

## Biography of Mother Ediltrude

Mary Emma Everett was the elder of two girls born in Lincoln June 27th. 1862. She lost her father in early childhood. Both parents were Protestants, upright and God-fearing persons of the old school who regarded Catholics as an ignorant and priest-ridden sect.

Mrs. Everett was a woman of strong character and high principles who shirked no sacrifice to give her children the advantages of a good education.

The family moved to Scarborough in 1870. Mary Emma was a promising student and in course of time passed into a training college and obtained her Teacher's Diploma. She taught in Scarborough for some years. It was during this period that she began to think seriously of the position of the Anglican Church of which she was a member. She had discussions with clergymen which always ended unsatisfactorily and merely served to accentuate her doubts. Finally she referred her difficulties to a Catholic priest and on July 1st. 1888 had the great happiness of being received into the Church, a grace for which she never ceased to thank God, She was the only member of her family to embrace the faith.

It was at this time that Miss Everett made the acquaintance of our nuns in Scarborough. Reverend Mother Cecile soon won the esteem and confidence of the new convert and it was through her influence that she was received into our Order at Coloma, Malines on the feast of the Purification 1891. In August of that year she was confirmed and a month later, September 8th. she was clothed in the livery of a Lady of Mary under the name of Mother Ediltrude. A year Later she was transferred to Coloma Croydon and put on the teaching staff. Her talent for organisation was soon apparent and Reverend Mother Felicie decided to make her Headmistress while still a novice.

During the summer holidays of 1893 Mother Ediltrude returned to the Mother House and on August 29th. she made her First Vows.

Our dear sister continued to govern the school with great success, The number of pupils increased rapidly and a new wing was added. The school was recognised by the Board of Education as a Grant-earning establishment and later affiliated to the university.

On September 3rd. Mother Ediltrude had the supreme happiness of pronouncing her Final Vows and spent a long holiday in Belgium, the cradle of the institute, where she had many friends.

After carrying on the work of the school at Croydon for many years, Mother Ediltrude was sent to Scarborough. The wrench was very painful but she made the sacrifice generously. The change was only temporary however, for on May 10th. of the same year she was named Headmistress of St. Anne's College, Sanderstead. At this time St Anne's was a private school and its teaching methods somewhat antiquated' With characteristic promptitude and in face of many difficulties our intrepid Sister set herself the task of raising the standard. She gradually and tactfully eliminated the untrained teachers and replaced them by those with university degrees. A few years Later she applied for recognition and the Inspecting body judged St. Anne's to be sufficiently efficient to be placed on the List of Grant-aided schools.

The last move in the succession of changes took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1930 when Mother Ediltrude was appointed Headmistress of St Winefride's High School, Forest Hill. Here again our energetic sister threw herself heart and soul into the work of improving the school.

In December 1936 owing to her great age Mother Ediltrude was relieved, of her arduous duties and retired from teaching.

Our Lord had a very special work for Mother Ediltrude to do in the cause of Education, so dear to our Institute. He entrusted her with the laborious task of organisation and development of our schools which under her able guidance attained a standard of perfection of which her successors in the work may well be proud; so perseveringly, generously and efficiently did she do the pioneer work so necessary and so invaluable to the success of every good cause.

On August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1943 our dear sister Ediltrude celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her Religious Profession. This was indeed, a red-letter day in her life and she showed her deep appreciation for all that was done to make the event a memorable one. How much she treasured the precious gifts and addresses of congratulation presented on that occasion all her friends can testify.

As time passed and the date of her Diamond Jubilee approached she often spoke of it. Her health had always been good and it seemed probable that she would live to enjoy it. In May 1947 our dear octogenarian contracted a severe bronchial attack and the chaplain thought it prudent to administer the Sacrament of

Extreme Unction. It was merely a precautionary measure for the valiant invalid was up and about the same day.

In January 1951 we noticed for the first time that our dear Sister Ediltrude was beginning to fail. Her appetite diminished and she began to complain of rheumatic pains and sciatica. The doctor prescribed remedies and the patient was kept in bed in a warm room but continued to lose strength. Again it seemed expedient that she should receive the last rites of the Church and her weekly confessor and dear friend, Canon McLoughlin, came over from Croydon to hear her confession and gave her the Last sacraments in the presence of all the members of the Community and the Novitiate. This gave the dear invalid immense consolation and happiness and she spoke of the beauty of the ceremony for days afterwards. Reverend Mother engaged a nurse and did all in her power to relieve the sufferer but she grew weaker every day and in the evening of March 24<sup>th</sup> 1951 she passed away very peacefully without a struggle.

Our good Sister Ediltrude was an easy patient and very grateful for all that was done for her. During her long life she never asked for any exceptions in the way of food. She had a wonderful constitution and seemed to be immune from all diseases except the common cold. At one time she was threatened with blood-pressure but this was remedied by adhering strictly to the doctor's orders and lying down for an hour after dinner. In this way she took a sensible care of her health but she was not abnormal in any sense of the word, Her mind was clear and alert up to the end she was a type of the older generation,

Mother Ediltrud.e had a great respect for her Superiors and was insistent in her efforts to win their cooperation, (Like many another she also had her likes and dislikes preferences and prejudices) The Principal-s of other Educational Congregations often appealed to Mother Ediltrude for help and advice. She gave this unsparingly and left no stone unturned to put them on the right lines. Many of them attribute the success of their initial efforts to her, wise direction.

Mother Ediltrude was very faithful to the old pupils and as far as possible never lost touch with them. She took a lively interest in their welfare and many of them now enjoying successful careers look back with grateful hearts to the devoted Headmistress who did so much for them.

