

Description strong  
and not too long  
of each dear Sister given  
creates desire  
To see them nigher—  
e'er [ere] they go to Heaven  
A fond Adieu  
I'll bid to you  
grandaughter [*sic*] dear & sweet  
and hope—I will  
that we may still  
In this poor world—meet

*Autograph: Brisbane*

**269. To Sister M. Frances Warde  
Carlow**

My Dearest Sister M. Frances

It distressed me very much to hear from Mr. O'Hanlon that your good director was changed. I know it is an affliction to you—but rest assured, God will

community on January 22, 1841, and received the habit on May 20; Catherine McAuley was in Birr on both occasions, spending a total of five weeks in Mary Anne's company. Mary Anne's native town was Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary, about twelve miles southwest of Birr, Co. Offaly. Borrisokane is in the riding (an administrative unit of the county) called North Tipperary, sometimes colloquially called "North Tip."<sup>22</sup>

The recipient of the poem had sent Catherine McAuley some poetry, in response to which Catherine sends her this brief poem, with the hope that she will see her again in "this poor world." As it turned out, Catherine made only one more trip before her death, to and from Birmingham, England, through Kingstown and Liverpool, August 20 to September 21, 1841—if indeed this poem was sent to Birr after May 24, 1841.

Mary Joseph Heenan was a lay sister, and Catherine McAuley was particularly devoted to and affectionate towards lay sisters, seeing in their work a close resemblance to the ministry of Jesus: "constantly engaged serving others, but never requiring any care or attendance for Himself" (see Sullivan, *Catherine McAuley* 269, 271). One thinks, in particular, of Catherine's affection for Teresa Carton (who in 1844 became a choir sister), Martha Wallplate and Mary Liston at Baggot Street, Mary Shanahan and Anne Hewitt in Limerick, and Mary Teresa Boyce and Mary Joseph Hawkins in Bermondsey.

The presence of the autograph in Brisbane is no help to identifying the recipient. The autographs of five other poems in Brisbane were sent to Ursula Frayne in Booterstown, Mary Teresa Vincent Potter in Limerick, and Anna Maria Harnett, then at Baggot Street—none of whom seems to fit a "Typee's Land" connection. Ursula and Anna Maria were from Dublin, and Ellen Potter was from Adare, Co. Limerick. Finally, Tippecan Lower and Tippecan Upper were townlands in County Kildare, but I have not been able to identify any Sister of Mercy in Catherine McAuley's acquaintance who came from either townland. Thus, one is left with a tender-hearted autograph poem to an unknown recipient—though Mary Joseph Heenan seems the likely recipient.

send some distinguished consolation.<sup>22</sup> This is your life, joys and sorrows mingled, one succeeding the other. Let us not think of the means [God] has employed to convey to us a portion of the Holy Cross, being ever mindful that it came from Himself. You remember what Father Gaffney<sup>23</sup> said to us when in retreat—"If the entire cross upon which Christ died was sent to this House, how impatient would each Sister be to carry it, and she who was permitted to keep it the longest—would be the most favored. Far better and more profitable for you to receive with all your heart the cross which God will send you in any form or shape He pleases." I earnestly hope that you will receive this trial so as to render it valuable to you.

The Ceremony in Birr went on very well. Father Mathew received thousands into the temperance society—he has got a most sorrowful or plaintive manner of saying, "ah, don't pull me." The Bishop went through the ceremony as if he performed it every week—he is a nice celebrant—and very kind & pleasing.<sup>24</sup>

Bernard Cavanagh paid a visit here when I was away—asked to see the Nuns. Sr. de Pazzi appeared—he said—"Did you ever hear of Bernard Cavanagh?" Yes. "What did you hear of him, what does the Public say of him?"—We know very little of public opinion. "Would you like to see him?"—I am not very anxious. "I am he." He asked to see the school, said many spiritual things—thin but not wasted or remarkable—features good, but expression of countenance weak and simple or foolish. Mr. Mathew says he is not an impostor—but certainly a lunatic.<sup>25</sup>

All are well here. The usual increase. We have again 3 postulants, expecting 2 more. Sister M. Cecilia is not as much better as I hoped—she has no appetite. I fear she never will have strength. Sr. Teresa a shadow.

The Sisters in Tullamore well—remove to their New Convent next month. I expected to hear you were in Naas—poor Naas is like the little chicken that belongs to the clutch called—creepy crawly. I wish it would take a start.

My love to all.

Pray fervently for your ever affectionate  
M. C. McAuley

*Autograph: West Hartford*

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Nolan had been a curate in Killeslin (Carlow-Graigie), but was now assigned as curate in Sandcroft, near Kildare (*Irish Catholic Directory* [1841] 294). The Carlow Annals for 1841 notes: "Early in July, our extraordinary Confessor, Rev. Daniel Nolan received an appointment to a curacy about fifteen miles hence, and Rev. John Magee was named to fill his place." Father Dan Nolan, whom Catherine McAuley called "my son," was the brother of the deceased and much-loved Dr. Edward Nolan, on whom Frances Warde had earlier relied. Presumably Father Dan was her "good director." <sup>23</sup> Myles Gaffney, dean of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and frequent retreat director for the Sisters of Mercy. Catherine may be recalling their first retreat together in 1832. <sup>24</sup> Dr. Patrick Kennedy, bishop of the diocese of Killaloe. <sup>25</sup> Bernard Cavanagh has not been identified.