

**A CENTURY OF
MORAVIAN SISTERS: A
RECORD OF CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITY LIFE**

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A Century of Moravian Sisters: A Record of Christian Community Life by Elizabeth Lehman
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ELIZABETH LEHMAN MYERS & FRANK J. MYERS

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Sister Christine Riem of Lancaster who married Peter
Fetter of Bethlehem



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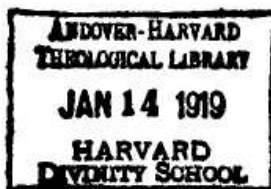
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DRAWINGS
By
FRANK J. MYERS



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A Gift to My Son



PREFACE

THE group of stone buildings on Church Street, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, known as the Sisters' House, Gemein House (Congregation House), and Widows' House, is a centre of interest to the tourist or to the new-comer within our gates.

The women who have lived in them have come from Europe, the West Indies, South America, and all parts of North America. Cultured women of high degree; women of lesser degree but just as sweet and gentle, and women of the working class, strong and willing but with the same desire for spiritual uplift,—all these have dignified the old houses with the graciousness of their living.

No historian has yet appeared to chronicle their doings. Fortunately, the early sisters kept a diary, noting the most ordinary actions of daily life; and this diary, now in the archives of the Moravian Church in Bethlehem, has been very helpful to me in the portrayal of life in the Eighteenth Century. The "Transactions of Moravian Historical Society" contain many interesting papers notably by Matthew Henry and James Henry which were a great assistance in the preparation of this book.

The booklets and historical pamphlets of the Rt. Rev. Edmund de Schweinitz, the Rt. Rev. J. M. Levering and the Rev. W. C. Reichel have been studied carefully in order to give a correct

back-ground for the groups of women, quaint and lovable, who move through these pages. The records of burials in the old graveyard by Dr. Augustus S. Schultze has been invaluable to me for names, dates and leading facts. The archives of the Moravian Church at Lititz and Bethlehem were courteously placed at my disposal by the custodians.

The couplets from the old chorales which head each chapter, were found, of course, in the hymn books belonging to the different periods.

Various minor facts I have carefully gleaned here and there, to form a picture as complete as may be at this late day.

There is much that is, as yet, unwritten history and for this I am deeply indebted to those of an older generation, who, still with us, find great pleasure in living their youth over again, conversationally, and taking their friends with them into the intimacy of that bygone day.

If you who now follow me back into the years, can get a real understanding of the kindness, the whimsicality, the oddity which covered sincerity, the sympathy,—above all, the childlike trustfulness of piety of these old sisters, I will not have delved in vain.

E. L. M.

Bethlehem, Pa.

