

The School of Loretto

Young Educational Institution to Bisbee a Source of Just Pride

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN FOUR SHORT YEARS

Brief Description of Order Which for a Century Has Devoted Itself to Education

There are a good many things in Bisbee which fill the stranger with surprise and one of the most surprising is the excellent Loretto Academy which last Monday entered upon its fifth year with greatly increased promise of success. In fact, the school had already passed the stage of promise; success has been secured.

The school has at present about 200 pupils, fifteen of whom are boarding pupils, but this number will be largely increased. The school draws its patronage not from practically all Southern Arizona and Northern Sonora. Most if not all the pupils are American.

The Loretto school is under the auspices of the Sisters of Loretto, (sic) an order exclusively devoted to education, just as other orders of the Catholic church are devoted to other activities, as for instance, the Sisters of Mercy are given to the establishment and maintenance of hospitals.

The order of Loretto whose centenary will be celebrated next year was founded by a Belgian priest in the wilds of Kentucky in 1812. He taught the children of the frontier in a log cabin and a little later the mother house was established at Loretto, where the centenary will be observed. The order has since spread throughout the west until its membership is now more than 700.

What has grown from the seed planted by that Belgian priest in the "dark and bloody ground," may be briefly and partially described as follows:

There is at Kansas City, a large academy, two convents and novitiate. At St. Louis there is a normal, a large convent, on Lafayette avenue opposite Reservoir Park where reside sixty Sisters who are engaged in teaching in various parochial schools. There is also a large academy at Florissant and there are schools in various other Missouri towns. Schools and houses in Colorado are located at Loretto Heights, Denver, Colorado Springs and Pueblo.

In New Mexico there is a house in Santa Fe, an Indian industrial school at Bernalillo and schools in Las Vegas, Las Cruces, Taos and many smaller towns. El Paso has an academy and three schools. The educational work of the order in Arizona is carried on at Bisbee and Flagstaff.

The school houses and academies mentioned are by no means all. They have been hastily selected from a number of educational stations. The Loretto school at Bisbee is housed in a handsome and massive looking structure of cream colored brick along Tombstone canyon and easy of access by the street railway. The superintendent of the school is Father Meuer and teacher of Christian doctrine and language. The principal is Sister Genevieve, who is assisted by eight teachers. Pupils of both sex are admitted and the course embraces the first eight grades and an academic course. There are besides special courses in music and drawing. The musical course includes voice training and familiarity with all instruments.

Religious instruction is not imposed upon the pupils. It is administered of course, to children of Catholic parents, but never to those of non-Catholics except upon the written request of the parents.

No attempt is made, as many suppose, to make Catholics of Protestant children for the Sisters believe that would be worse than useless. The religious belief of the church if placed upon the impressionable mind of the child would almost certainly be effaced when the child was removed from the influence of the school and brought again into contact with the non-Catholic world.

As part of the discipline the children of non-Catholics attend the services but do not participate in the prayers or other religious exercises.

The children range in age from about seven years to eighteen and a brighter collection of pupils can be found in no school in the country. The Review reporter who visited the school and went through the classrooms saw not a dull looking child.

The appointments of the school are excellent. There are four large classrooms on the second floor, a handsome chapel, a hospital ward, small but marvelously neat and clean. The office of the principal is on this floor.

There are two dormitories, whose snowy beds enclosed with snowy curtains, invite repose.

There is no established formal course of domestic science but what is perhaps better, there is a practical course. The girls are taught the mysteries of making beds, of cooking, of sewing and

other things that will fall to their lots as housewives. Moreover they are taught these things sensibly and right.

On the first floor there is a reception room, a nurse room, a class room and other apartments. This floor is crossed by broad halls. The dining room, which is sometimes used for dancing and the culinary department are in the tall well lighted basement. In the basement is also a large and pleasant playroom for the smaller children in bad weather.

This is a very inadequate description of the excellent appointments of the Loretto school of Bisbee, set in a pleasant and healthful location, surrounded by beautiful grounds, yearly growing more beautiful under the constant care of the Sisters.

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