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Love Spans the Centuries
Origin and Development of the
Institute of the Sisters of Charity of
Montreal, Grey Nuns
Volume 2: 1821-1853

by
Clémentine Drouin, S.G.M.
translated by Antoinette Bezaiem S.G.M.

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Clémentine Drouin, S.G.M.

**LOVE SPANS
THE CENTURIES**

Volume II
1821-1853



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**LOVE SPANS
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Clémentine Drouin, S.G.M.

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THE CENTURIES**

Volume II

1821-1853

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The Sisters of Charity of Montreal "Grey Nuns"

translated by Antoinette Bezaire, S.G.M.

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L'HÔPITAL GÉNÉRAL DES SŒURS DE LA CHARITÉ
SŒURS GRISES, Montréal, 1933*

PREFACE

We present the second volume of *Love Spans the Centuries*: it recounts the principal events which took place during the administration of our Mothers Marguerite St-Germain Lemaire (1821-1833), Marguerite-Dorothée Trottier de Beaubien (1833-1843), Elisabeth Forbes McMullen (1843-1848) and Marie-Rose Coutlée (1848-1853). These superiors show contrasts, but contrasts which harmonize, under the thrust of the same key idea, under the influence of the same supernatural spirit: the love of God and the poor.

Mother Lemaire with her strength of soul appears to us as an apostle.

Mother Beaubien, because of her benevolent charity, can be called the benefactor of the humble.

Mother Forbes-McMullen, valiant and intrepid, is like a brave soldier of Christ.

Mother Rose Coutlée, by her untiring devotedness, reveals herself a true Sister of Charity.

This book continues to relate the history of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns). The apostolate of our early mothers will always be for us a beloved treatise of which our religious family has a right to be proud and which it honors with love. It is a sacred memorial where we find the living image of

our foundress, a permanent invitation to the virtues practised by our predecessors, a stimulus and strength in our multiple works of charity.

A Grey Nun
Hôpital Général
April 28, 1933

PREFACE

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THE GENERAL HOSPITAL OF MONTREAL

UNDER MOTHER MARGUERITE
SAINT-GERMAIN LEMAIRE

FOURTH SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE INSTITUTE

CHAPTER I **1821 — 1826**

Mother Coullée, third superior general of the Institute, had just died. It was July 20, 1821, feast of St. Marguerite, patron of our beloved foundress. The election presided by Bishop Lariguet, assisted by Father Antoine Sattin, the community's confessor, and Father Charles Bédard, the Hospital chaplain, elected another Marguerite as guardian of a little society in mourning, leaving in their respective offices Sister Raizenne, assistant, and Sister Montbrun, mistress of novices.

While the Sisters' thanksgiving rose heavenward, Mother Lemaire, moved at the thought of her serious responsibilities, murmured silently: "Oh! what a painful feast day gift!"

The community would but rejoice with the nomination of this superior general, imitator of our first mother by her generosity of heart and the beautiful qualities of her mind.

Let us follow this brave soul in the various works that she so generously undertook for the good of the poor and of which we now reap the precious heritage. Mother Lemaire was careful not to remain inactive. She marched forward without ever losing any ground: she was a conqueror who did not retreat.

Like another Marguerite d'Youville, she gave her daughters the example of fidelity to the rule, of work, of faithfulness to customs, and to charity. This direction was the heart of her government and the principle of her kind administration.

It is interesting to cast a glance on the early preparations of Providence which contributed to shaping her soul as a child and to make of her a mother of the unfortunate.

Marie-Marguerite Lemaire was born May 14, 1769, at Lac des Deux-Montagnes, then a mission almost completely comprised of Algonquins and Iroquois. Her father, Ignace Saint-Germain Lemaire, lived comfortably from the produce of his farms and from trade with the Indians. A man of great judgment and remarkable integrity, he exercised such a mastery over these Indian tribes that after the conquest the government had recourse to his influence in order to win them as allies.

Her mother, Louise Castonguay, was a granddaughter of Ignace Raizenne and Elisabeth Steben, the two converted captives whose courage and solid piety we admired in the first volume of our story. The family lived in a modest house on the edge of a forest near the mission, facing the lake.

Early in life, Marguerite contemplated, on the shores of Oka, the great book of nature. Instinctively she was in communion with the splendors of God even before being in communion with the God of splendors. At school under the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, she ranked among the brightest students. Then the young girl, the eldest of four children, soon had to share her father's work and help her mother at home. To give of herself was a need, to please others was her joy!

Near the God of the Eucharist, under the direction of the Sulpician priests, in the shade of the great trees and listening to the waves, Marguerite thought about her vocation. The silence and the calm of nature made her desire the recollection of the cloister. At sixteen, she left the world without ever having known it and went to Hôtel-Dieu. A physical deformity prevented her from being admitted. Without being dis-

couraged, the young applicant believed that a Grey Nun can love God like a cloistered nun, so she continued her way to the General Hospital. Good Mother Despins undoubtedly remembering the words of our foundress, "that an infirmity cannot be an obstacle to a religious vocation", allowed the aspirant to try the novitiate. She entered November 21, 1785.

Several months went by and it was noticed, according to the expression of the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu "that the limp had disappeared". The dear novice applied herself with earnestness and courage not only to her religious exercises, but also to every type of manual work: the most humble tasks, the most difficult chores were those she preferred.

Admitted to profession on January 24, 1788, the young sister at first had no assigned occupation. Active and flexible, she remained at the disposition of her superiors for the many hidden tasks that contribute to good order and success in administration. Thus she was employed at making candles, soap and other similar activities. Ingenious, she did her best in everything and through virtue as much as through affection, she sought the good of the community and was attentive to the slightest details.

As a bursar for twenty-three years, from 1798 to 1821, Sister Lemaire was just as devoted. Obligated in this capacity to administer the seigniorie at Châteauguay and the farm of Ile Saint-Bernard, she frequently made long sojourns to the manor. It will be interesting to note here that at this time, the seigniorie comprised all the territory from which rose the parishes of Châteauguay, of Saint-Isidore, of Sainte-Philomène and the part of the parish of Saint-Remi called Côte Sainte-Thérèse. A large number of farms in the seigniorie of Châteauguay had been conceded, yet no record had been kept of the transaction. Sister Lemaire wanted to remedy the grave inconveniences that could result from the omission. With great work and incalculable fatigue, she started and completed a register containing all the details of these various concessions of the seigniorie. To this end she travelled through the area several times in order to obtain

the titles from the owners. She had the seigniority measured, had landmarks set, assigned a part to the community, then conceded the remaining farms. She obtained from the Duke of Richmond, governor of the province, that this record be acknowledged by Letters patent dated December 12, 1818. These travels were made by cart and no consideration of fatigue, of health, or of peril ever stopped the traveller.

In Sister Lemaire, the love of work was joined to precious qualities of heart and mind. Thanks to her good memory, anecdotes and edifying facts abounded in her conversation. Her letters like her conversations are interesting and graceful. Even as superior, she continued to read in the refectory and not a syllable was lost. Her devotion was ardent, affectionate and sincere. She guarded herself incessantly against natural haste by practising recollection, a requisite for personal sanctification and fruitful works. In one of her letters May 28, 1819, addressed to her cousin, Sister Chénier, we read: "You will always please me when you write but I do not promise I shall answer each time, for you know that at Châteauguay my free moments are very few. I am stealing this one. I am touched by your attention and I thank you for remembering a poor exile. Yes, remember me in the Sacred-Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Ask them for the spirit of recollection, so necessary for my sanctification". The brave Sister left us more than one example of her sustained effort and dauntless courage.

One day she heard that the Indians of Sault Saint-Louis had taken over Saint-Nicolas island situated on the edge of the seigniority to which it once belonged. Sister Lemaire did not hesitate to go there to claim the rights of l'Hôpital Général. The Indians withdrew, not daring to resist her.

She manifested the same courage in 1821 when there was question of digging the canal at Lachine.⁽¹⁾ The engineers had planned to dig on the land which the hospital owned at Pointe Saint-Charles, and without previous approval of the com-

(1) This canal was begun July 17, 1821 and finished in 1825.

munity, they had already planted their stakes. Informed of this fact, Sister Lemaire had the courage to remove them and she invited these gentlemen to put their lines elsewhere.

A former superior had given the pastor of Châteauguay provisional enjoyment of a piece of land, without taking measures to guarantee ownership by the hospital. After the death of the pastor, the heirs expected to have the land. But Sister Lemaire was watchful. A wise and prudent steward, she succeeded in having the rights of the hospital recognized without offending the opposite party.

Undaunted energy was, however, tempered by great kindness, and even strangers experienced it.

One night during the war of 1812, Sister Lemaire, bursar at Ile Saint-Bernard, noticed at a short distance from the manor, an English soldier walking to and fro on the shore in great agitation. "It must be a wounded soldier or the victim of an accident", she said to herself. She hurried toward the stranger to offer help. Sure enough, this man had been wounded in the hand by enemy fire. The bullets were still in the wound and there was no one to remove them. Moved with pity, Sister Lemaire led the poor man to the manor, gave him a good bed, and with the skill of a surgeon, she extracted the bullets from the wound and continued her care until complete recovery.

Another day of the same year at the beginning of winter, Sister Lemaire heard cries similar to those of persons in distress. Going out, she saw a barge caught in the ice on the lake. It was filled with men, women, and children making fruitless efforts to escape from shipwreck. Noticing the sister's silver cross, they increased their cries for help. Immediately, Sister Lemaire signalled to the farm hands, but these, terrified by the immediate danger did not dare to expose their lives. Indignant, Sister Lemaire took the initiative and organized the rescue herself. Boards and ladders thrown into the river allowed the men to open a passage through the ice and the ship was brought to shore. It was high time; a few women and frail children were on the point of succumbing to cold and fear. Sister Lemaire led

them to the manor where hot drinks and a good supper were served. After a restorative sleep, these brave people could return home blessing the kind sister who had saved them.

Once she was travelling to Châteauguay with a few sisters. A storm arose which suddenly became severe. Exhausted with fatigue, the oarsmen were about to lose courage and to turn back when a more violent gust of wind threw the frail vessel near Saint-Nicolas Island. It was useless to think of going any farther that night. They disembarked and organized to spend the night there. Sister Lemaire had the canoe pulled to shore, and taking advantage of her authority, she ordered the sisters to settle in it while she would keep watch. A discussion followed, but she won. The brave mother was on sentry duty the whole night, watching over the little group and blessing God for having preserved them in his mercy.

It was especially towards persons of her religious family that Sister Lemaire's charity was ingenious. To preserve the health of the sisters she tried to give them all the help possible in order to make their work easier. "How good she was to the sick!" said Mother Mc Mullen. Sister Cherrier among others, experienced her kindness. Infection had spread in her hand to the point that the doctor declared amputation urgent. Alarmed at this, Mother Lemaire intervened and put forth one last effort. "Since the patient has nothing to risk, let me take care of her", she told the doctor. She dressed the gangrenous hand herself. Within a few days, healing began. Encouraged by this first success, the devoted nurse continued treatment until the patient had recovered the full use of her hand.

These few facts concerning the new Superior are sufficient evidence to show in what firm and kind hands the interests of the little community rested for the next twelve years.

CHAPTER II

1821 — 1826

The hospital at this time was reaching an era of security such as it had never known. Father Thavenet, a Sulpician priest, who worked since 1816 for the recovery of the community's revenue in France, wrote, "All your income is settled, you will not lose anything. You can count on more than 100,000 francs".

At what price did the devoted steward obtain this success both complete and unexpected? He himself informs us in a letter of November 20, 1822. "Exhausted with fatigue, crushed with business in which the least negligence can have devastating results, not knowing how high the already enormous expenses will run, all I can tell you is that, having sent you some 80,000 francs, I shall send you no more until I know how much is still owed you. The pen is falling from my hand... I recommend myself to your prayers."

This extraordinary aid would help our mothers to fulfill one of their most ardent wishes. We remember that, in 1758, our beloved foundress had laid the foundation for an addition to the hospital parallel to that built by the Charon brothers. Forced to suspend the construction because of the war, Mother d'Youville never gave up. When peace was restored, "she was preparing to resume the work and finish it," when the fire of 1765 again thwarted her project. Without resources, defrauded even of the revenue which the French government owed her, she was forced to rebuild only what the fire had destroyed.

The funds recovered were now employed to extend the building. After deliberation, it was decided that "a three-storey wing would be built measuring 105' x 30' and having eight rooms four of which would be for the men and boys (foundlings); the four others would be for crippled women and little girls; the whole would contain two hundred beds; the lower floor would have a kitchen, a pantry, and a work room."⁽¹⁾

Pierre Brau dit Pomminville from Saint-Laurent on the outskirts of town, undertook the construction. The cornerstone of the new building was laid on October 24, 1822, about five o'clock in the evening in the presence of Sister Marguerite Lemaire, superior and Sister Marie-Euphrasie Sabourin, bursar. The desire to draw heavenly blessings on this building inspired Mother Lemaire to insert in the cornerstone the following prayers:

TO THE ETERNAL FATHER

God almighty and eternal, direct our actions according to your holy will so that in the name of your beloved Son we may multiply our good deeds through Jesus Christ, our Lord who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. ET VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST; ET HABITAVIT IN NOBIS. O CRUX AVE, SPES UNICA etc.

TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN

Most Holy Virgin, Queen of Angels, refuge and salvation of humanity, allow us to ask in all trust for your holy protection as we begin, and bring to its completion this building which your servant and our good mother Marie-Marguerite de la Jemmerais, widow d'Youville, had begun, desiring with all our heart

⁽¹⁾ Memoir drawn up by Mother Lemaire, December 15, 1823, to be sent to the Quebec legislature.

that it may serve to increase your glory and that of your Divine Son. Do not allow, O Immaculate Virgin, that mortal sin be committed in this house. Please command the Holy Angels to guard so well the conduct of those who live in it that you will always be loved and served as Our Lady and Queen. Amen.

JESU PATER PAUPERUM, MISERERE NOBIS.

Divine Providence who art the support
of the poor have mercy on us!

JESU, MARIA, JOSEPH, JOACHIM ET ANNA, SUCCURRITE
NOBIS.

SANCTA TRINITAS UNUS DEUS. AMEN.

Praised be Jesus and Mary!

AVE JOSEPH, FILI DAVID, JUSTE VIR MARIAE

DE QUA NATUS EST JESUS.

Holy Angels, our faithful guardians,
watch over us and protect us.

To these prayers were added medals and relics. All the holy protectors of the Institute were represented and asked to ensure the success of the enterprise.

The following day at nine o'clock, the community assembled in the choir loft of the chapel to recite aloud the prayers included in the corner stone, and to beg new blessings on the

construction. The work proceeded ardently. By the third of August, the addition was finished and the wards were ready to receive the poor. Requested to bless the latter or delegate someone for this, Father Roux, superior of the seminary, delegated this honor to Father Sattin, the community's confessor. In the forenoon of August the eleventh, Father Sattin proceeded with the ceremony. He recalled to the large attendance the precious advantages the new home offered to the poor and disabled of the town, and the great merits to be obtained by the Sisters who would generously dedicate themselves to the care of the suffering members of Jesus Christ. In mid September, all the men, women and children were settled in their new quarters which were spacious and well lighted. The poor who had occupied the ward constructed in 1816 and upkept at the expense of the seminary, were brought together.

Informed of this material progress, Father Thavenet expressed his joy to the superior: "I am greatly edified that the money which Providence sends you only serves to make you poorer and to increase the number of poor in your house. This encourages me and makes me hope that you will be paid to the last mite".⁽¹⁾

While these additions were being carried out, repairs were done to the older buildings. The walls of the old hospital were raised in such a way as to make the attics more serviceable. A tin roof replaced cedar shingles. These major works demanded many sacrifices. The children slept in the bakery, the sisters and the novices in the attics. During the hot summer nights, the atmosphere of these temporary dormitories did not contribute to rest. Annoyances were endured on rainy nights when the water penetrated through the disjointed boards of the roof! Finally, after a sudden turn of fortune and adventures of many kinds, the day came when these troubles were amply compensated. Though she uses scrupulous accuracy in transmitting the account of these repairs, untiring Mother McMullen does not claim, however, to give minute details. "She would never

⁽¹⁾ Letter to Mother Lemaire, November 24, 1823.

finish", she assures us. Following her example, we shall point out the most important.

The community room, the refectory, and the kitchen remained as they had been under the Charon brothers. The old men's ward was divided into three rooms, an oratory, a parlor, and a business office. The women's ward became a dormitory for the sisters; the orphans' ward became a linen room.

Châteauguay was not forgotten in this march toward progress. To assist the rent collectors and assure new resources for the poor, Mother Lemaire had a sawmill built in 1826 next to the flour mill, as well as one for the carding machine. A 400 ft. dam was also built to increase the hydraulic power required for the new machines.

The enlargement of the hospital had procured for all the personnel conveniences until then unknown. But the community on the other hand, had not changed its habits of frugality and simplicity. Father Thavenet watched with special interest what use the sisters made of their recovered capital. He wrote on November 7, 1824: "I commend you for enlarging the house of the poor; but can I praise you for not having kept anything for the spouses of Jesus Christ? My dear Sisters I wish you and your whole community, a great spirit of poverty but a little less of real poverty."⁽¹⁾

However without setting aside the spirit of evangelical devotedness that so well becomes a Sister of Charity, our mothers took advantage of these extraordinary receipts to purchase some spiritual works imported from France. Mother Lemaire's letters point out among others, the works of Saint Francis de Sales and the life of the Desert Fathers. The acquisition must have been considerable since the cost, including transportation, amounted to four hundred and sixty-seven pounds. Shortly afterwards they bought sacred vessels in France, happy to offer in this way to the Author of all gifts a

(1) Letter to Mother Lemaire.

grateful homage for the goods that his Providence had restored to them.

But the most appreciated advantage was to allow the community to take in a greater number of disadvantaged persons. A group of children drew, in a special way, the compassion of priests in the parochial ministry; they were young Irish orphan girls whose number had been increased by growing immigration and the permanent settlement of troops in Montreal. For several years already, Father Roux, superior of the seminary, had been thinking of opening a refuge for them. When he saw the hospital being extended, he asked the Grey Nuns to reserve rooms for these young girls. The seminary would pay for their upkeep and living expenses. The proposal was accepted and on October 14, 1823, five young girls by the names of Hart and O'Neil were received into the new wards. Soon some twenty more joined them; then the number rose to forty. It remained the fixed number.⁽¹⁾

The most difficult thing was to find a Sister who spoke English. Our ancestors, French Canadians, had not hastened to adopt nor learn the language of their conquerors. To our forefathers this language was just about unknown. The community numbered only two subjects of foreign origin: Sisters O'Flaherty and Nobless, and these had been received at too young an age to have preserved their native tongue. But Providence, attentive to the needs of its children, had just directed toward our novitiate three young Scottish girls of good judgment and remarkable self-devotedness: Catherine, Elisabeth and Isabella Forbes, daughters of John Forbes and of Anne or Nancy McDonnell, both natives of Scotland and who for several years were established at Saint-André, Rivière-Aux-Raisins in the diocese of Alexandria.

(1) The Sulpician Fathers maintained this good work for sixty-three years; 848 orphan girls were thus protected by them. Of this number, four dedicated themselves to the service of the poor in our Institute: Ellen Howard — Sister Rodriguez, May 31, 1841; Anna Pope — Sister Olier, July 16, 1842; Ann-Justine Mulhall, May 31, 1855; Louisa Croocks, August 15, 1861. This ward lasted until 1889.

Catherine had not yet pronounced her vows when the girls' ward was opened. It was believed that the young novice was mature enough to be entrusted with the care of these orphans. The superiors were not disappointed in their trust.

From 1822 to 1827 besides the three Sisters Forbes mentioned above, the novitiate received Eulalie Lagrave⁽¹⁾, Rose Ladurantaye, Rosalie Barbeau, Angélique Brazeau, Marcelline Mallet⁽²⁾ Des Anges Lallier, Véronique Mc Dougall, Scholastique Gosselin, Victoire Gravel, Marie-Louise Valade⁽³⁾ and about ten other young ladies who did not persevere. Sister Montbrun mistress of novices, put all her zeal and care into the religious formation of her dear novices. Was the possibility of founding far away missions a dream for the future? The devotedness of Bishop Provencher and his aides lit in many hearts the flame of apostolic zeal.

Closer to home, Catholic Centres also lacked missionaries. In 1821, the community was visited by Bishop Alexander Mc Donnell, recently named auxiliary of Québec for the province of Upper Canada.⁽⁴⁾ Set on extending the Reign of Jesus Christ in this region, where Gospel ministers were too few in number, the prelate had told the sisters of his plan to open an establishment of charitable works, the principal aim of which would be to instruct young girls.⁽⁵⁾ This project we shall see interested some while others did not find it compatible with the service of the poor and the formation received until then in the Institute. Among the latter was Mother Lemaire who, though she appreciated the apostolate of far-away missions, did not believe that the time had yet come for sisters to leave for this field, in view of their restricted number.

(1) Foundress at St-Boniface.

(2) Foundress of Sœurs de la Charité de Québec.

(3) Foundress at St-Boniface.

(4) Bishop Mc Donnell, named by Pius VII bishop of Rhésine in Mesopotamia, was consecrated in the church of the Ursulines of Québec, December 31, 1820.

(5) Letter of March 7, 1822.

Along with the mistress of novices, she tried to develop in the young recruits the virtues required for apostolic and charitable works. It was the responsibility of the superior general to admit candidates as postulants. Hesitant about her own judgment, Mother Lemaire always submitted the candidates to an examination by the confessor or the superior.

To a young person whom she had gladly accepted, but whose zeal needed to be moderated and tested, she wrote: "I had told you to mature your vocation and wait until the month of May. In such an important affair where your eternal salvation is at stake, one must not hurry. One must consult God and ask for his light. Here then, dear daughter, is what has been decided: from now until August you shall test your vocation by the practice of obedience, renouncing your will by submitting it to that of God; thus you will show him your love".

Not content with imposing on candidates these delays, she showed them religious life under its true light, not hiding its difficulties, its obligations, nor its trials; but she also knew how to make them feel its advantages and its sweetness. "It is with great joy that I receive you as my postulant," she wrote to a young girl on whom she had founded great hopes.⁽¹⁾ "However, I must not hide from you that the life of a true religious is a life of: crosses, penance, mortification, humility, and continual self-abnegation. This penance consists of doing the same thing every day, at the same hour: that is, the same prayers without even being able to change them. These are the daily crosses. There are others which are greater and more extraordinary.!"

"In the end, crosses are only trifles to which God in his mercy allows us to be sensitive so that we will have the opportunity to offer him sacrifices. They are the lot of the Christian. Called to follow Jesus crucified, we must, like him, carry the cross and die on it if it is his divine will."

⁽¹⁾ Letter of March 14, 1830 to Rose Coullée who became superior general in 1848.

“Oh, my dear child, the world finds hard and unrealistic the sacrifice of one’s will to that of our amiable and sweet Jesus. This secular world sees the thorns and crosses of the religious state, but it does not see its joys and consolations, the blessings and the sweetness; that is a secret that is hidden from it. It believes happiness can be found only in the tumultuous pleasures of the world. It is mistaken. It is in retirement, in silence, that one enjoys peace and happiness. It is there that one hears the voice of the Divine Master saying: “Taste and see how sweet is my yoke, how light my burden. It is He, my dear child, it is He himself who carries this burden with us. That is why it is so light and so sweet. His grace and his love alleviate all things.”

Four months later, writing to the same person, she insisted again on the necessity of mortification, the foundation of all interior life and the condition of intimacy with the Lord.

“You will soon have reached the term that I have set for you. I suppose you have thought about what I said. Think again, remember every day that community life is a continual death to self, a surrender of all comforts, commodities, pleasures, and tastes; a constant mortification of our will and of ourselves. Never to do one’s will, always to keep silence about what one endures, to complain about it only to the Divine Spouse, one’s support and consolation! Live thus and you will experience how sweet is the yoke of the Lord! The company of Christ makes one find sweetness in the greatest sorrows of life; and how could one find these things difficult following a crucified God, a God crucified for our love?”

If Mother Lemaire insisted on mortification and self-denial with the young recruits, it is that she tried to free souls from imperfect sensitivities which sometimes retain them in natural life. This is why she so often repeated to her daughters that union with God and the highest degrees of the spiritual life are the reward of losing our will to the Divine Will by perfect obedience.

Fond of the Community of which she was responsible, she took jealous care to maintain it in the soundness of its fervor and in the spirit of its foundation. In view of this, she was firm about the observance of the least customs of the house, she wanted each sister to know about the lives of the early mothers, to imbue themselves with their maxims, their traditions, in a word, of the whole of ideas and principles which constitute the spirit of the community. For her, the past was sacred; even old furniture was worthy of respect.

One of the sisters, in what she thought was a movement of zeal, undertook without permission, to paint the encasement of a clock. As soon as Mother Lemaire noticed this, she stopped her and even made her remove the paint already applied.

This worthy superior greatly loved the feasts of the Church; she appreciated the beauty of the ceremonies and delighted in the melody of liturgical hymns. But there again, she insisted that all be in conformity with practices established by our founders and our first mothers. One morning on a feast day, the singers were joyfully prolonging their hymns after Mass. The uncompromising mother, fearing that her silence would seem to authorize this novelty, did not hesitate to raise her voice to stop the singing and she began the "O Crux Ave" and other customary prayers.

In 1825, a greater number of poor persons, increase in charitable works and consequently little space for the women boarders, rendered difficult the observance of regularity. The superior, therefore, assembled her councillors and, with the consent of all, obtained that no new boarder would be admitted. This decision guaranteed to those already received the freedom to enjoy their rights. Miss Marie-Michel de Chapt de Lacorne-Dubreuil was the last who ended her days at the hospital. Descendant of a noble French family, Miss Dubreuil had been raised in affluence and still possessed some wealth. Having come to our house on September 11, 1813, she lived simply, as one of the family. She enjoyed sharing the work of the Sisters, even to hanging out the laundry and folding clothes. She had

no servant but cleaned her own room and went to the kitchen to get her frugal meal. This meal was simple. At noon it consisted of soup, one potato, and stewed meat. Simpler still were her breakfast and supper; yet she paid 700 pounds for her board, a high price at the time.

Miss Dubreuil died on September 11, 1831 at the age of seventy-seven after a long and painful illness. Wishing to express her gratitude for the good care she had received, she willed to the hospital all the furniture left in her room and all other items that it contained. The inventory revealed the sum of \$5,354. in gold coins. This amount came in time to help with the project that Mother Lemaire had in mind of restoring the church and the entire section of the hospital that had been constructed by the Charon brothers.

Another great friend of our house, Major Hughes died a few years previously in his eighty-seventh year. Having come to Canada in 1760 under General Amherst, Hughes, after the conquest remained in Montreal where he was in charge of the barracks which were along the river's edge a short distance from where the Viger station is today. Each spring it was the custom to clean out the barracks. On this occasion, all the remains of the preceding year, linen and supplies were burned or thrown into the river. Hughes, though he was not a Catholic, thought of the use the Grey Nuns could make of these things and he ordered his soldiers to send everything to them. Thus the hospital received quantities of blankets, sheets, and linen table cloths.

In March 1877, these barracks were bought by Father René Rousseau, P.S.S. to shelter needy elderly men who were so numerous in the area of Bonsecours.

It is this building taken over in indescribable dilapidation and restored by the care of our Sisters Coullée, Sainte-Croix, Brassard, and Miville that was inaugurated as Hospice Saint-Charles. It still exists today under the name of hospice Saint-Antoine-de-Bonsecours.

CHAPTER III

1822 — 1827

The joy occasioned by the arrival of new recruits was soon followed by separations that were both painful and consoling. Was Mother Lemaire not to be submitted to the supreme law which is that of Christ and of all his saints: The more one advances in the spiritual life the more one strives towards the absolute through sacrifices.

On May 21, 1822, Christ came to claim for his kingdom a young professed sister who was hardly twenty-one. "It seems to me" said Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, "that God does not need years to accomplish his work of love in a soul. A ray from his heart can in an instant cause his flower to bloom for eternity". This divine work must have been carried out in Sister Angélique Legault whose religious life was short. She was indeed the bud that blossomed under the rays of the divine sun, having kept for Him both her scent and her beauty.

With a sweet disposition, active, having a strong temperament, she appeared to promise many years of service to the poor. She spared neither her efforts nor her strength. But alas, she was suddenly struck by a persistent pain. She accepted it without complaining and showed loving resignation to the will of God.

Following long days of suffering and burning fever, she asked for the Sacrament of the Sick. Mother Lemaire watched by the bedside of the dying Sister, encouraging her daughter to offer her suffering and her sacrifice in union with the infinite merits

of Jesus Crucified. "Yes, go and rest, I will call you in time", which she did in fact three quarters of an hour before falling asleep in the Lord.

If the Lord sometimes picks a flower in its springtime, he often waits until fall so that he can enjoy its fruit. Thus, after the short life of Sister Legault, we find ourselves in the presence of the long career of a sister, loved by all and seen as a model of a good hospitaller. We remember the young novice named Elisabeth Bonnet whom our founders admitted for profession with so much joy on October 27, 1769. Drawn to our community by a great love for the poor, she was able to realize her ideal as a Sister of Charity.

Of a frank disposition and a very docile personality, she yielded promptly to the will of her superiors and on occasion, she even anticipated it. Her love for religious celebrations inspired her with great zeal for liturgical hymns. Ingenious in works of art, she shared with Sister Prud'homme the merit of having enriched our house with its first reliquaries.

But the work in which Sister Bonnet's greatest devotedness was revealed was that of hospitaller of women. A person of faith, she loved the meek, the crippled, the victims in whom Jesus conceals himself to solicit our compassion and our care. With her, the poor were never refused anything. If the superiors sometimes hesitated to admit a new patient for lack of space, Sister Bonnet kindly reassured them. "Give her to me, Mother", she would say good-naturedly, "I shall find her a little corner; she may not be too comfortable, but she will be free from distress". Her ward was literally filled with the most crippled and deformed cases.

Among the inhabitants of Montreal at that time, were a certain number of black women who were former slaves. A few among them, after spending themselves in the service of masters who were more or less compassionate and generous, received a small sum for personal upkeep; others remained miserably abandoned to the mercy of the public. Many of the latter became residents in Sister Bonnet's ward. Benevolent toward all,

she welcomed them with kindness. The attention she lavished upon them revealed her concern in securing comfort to compensate for the kindnesses of a family. Not content with giving them material care, Sister Bonnet applied herself especially to instruct them in the faith and prepare them judiciously to receive the last sacraments.

The effects of such an ardent charity were not restricted to the poor of her ward. Whoever had access to the hospital had a right to it. One day, a Mrs. Raimbault came to request a place as a boarder. Not having even a small corner for her, Mother Lemaire was about to dismiss her when Sister Bonnet, informed of the superior's situation, hurried to her and said: "Mother, if this woman will accept my room, I shall give it to her willingly; as for me, I'll find a corner." Said so graciously, the offer was accepted and the charitable hospitaller set up her bed in the women's dormitory in the most inconvenient place. To understand the worth of this sacrifice, it is important to recall here that at that time the women's dormitory served as refectory and recreation room.

A painful illness came to end this long life of sacrifice. The prolonged stay of Sister Bonnet in the infirmary was for her companions a new and touching form of edification. Refusing all relief that was not rigorously prescribed by obedience, she eagerly awaited to be reunited with Jesus Christ. "O, Beauty forever old and forever new, when will I see you, when will I possess you?", she would cry in the delirium of her agony. Or again: "My God, come to my aid; Lord make haste to help me."

On March 12, 1824, her wish was granted. She went to God at age seventy-four, in the fifty seventh year of her religious life and in the thirtieth year of dedicated service to women in the wards.

Sister Bonnet left in the infirmary, a suffering companion who would not delay in following her. She was Sister O'Flaherty who had been protected from her childhood by our foundress. Unassuming and shy, this dear sister preferred to remain in the background. God seemed to favor her love of solitude by send-

ing her infirmities that kept her in the infirmary a great part of her life. She lived there in such silence and reserve, occupied such little space, that one was hardly aware of her presence.

This prayerful soul was not afraid of work. When her suffering allowed her some respite, she worked zealously at making church vestments or at instructing young sisters or training them in sacred music. She possessed a very good knowledge of plain chant and directed the choir as long as she had strength enough to do so. She excelled in the art of singing God's praises.

Suffering from cancer, "it was really an edifying sight", say our memoirs, "to see this poor patient who though her flesh was wasting away, though her soul was cruelly stricken, still remained perfectly calm and received with a pleasant smile the sisters who visited or cared for her". During their illness, Sisters O'Flaherty and Bonnet encouraged each other to the joy of suffering, to the desire for heaven, anxious to know which of the two the Lord would call first. When her companion died, Sister O'Flaherty could not hide her sorrow at not being able to follow her. Finally on March 18, these two competitors in suffering were united in glory. With them disappeared the last contemporaries of Mother d'Youville.

However, death had not finished its harvest. On the following May 22, it snatched from the community one of these choice souls which heaven only lends to earth. Charlotte Lemond was born in Terrebonne May 20, 1804, into a family that was both pious and unassuming. Blessed with special graces, surrounded with vigilant care from her cradle, desiring to dedicate herself to God, Charlotte entered our novitiate in her fifteenth year.

The humility, obedience, simplicity, and great love of poverty which characterized her made her companions say to each other: "The innocence of this good soul must never have been tarnished."

At the time of her profession June 22, 1821, the novitiate did not yet have a sub-mistress. The age and the sickly state of the director made it imperative that she be helped in her duties by

a professed sister. She was given Sister Lemond as a helper. It is there especially, that her beautiful qualities were revealed: her gentle charity, her perfect discretion, and her union with God. The secret of her perfection was to go to Jesus through Mary. It was not surprising then, if the Mother of Mercy obtained for her the virtues that her companions so admired in her life. The Blessed Virgin led her thus towards the endless joys of paradise, the intimate union with her divine spouse.

On December 4, 1825, great mourning hung over the country. On that day God called its spiritual leader, Bishop J.O. Plessis. He died suddenly at the Quebec General Hospital where he had retired a few days earlier. "Never had a man been more universally missed", say the memoirs of the time.

Writing to Bishop Panet, his coadjutor, Lord Dalhousie summarized in this way the sentiments of the people:

"The Church has lost a beloved prelate, the people a firm and untiring guardian of their spiritual interests; the king has lost a loyal and faithful subject. As His Majesty's representative in this country, I am particularly happy to acknowledge his continuous attention and his kind behavior towards me. They produced a harmony which existed in all our relationships, and you can imagine that I experience personal grief with the whole country in this circumstance."

This loss could not but be keenly felt by our religious family which had appreciated the untiring zeal and the rare ability of this Prince of the Church in his often difficult task of administration.

The prelate was only sixty-two years old and had occupied the see of Quebec for twenty years. His coadjutor, Bishop C.B. Panet who succeeded him, was ten years older. He wrote: "My great age makes me fear at the thought of the responsibility that is imposed upon me." The bishop in his seventies would nevertheless, govern the diocese for seven years.

This same year the council of the community accepted the resignation of Sister Montbrun as director of the novitiate. For

twenty-seven years she piously and zealously fashioned the new sisters to the austere self-abnegation required for the practice of the evangelical counsels. A loving and devoted mother, she had shared with her novices the numerous tasks which in those heroic times befell their generosity. The memoirs signal among others the upkeep of the linen for the church of Notre-Dame and that of Varennes⁽¹⁾, the upkeep of the vestments of the Fathers at the college and at the Sulpician seminary, etc. left entirely to the care of the novitiate. Furthermore, to increase the merits of his servant, God sent her a long and painful illness which brings one forcibly to retreat and inaction. A tumor on the face, mildly malignant at first, then suddenly activated and spread to the eyes threatening to close them. Becoming completely blind and incapable of doing any work, Sister Montbrun progressed in her infirmity from which she would emerge only by entering into eternal rest. How edifying she had been! And how significant and deep were the teachings she gave! A prey to violent pain, she remained calm and submissive to the crucifying hand of God, never uttering the least complaint, never manifesting the slightest desire. Her nurse had to be keen and attentive to understand the needs of the patient. If someone inquired about her health, she answered with few words and adroitly changed the conversation to inquire cordially about the health of others.

To forget herself in order to devote herself more completely to the happiness of others, such had been the program of her whole life; hence this exquisite politeness gave so much charm to her relationships. Persons from the outside who were least favorable to the sisters' work were won over by the gentleness of her manner. Relatives of the novices felt they belonged to the family when they were in her company. She showed them the same cordiality, the same affectionate interest that she would have shown to her own. But the most tender charity was for her sisters who remained her daughters at heart.

(1) Memoirs of Sister Beaubien.

A bond of unity between everyone, the former mistress excelled in maintaining peace and harmony within the community. As hearts opened to her, minor difficulties subsided as soon as she had cast the light of her counsel and the aroma of her charity.

For four more years this beautiful life of charity would be perfected by suffering. Sister Montbrun died April 5, 1829, at the age of seventy-one and in the fifty-third year of her religious life.

On January 3, 1825 the assembly of sisters councillors presided by Father Roux, superior of the seminary, entrusted the direction of the novitiate to Sister Euphrasie Sabourin, former bursar of the community who was replaced in that function by Sister Marie-Joseph Turgeon.

Until this time, the community had been content with announcing conventual exercises by ringing a bell indoors. This same year, 1825, a second bell was acquired and installed in the small tower of the hospital to announce these same exercises. That bell, the same which still serves today, is loved for the quality of its sound. It came from London. Weighing one hundred and four pounds, it cost 4,809 pounds including transportation and installation.

The year 1826 was noted for an event that was especially painful to our Mothers' piety. During the night of May 29, Sunday in the octave of the Blessed Sacrament, thieves entered the hospital chapel by one of the windows of a covered passageway. Not content with desecrating the sanctuary, they broke the tabernacle door, took the lunula of the monstrance and the sacred vessels and scattered the hosts on the altar.

In the morning, the first thing that drew the attention of the sacristan as she entered the chapel, was the crucifix, then the sanctuary lamp, and various other objects mingled with the debris of the window. Having a presentiment of the crime, Sister Hardy approached the altar full of fear. To join mockery to godlessness or rather, we like to believe, to harken the one last sen-

timent of reverence towards God in the Eucharist, these robbers had taken care before leaving, to place two bouquets beside the profaned hosts. Moved to the depths of her soul, Sister Hardy knelt for a moment to adore her Master so offended; then she hurried to tell her superior about the sacrilegious theft.

It was proper that solemn reparation be made for such an insult to the God of the Eucharist. The rest of the day the Sisters and the poor replaced each other at the foot of the altar to make amends to Jesus in the Eucharist. A resolution was taken that very day that in the future, an act of reparation would be recited each first Friday of the month, in atonement for this profanation and for other insults throughout the world against Christ in the tabernacle.

The following year, Bishop Lartigue sanctioned this pious practice by granting permission to have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the hospital chapel on the First Friday.

As for Sister Hardy, this painful event so affected her that she was unable to continue her role as sacristan. She was replaced by Sister Marie-Angélique Magnan.

In 1825, His Holiness Leo XII, Pope for the past two years, published on May 12, the feast of the Ascension, the document by which a jubilee was granted to the faithful of Rome that year and to the entire world the following year. Begun for Canada on February 11, 1827, on Septuagesima Sunday and ended the following August 11, this jubilee produced abundant graces. Retreats were preached and processions were organized in towns and parishes during the fortnight that each Catholic centre was asked to consecrate to the stations of the jubilee. The sisters and all the personnel of the hospital spent the two last weeks of May at these exercises. On June 2, feast of Our Lady of Grace, they closed this fortnight of recollection, of mortification and of prayer by a solemn dedication of themselves and their poor to Mary, the gentle treasurer of the graces of the Heart of Jesus.

The same year Leo XII gave to the poor of the hospital a special assurance of his paternal affection. By an indult of February 20, 1827, His Holiness placed the orphans under the patronage of Saint Jérôme-Emilien and he granted in perpetuity, a plenary indulgence applicable to the faithful who, having confessed their sins and received Holy Communion, would visit the hospital chapel on the feast of this saint and pray for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.⁽¹⁾ This privilege was obtained for them by the intervention of Father J. Richards, then visiting Rome.

In the following September a precious gift rejoiced the Sisters. Father Thavenet sent them from Paris a piece of the true Cross encased in a silver reliquary. It was the first time that the community had possessed a similar treasure, and when Mother Lemaire appeared in the community room carrying the sacred relic, the O CRUX AVE broke forth from everyone's lips. To honor the relic, divine pledge of our dearest hope, the Sisters carried it in procession to the sacristy where it would be preserved. On September 28, the last Friday of the month, it was exposed for the first time to the veneration of the faithful.

(1) Letter of Father J. Richards, July 20, 1827.

CHAPTER IV

1824 — 1829

Montreal, now numbering a million inhabitants, was a century ago, an active town hardly a quarter of the size it is today. In the centre of activity, the foundations were laid in 1824 for the second church of Notre-Dame, one of the most beautiful works of art of the young city.⁽¹⁾ Open for worship after five years of construction, it would not be completed until 1843. We cannot give here the details of this immense work. Let us say only that undertaken at a time when architecture, sculpture and painting were like the country itself, still in a stage of development, it cost the sons of Father Olier great worries.

These concerns coupled with regrettable conflicts which arose in the district of Montreal by the erection of an Episcopal See, had considerably affected the health of Father Roux, superior of the seminary. On the order of his doctors, he went to France in 1826 to renew his strength in his homeland. He was to remain there two years.⁽²⁾ Father Richards, one of his young confrères, had been assigned to accompany him on his trip. He lavished such affectionate care on him that it was compared to "the attention of a good son towards his father".⁽³⁾

During Father Roux' stay in Europe, important events took place in our community. The summer following his departure, August 27, 1827, Bishop Panet, passing through Montreal,

(1) See the history of "La Paroisse", by Msgr. Olivier Maurault.

(2) Letter of Father Roque to Bishop Panet.

(3) Letter of Father Thavenet to Father O'Sullivan, October 3, 1826.

visited the General Hospital. In an interview with Mother Lemaire he announced that the community would henceforth look to Bishop Lartigue, his suffragan, as its ecclesiastical superior. Mother Lemaire was painfully moved at this disclosure. Along with our beloved foundress and her daughters, she had always hoped that the Institute founded by the Sulpician Seminary would remain its work, while submitting to the jurisdiction of bishops of the diocese.

Since its origin, that is for ninety years, had the community not subsisted in great part by the charity and devotedness of the founders? In its difficulties and for its spiritual guidance, what enlightenment and help had it not received from them? How difficult it was, then, to have these bonds broken, bonds formed by God, it seems, to keep this work in the spirit that had presided over its organization! Absorbed by these thoughts, Mother Lemaire submitted them to Bishop Panet. The prelate could not disregard the righteousness of these representations. He concluded, nevertheless, that the Bishop of Telmesse would be the superior of the Grey Nuns for spiritual matters and specified in a special way retreats, elections, vesturings, and the reception of postulants. For temporal matters, he allowed them to continue to appeal to the superior of the seminary. The spiritual direction was happily left to the two Sulpicians already named: Fathers Sattin and Bédard.

The very day that Mother Lemaire transmitted to the Sisters Bishop Panet's decision, she had to tell them of a determination of another kind it is true, but one that would sadden them.

Bishop McDonnell's visit to the hospital in 1821 had not been forgotten nor had the proposal he made to the Sisters to open a house for the education of young girls in his diocese.

Distance, the predominance of English and the lack of sisters, had prevented our Mothers from pursuing this project. Nevertheless, it was not lost sight of by all. Sister Raizenne, then assistant, had made it the dream of her life. As early as the spring of 1822, she was beginning to realize it. Her plan of institution already traced out, had even been presented to Bishop Plessis.

The prelate's response full of wisdom and moderation, deserves to be quoted in its entirety: "According to new regulations, I must not deal with ecclesiastical or religious affairs of the district of Montreal except through the channel of the Bishop of Telmesse. It is therefore, to him and not to me that you must submit your plan of institution which appears to me to be prompted by a pure and laudable motive. As to the possibility of putting it into execution, I shall say what I think only when the Bishop judges appropriate to refer it to me."

The yearnings of Sister Raizenne momentarily quieted by the seriousness of this reply were stirred up again in 1826 with a new intensity. From that time she was set in her resolve. She would go to this field of action where God was drawing her so strongly despite humiliations, contradictions, physical illness, and moral suffering.⁽¹⁾ Finding no support in the community, trying in vain to get the confessor and the superior to share her views and pursued nevertheless by the thought that she was obeying a call from God, Sister Raizenne spoke of her plan to Bishop Lartigue. He did not formally oppose the project but abstained from encouraging it.

"Your project of foundation in Bishop McDonnell's territory appears to me unlikely to succeed for several reasons. Among others, how could women who know no English do anything in such a district? I do not object, however, that you speak about it to this prelate when you see him in Montreal; but I doubt that he will like your plan".⁽²⁾

Concluding that this was a tacit approval, Sister Raizenne resolved to proceed with the venture even if it meant abandoning forever the house that had sheltered her for forty- four years and Sisters whom she loved as her own family. The execution of her project required co-workers. In the hope of winning over some of her companions, she urged her superior to transmit her views to them.⁽³⁾ Mother Lemaire, who until then had been the

(1) Letter of 1828.

(2) Letter of April 19, 1827.

(3) Letter of October 15, 1827.

sole confidante of her assistant's determination, thought it prudent not to keep the secret any longer. In order not to be responsible, she told the community about the project. A sentiment of painful surprise resulted from this overture. How could such a course be explained in this religious whose exemplary conduct and constant devotedness to the works of the community had earned her so much esteem and trust? Was her resolution to be looked upon as an act of courage or as an act of abandonment? These questions troubled minds and left hearts in anguish.

For any other enterprise, the affection that Sister Raizenne inspired in her sisters would have made her find sister-laborers among them. But in this circumstance, all protested against this act showing rather their attachment to the community. Seeing herself isolated, she cast her eyes on her two nieces, Tharsile and Marcile Raizenne who lived in Saint-Benoit. In their twenties, "pious and well-bred", both were children of her brother Ignace, a notary of the place. As both desired to dedicate themselves to the service of God, the future foundress had no trouble in winning them to her cause. She herself would form them in the religious life and God, blessing her efforts, this small mustard seed would perhaps become a great tree.

Less confident than his sister, troubled by gloomy presentiments, Father Jérôme Raizenne, pastor of Saint-Roch-de-l'Achigan, did not hide from her his perplexity: "You alone with children which you will have to form in two years!", he wrote, "What will become of them if you die before that time? You are sixty-two."

The function of assistant became incompatible with the situation which Sister Raizenne had created for herself in the community. She handed in her resignation on March 13, 1828⁽¹⁾ and a few days later she received from the Bishop of Quebec to whom she had been referred by Bishop Lartigue, the following letter of obedience:

(1) Record of vesturing and profession.

“Bernard Claude Panet, by the mercy of God and the favour of the Holy Apostolic See, Bishop of Quebec.

To all those who will read this. We make it known that answering the request made to us by our dear daughter, Sister Marie-Clothilde Raizenne, assistant of the community of the General Hospital of Montreal, to permit her to leave her community in order to form and establish one in the town of Kingston in Upper Canada, whose principal concern will be the education of young girls, and having assured ourselves that Bishop Alexandre McDonnell, Bishop of Rhésine and our suffragan, would be willing to furnish to the said sister the means necessary to set up such an establishment, we give and grant to our dear daughter, Sister Marie-Clothilde Raizenne, the present obedience to the effect of leaving her community of the General Hospital to establish herself in the said town of Kingston and to live there in the observance of the rules and constitutions which will be drawn up by Bishop Jean-Jacques Lartigue, Bishop of Telmesse, our suffragan for the district of Montreal, under the entire authority and jurisdiction of the said Bishop of Rhésine, consequently dispensing her hereby (on condition that she will oblige herself by simple vows to educate and instruct young persons of her sex) of the special vow that she made to care for the poor and infirm and of all dependence on us where she made the vows.

In testimony whereof we have sent this affixed with our seal, signed by us and by our secretary at Quebec on March eight, eighteen twenty-eight.

Signed: † Bern. Clde Bishop of Quebec,
by the bishop

Signed: N.C. Fortier, priest secretary.”

Free now to pursue her plan, Sister Raizenne legally surrendered the rights, claims, or compensations she had had until then or that she could have in the future in the community. By this act, she acknowledged that she no longer had any link with the community “except” she said, “that of charity, of union in prayer and of gratitude I owe to this community which without any obligation or convention, provided me for my future estab-

ishment in Upper Canada with monies, goods and rights to a sum more than sufficient to repay me what I could have expected from the said house if I had remained there until death and for which I am fully satisfied."

The act, drawn up on March 31, 1828, was signed by J. Bouthillier and P. Rocheblave. The new missionary was eager to go to the field of action which she had chosen, but first she had to suffer many disappointments, many delays. In Kingston, Bishop McDonnell had become gravely ill, and he wrote to her through his delegate, that he was awaiting the arrival of a coadjutor before authorizing the establishment of the Grey Nuns.⁽¹⁾ Then after a delay of two months the prelate, still sick, sent word by the same secretary that it was no longer in his Episcopal See, but in the villages of Sandwich and Amherstburg that he had decided to settle them; that they would be among a population both French Canadian and Catholic, but nothing was yet ready to receive them. ⁽²⁾

The summer must have appeared long to the one whose zeal had been quenched for more than a year. Finally, her renunciation was approved by Bishop Lartigue on October 2, 1828, registered by the notaries Jobin and Bédouin the following day, October 3, and October 9, 1828, all was ready for the departure. Fearing that she would break down under the emotions of the farewell, Mother Lemaire had alleged the necessity of a trip to Châteauguay in order to be away. It was not only her sister and her daughter in religion who was leaving, she was also a relative.

About one o'clock in the afternoon, a coach awaited the travellers in the churchyard. After bidding farewell to the community, Sister Raizenne went to the sacristy to request the blessing of the confessor. Could one believe it! The gentle and good-natured Father Sattin refused her this consolation. Heart-broken, the departing sister sadly entered the church; then, at the door, turning toward the Blessed Sacrament, she prostrated

(1) Letter of April 24, 1828.

(2) Letters of February 26 and of April 2, 1828.

herself one last time to receive the blessing of this divine and unique Consoler. Taking their place beside her were her two nieces and a young English girl by the name of McCord who had joined them as a postulant. Obligated by an order of Bishop Lartigue to remove the religious habit of the community she was leaving for ever, Sister Raizenne brought along a new one which she had herself designed and which she would don only after receiving the approval of Bishop McDonnell.⁽¹⁾

Soon the rolling of the coach could be heard on the hospital avenue which was strewn with the last leaves of autumn. The grey skies and the tall, bare trees put this departure into a framework that was in accord with the sadness of hearts. Then all disappeared from sight. At home the sisters had been aware of this distressful scene. Each one went silently back to her work praying to God to be kind and helpful to the companion who was leaving them forever.

There were no notable incidents to distract the travellers from the emotions of the departure. Sandwich, a little village on the St. Clair River, a short distance from the Detroit River which joins Lake Erie and Lake Huron would mark the end of their journey. The residents of the place received them with great joy and assisted this new work as much as they could. The gentleness and piety of Sister Raizenne, known henceforth as *Sœur de l'Incarnation*, won everyone's heart. Actively she set the foundation for the new work on land formerly cultivated by the early Jesuit missionaries. Her time was shared between teaching children, forming her novices, and supervising the erection of a building destined to house the future foundation.

But this was too much for her sixty-two years and her frail constitution. Just when the construction was being completed and she had hope in the future, after ten months of labor dedicated to the enterprise, a cruel illness struck her and in a few days she was reduced to extremity. Smiling at her daughters who wept around her, and pointing to heaven she said, "My

(1) Letters of February 26 and April 2, 1828.

dear children let us submit to God. May his holy will be done!" Then, having blessed them, she died in admirable peace. It was the feast of Saint Bernard, August 20, 1829, only eleven months after her arrival in Sandwich.

Father Joseph Crevier, pastor of Detroit, informing the community certified that she had died a saintly death. To her brother, Mr. Ignace Raizenne, he wrote: "Your dear sister, Marie-Clothilde Raizenne, is no longer among the living. She had long been ready for heaven. If Providence preserved her to this day, it was only to form a new religious order of which she was the treasure. She is already enjoying the crown of her sacrifices. Join us in praying for her if one should pray for the saints".

Alas, the work that had cost the foundress her very life was not to survive! Shortly after the death of Sister Raizenne, the three young novices who had shared the anxieties and works of this foundation, feeling unable to pursue the good begun, dispersed. In 1870, Tharsile in her old age, sought shelter under our roof. She ended her days in the women's ward in 1877 at the age of 74.

As to the memory of the servant of God, it was not left to oblivion. The veneration she had inspired in the people of Sandwich was such that thirty years after her death, they could still be seen praying at her gravesite. About 1850, thanks to the Jesuit Fathers, the remains of this sister were transferred to the Cathedral in Sandwich and buried on the gospel side.

In our community, Sister Raizenne had been successively sacristan, hospitaller of the men's ward, bursar, and assistant. As sacristan, aided by Sister Anson, her blood sister, she made a set of red velvet mass vestments, a set of white vestments embroidered in silver, and a lovely veil for the Blessed Sacrament. Nearly all the linen palls embroidered in gold or silver were also made by them. The designs were in petit point and the perfection of their work is still admired by experts today.

As a hospitaller, she had been loved as a mother by the poor. In her charity, she used her energy to secure all sorts of little kindnesses for the dear old folks. She did not rely on others for the care of the sick. She served them herself and dressed their wounds as much as prudence would allow her.

In 1821 she became assistant. With this responsibility came the trial. Sister Raizenne's years of apostolate in the service of God, her desire to glorify him and to save souls will, we hope, have merited for her a beautiful reward.

CHAPTER V

1827 — 1830

During 1827 and 1828 the scarcity of wheat in the whole country and its high price subjected the hospitallers to great privations. From October 1828 to the following March, our Mothers had to be satisfied with corn cakes at breakfast and potatoes at the other meals. When bread appeared on the table, through consideration no one dared touch it. Health fared so poorly with this diet that Mother Lemaire sent two sisters to Châteauguay with the mission of urging the fiefs to bring them a part of their wheat owed for the privilege of grinding their grain at the Sisters' mill. To assure the success of their undertaking, the sisters saw themselves compelled to go from door to door. Their rounds brought the hospital three hundred measures of flour to which the seminary added an alms of one hundred measures. Thanks to this help, the sisters and the poor had bread on the table at each meal.

Numerous bereavements marked this period of our history. Two young sisters were called to God early in their religious life. The first was not yet twenty-three. She was Anne-Marie Brayer, daughter of Jean-Baptiste Brayer, dit Saint-Pierre and of Marie Josephte Lanthier. This virtuous couple had already given two children to the Church: Véronique who died as a Grey Nun in 1821, and Jean-Baptiste, a Sulpician priest who was chaplain at Hôtel-Dieu for twenty-three years.

Sister Marie-Anne Brayer, known as Sister Sainte-Croix, was a meditative soul. Her habitual recollection made her rise above

earthly things and kept her constantly united to God. But in him, she was more attentive to the needs of others. This little Sister of Charity seemed to have taken for her motto: To apply myself with joy to please the persons around me. With these beautiful dispositions she died in peace and went to sing in heaven of the mercy of God.

The second, Véronique Mc Dougall, ended her career unexpectedly on April 10, 1829 at age twenty-two after a few days of illness. Gifted with advantages which the world prizes highly, she could have had a brilliant future; but penetrated with thoughts of eternity, she offered to the Spouse of Virgins the glory of sacrificing her preferences. Her spirit of generosity coupled with self-forgetfulness inspired her with great dedication to devote herself to works of charity. Introduced to the joys of voluntary mortification, she welcomed without turmoil, even with gratitude, the numerous humiliations by which God wished to advance her sanctification.

Less than three weeks after her death, on April 29, the community suffered an acute loss in the person of the assistant, Sister Turgeon. Having entered the novitiate in her thirty-second year, she had at heart to compensate for the delay of her oblation by the alacrity of her zeal. Without interruption, her religious life was a witness of sacrifice and of compassion towards her neighbor, because it was especially a reflection of her love for God. This person, absolutely dedicated, had founded her laborious life on prayer as a safeguard for interior peace and a component of fruitfulness. When her occupations allowed her some leisure moments, her rosary immediately replaced in her active hands, her instruments of labor. It was with work, mingled with faith, with love of God and of souls, that our dear Sister gained merit for eternity.

Marie Joseph Turgeon was born in Quebec February 4, 1767. Daughter of Joseph Turgeon and of Catherine Lacroix, she was a relative of Bishop Flavien Turgeon, the future bishop of Quebec.

On May 1, 1829, Sister Angélique Hainault was elected to replace her in the office of Assistant.

But the angel of death was not about to sheath his sword. On October 10, he struck our dear Sister Euphrasie Sabourin amid her little family of novices. Surrounded by her novices whom she gratified with maternal vigilance as she introduced them to the holy works of charity, the mistress was sharing refreshments with them in the afternoon, when she fell, struck by an attack of apoplexy. She had time only for confession and died amid the sobs of her young family.

Having entered the novitiate at eighteen, with a fiery temperament, she soon settled on the great work of her life: to overcome the vehemence of her nature. Twenty-five years of effort softened her disposition to the point that on January 4, 1825, she had been judged capable of teaching others the difficult art of overcoming oneself.

The following October 15, Sister Marie Archange Thuot took over the direction of the novitiate.

During the year 1830, two other graves were opened at a few months' interval. On January 25, Sister Des Anges Emélie Lallier returned to God in her twenty-first year. Imitator of the pure spirits whose name she bore, fearing to soil her beautiful wings by contact with the world, Des Anges had fled to our novitiate to shelter her youth under the garb of a servant of the poor. She lived there six years. Pious and simple, she knew how to communicate the serene joy which radiated from her whole being. As frail of health as she was delicate of soul and heart, she was taken away prematurely by consumption and went to join the angelic choirs and to sing with them the glory of the Most High.

With the last day of June, Sister Marguerite Magdeleine Lemprohon ended her career. She was born in Nicolet September 4, 1790 of Jean-Baptiste Lemprohon and Agathe Fleurant, virtuous parents who though poor, were blest with numerous children. To relieve their distress, Mr. Alexis Beaubien was allowed to take into his home little Magdeleine, then only ten.

Well-behaved and docile, the child profited by good example and was inspired by the advice given her in this Christian family. She was growing up in piety and love of work when a casual meeting brought about by Providence, threw light on her destiny. Gravely affected in her health, Sister Montbrun had been authorized to follow a special treatment under a doctor from Nicolet and the Beaubien family was happy to offer hospitality to the patient and her companion. As soon as Magdeleine had become acquainted with the two Sisters, she wished to become a Grey Nun. A man of faith, Mr. Beaubien encouraged this pious desire and took it upon himself to pay her expenses. Like a real father, he made it a duty to visit her afterwards and to have her visited by her family.

In the novitiate, as in her adopted family, Magdeleine delighted everyone by her simple and courteous manners. Work did not weigh heavily on her strong arms. She gave herself to it without calculating, without choosing, having but one concern: to accomplish as perfectly as possible the will of God, always seen in the work she was assigned. She died at forty having dedicated half of her life to the service of the poor.

These many disappearances carried with them a great number of regrets and delayed the expansion claimed by so many needs. In Montreal, committees of Christian women were already being organized to help poor families and the many orphans whom immigration had brought. In 1827, a society of Ladies of Charity was formed in Montreal. The Baroness of Longueuil was the president. In 1828 Madam Gamelin, aided by a few companions, opened a refuge for a few invalids on the ground floor of a little parish school situated on the corner of Saint Catherine and Saint Laurent Streets.

In the far-away missions, many wished for evangelizers, and numerous prayers were directed heavenward in order to draw toward these underdeveloped areas, women apostles, worthy and holy religious, who would cooperate in their work of evangelization by sharing their sacrifices and their labors. Ten more

years would go by before the Grey Nuns undertook such foundations.

Meanwhile, to fill all the voids, there were only the professions of Sisters Elizabeth Hughes, Catherine Fréchette, Zoé Beaudry, Catherine Harley, Eléonore Thibodeau, and Rose Coullée. But by linking the past to the present, these well known names speak to us of hope. They tell us that in the harsh winter of testing, a harvest was being prepared. The tree of our Institute was thrusting its roots more deeply in order to spread out its branches farther.

Father Sattin, a Sulpician who for fifteen years had been dedicating himself to the spiritual direction of our community was bestowing particular care towards the novices. As soon as a young lady entered the novitiate, like a gardener who takes possession of a plant full of promise, he undertook the formation of this person providentially entrusted to his care. He was careful to gain her trust first of all, so that she would then better accept the advice he deemed appropriate for the correction of her faults. Coming from him, reproaches as well as encouragements were received with gratitude and bore fruit. If he detected in his postulant good dispositions for the religious virtues, he rejoiced, advised her of them, urged her to thank God and to make the most of these elements of holiness. In his mind, "the mission of a Sister of Charity constitutes an apostolate, one of the principal aims of which is to work at establishing the Reign of Jesus Christ in souls".⁽¹⁾

From this stemmed the care he gave to developing in the souls of his novices the love of self-abnegation and of humble virtues, which would increase in them the love of the Savior and the grace of piety. The restraining of curiosity, of empty and thoughtless words, breaking of the will, control of the senses, custody of the heart, detachment from wordly goods, the easy, calm, uninterrupted attention to the presence of God: such were the means he proposed to them to affirm the Reign of

(1) Letter of April 16, 1836.

Jesus Christ in their own hearts and to provide them with the secret of contributing more efficaciously to establishing this reign in the souls entrusted to his care.⁽¹⁾

Each week, Father Sattin gave a conference to the novices. This was a precious moment: everyone enjoyed these teachings full of charity and of doctrine. The lessons that flowed from them opened hearts to the most generous yearning for virtue.

It was with fatherly insistence that the vigilant director stressed the advantages of mutual tolerance, the joys of agreement and union of hearts, the inestimable benefit of discretion in relationships, and the supernatural beauty of various other forms of charity! One day, a novice wearied of living with a companion whose tendencies did not please her humor, complained to Father Sattin. The latter now knowing what to answer said: "Believe me dear child, the one you are complaining about is less imperfect than you are." The lesson was effective; the novice understood that there is greater benefit in knowing and confessing one's own problems rather than those of others. This firmness of the director, always guided by great friendliness, did not alter the gladness of hearts; on the contrary, it promoted it and led to a pleasant serenity which resulted from virtue better understood and more generously practised.

To train the novices to the virtues of their holy state was not the only concern of Father Sattin. He wished to give them knowledge that would facilitate the practice of their various assignments. He demanded that the novices be taught. To encourage this work which he had so much at heart, he compelled himself to give them lessons in grammar. Prevented by his occupations from correcting their work in the daytime, he spent the nights at it. The notebooks entrusted to the traditional little velvet bag, were carried to the seminary by old Berthiaume, and the following day, Father Sattin would carry the corrected exercises which bore shrewd notations in the margins. Then the

(1) Biography of Father Sattin.

novices, eagerly reviewed the corrections which were full of teachings.

Despite these diverse occupations, Father Sattin had found time to finish writing a life of Mother d'Youville. Until then, the community possessed only a biographical sketch written by her son, Father Dufrost, her rare letters, and a few isolated notes collected by senior sisters who were the respectful guardians of her maxims and of her traditions. When Father Sattin came to Canada in 1794, twenty-three years after the death of our beloved Foundress, eleven sisters who had been trained by her and had worked with her, outlived her. When he became confessor in 1818, five of these were still alive. He then had the advantage of being informed by contemporaries of Mother d'Youville, by Mother Coutlée among others, who as bursar and secretary, had lived in the intimacy of the foundress and, thanks to "an excellent memory and a fine judgment" was able to transmit to him precious details concerning this beloved life. It is the ensemble of these facts and memories that Father Sattin had at heart to coordinate for the edification and teaching of future generations.

Inserted in a manuscript volume of one hundred and twenty-five pages, these notes formed a precious source from which Father Faillon drew abundant material for a more complete and detailed life of Mother d'Youville.

With his exquisite refinement, Father Sattin chose July 20, 1829, feast of Saint Marguerite to present to the Grey Nuns the life of their foundress. For them it was like the traditional bouquet reminding them of her virtues and charitable works.

In this same year, 1829, the faithful of Montreal had the consolation of seeing opened for worship their new parish church known today as Notre-Dame Church. It was blessed on June 7, the feast of Pentecost, by Father Roux, superior of the Seminary. On the same day, a large and recollected group gathered in its vast nave to attend the first mass celebrated by Father John Richards, a Sulpician priest. This ceremony was only the prelude of a more grandiose celebration. Through an attention worthy

of their filial piety, the priests of the Seminary had chosen July 15, feast of Saint Henry, patron of their Superior, for the solemn inauguration of the superb edifice. On that day, there was a Pontifical Mass sung by Bishop Lartigue. The sermon was delivered by Father Quiblier. Outstanding among the numerous participants was Sir James Kempt, Governor-General, accompanied by his Sergeant Major and the various corporations of the town.

Father Roux, superior, had arrived in Montreal in the early days of August 1828, with Father Richards and four new Sulpicians: Fathers Philippe Séry, Jean-Claude Léonard, Sauveur-Romain Larré and Jacques Arraud. Always attentive to the needs of our religious family, Providence was preparing for it in these generous recruits, zealous directors and friends dedicated to its works. Thus as early as September 27, Father Séry was named chaplain of the hospital. He performed this function until April 15, 1829, at which time he was replaced by Father Bayle. The latter had arrived in Montreal with Father Quiblier on September 16, 1825.

The same summer of 1829, Father J. Carrière, the future Superior general of the Company of Sulpicians visited Montreal. At this time, Father Carrière was the correspondent of Father Thavenet for the recovery of funds of the Canadian communities and consequently had been communicating with ours for several years. On September 26, he came to celebrate Mass in our chapel, visited the establishment, and chatted with our mothers on abandonment. The latter expressed gratitude for his kind services. Father Carrière corresponded with our community until his death and our archives have preserved his correspondence with respect.

CHAPTER VI

1825 — 1832

In 1823, a disastrous fire reduced to ashes the Basilica of St. Paul in Rome. Pope Leo XII, who shortly after, succeeded Pius VII, did not want to leave buried in its ruins this temple erected to the Apostle of the nations by the great Constantine, and rebuilt and embellished by his successors Theodosius and Honorius, restored again and maintained since, by the sovereign pontiffs. But he was reluctant to impose on the citizens of Rome, this costly restoration. Head of a numerous family, one of the most glorious attributes of which is to be a Catholic, Leo XII resolved to call upon the charity of the whole world. To this end, he issued the beautiful bull of January 25, 1825: "The Apostle of the Nations, has a claim to the love and the generosity of all peoples."

Without delay, Bishop Plessis communicated to the clergy and the religious communities, the pope's encyclical supporting it with his urgent recommendation.

We do not know how our community responded to this appeal, but two subsequent letters exchanged between Father Thavenet and Mother Lemaire testify to the fact that the community responded to this endeavor. Father Thavenet wrote, "For several years, the pope has been restoring at great cost, the church of St. Paul in Rome. He invited the faithful to come to his help by their generosity. The Bishop of Quebec, the Seminary in Montreal, one of the religious communities, have entrusted me with their donations. Convinced that the other

communities must also share in this pious work, I make it a duty to ask them if they would approve that I give an offering in their name: for instance five percent of what is owed them in their settlements, which would be ten francs per thousand."

Mother Lemaire replied, "It is with joy that the community consents to this contribution and we look upon this donation as a homage to Divine Providence who was so favorable to us in the recovery of our assets, and as a mark of gratitude toward you, Father, who have accepted nothing from us." This contribution amounted to 295 francs.

It was about this same time, in 1830, that our community procured for itself new sacred vessels: ciborium and chalice; it acquired the beautiful monstrance on which Madam Tiffin, a noted benefactor of the hospital would have her most precious jewels inlaid in 1881.⁽¹⁾

The community received the tableau of the Holy Family painted in Paris by Bazin according to the plan made in 1770 by our beloved foundress. A sculptor from Montreal, by the name of Finisterer, made the frame. This tableau decks the wall of the sanctuary behind the main altar. It also received books, a collection of pictures of former superiors of the Sulpicians, and finally three large clocks with springs, two of which were provided with alarms. To receive various objects, there was a considerable amount of duty to pay. Mr. David Ross, a non Catholic lawyer intervened with the Governor General, Sir James Kempt and obtained a remittance.

Indebted for these goods forwarded through the care of Father Thavenet, Mother Lemaire wrote to him this message full of gratitude: "I have the honor of sending you the payment of all that I received from you in money, sacred vessels, books, paintings, etc. Dear Father Thavenet, you go to too much trouble for us. I sincerely recognize that I am completely in-

(1) 1 gold pin with diamonds 750.00
1 cross in jet 1250.00
1 diamond ring 300.00
1 ring with two diamonds 150.00

debted to you for all that I have received, for who other than you, would have taken on that responsibility at the cost of so much trouble and trips? Consequently my gratitude will end only with my life. Or rather, if God is merciful to me as I hope, I will show my gratitude even better after my death." Learning later that Father Thavenet even refused a carriage to carry out hospital business, Mother Lemaire expressed her sorrow in this way:

"To know that you deprive yourself to the point of not taking a carriage for the trips you have to make for us, saddens me deeply. For mercy's sake Father, act more freely, remember that we are a community of the Sulpicians and that you are one of our fathers; fathers are not embarrassed with children when they know these are penetrated with respect and gratitude as we are toward you."

The simplicity and the delicacy of this message reveals to us in Mother Lemaire a deep gratitude toward the benefactors of her house. Her kind heart even inspired real sacrifices in order to acknowledge services received. We find a touching proof of this in a letter addressed to Father Thavenet concerning an amount lent by him to Mr. O'Sullivan, lawyer for our institution. The latter in a dilemma, had begged Mother Lemaire to transfer this amount to the hospital's account. On October 15, 1827, the superior wrote:

"I am pleased to forward the amount of all the various monies you sent us with the exception of the 6,465 francs which you had given to Mr. O'Sullivan. Deceived in his dealings, and not receiving the amounts that were due him, he came to me on January 5 asking if I would accept a promissory note for 6,465 francs, and advise you. I accepted it in order not to grieve him and I am disposed not to embarrass him. He was kind enough to tell me that he would be less embarrassed with me than with any other person.

Please be kind enough to put this amount on our account. This kind gentleman renders us such great service that he deserves

that we put ourselves out a little for him. I would not want him to know about it, however; it would humiliate him."

Mr. Michael O'Sullivan, a distinguished lawyer from Montreal, provided professional services gratuitously to the hospital from 1812 to 1829.⁽¹⁾ He has been a sincere and devoted friend. Orphaned from infancy, he had had the advantage of becoming a pupil and protégé of the Sulpician Seminary. His good behavior, his studious attitude and his talent responded to the expectations of his benefactors. Admitted to the bar after brilliant studies, the young lawyer continued to distinguish himself as much by his integrity as by his wisdom and his competence. Never did his success make him lose sight of his benefactors. In public gatherings he delighted in recalling the time when, as a school boy, appearing in the college classrooms poorly dressed, he was gratified with gifts of their charity.

The prominent lawyer, though still young, was elevated to the office of Solicitor-General. In this post he in turn became the protector of the poor. Communities dedicated to charity benefited in a special way from his patronage. Always devoted to ours, he tried to obtain that the English hospital on the corner of Dorchester and Lagauchetière be annexed to ours and entrusted to the management of the Grey Nuns. The opposition of non-Catholics prevailed however, and prevented the project from being realized.

The career of the Honorable O'Sullivan came to an end on March 7, 1839. Father Thavenet wrote of him, "I miss him greatly; I loved him because he had an affection for your community and our seminary and because he was in a position to render great service to our holy faith. I am consoled of this loss, as you are, by the thought that he died a holy death."

In 1840 the community received 776 pounds from his will. The Honorable Mr. O'Sullivan was the uncle of George Selby and grand uncle of William Selby, both doctors practising in our institution. From 1782 to 1832, a period of fifty years, both in

⁽¹⁾ In 1829, Mr. Toussaint Peltier was chosen as lawyer for the house.

turn provided professional services for the modest amount of one hundred dollars a year. William having died on February 3, 1829, his father resumed his earlier function which he continued to fulfill until 1832 at which time old age obliged him to retire.

The preceding year, the death of Father Louis- Auguste Roux, ninth superior of the Seminary and Vicar General, united in the same bereavement the Sulpician priests, the religious and the faithful of Montreal. Since his return from Europe, the beloved superior's health, momentarily restored, had only deteriorated. In view of assuring him complete rest, the council named Father Quiblier vice-superior on August 16, 1830. This measure of prudence did not succeed however, in warding off the illness. On April 7, 1831, Father Roux had an attack of paralysis. He was 72.

Jean-Louis Auguste Roux was born in Provence, on February 5, 1760, of a distinguished family. He studied at the seminary of Avignon, obtained a doctorate in theology at the University of Valence, entered the Company of the Sulpicians in 1784, and was assigned to the seminary in Puy as professor of theology. Bishop de Galard, bishop of the diocese, soon honored him with his trust, named him his vicar-general, and took him as his companion in exile during the terror of the Revolution.

In 1794, Father Roux left his noble friends to go to England and from there to Canada. Named superior of the seminary in Montreal at the death of Father Brassier in 1798, and vicar-general of the Bishop of Quebec for this part of the diocese, he won the esteem of both the clergy and his people. Besides being gifted with a superior intelligence, and being a scholarly theologian, he was also a skillful administrator.

Father Roux was in charge of the seminary when the British colonies to the south, turning against Britain, attempted to draw Canada into this revolt. "It took all his influence to maintain the district of Montreal in the path of duty. The proclamation which he issued had the desired effect. All, with only a few exceptions,

promised to remain faithful, and since then, Britain has not had more loyal subjects."

Mother Lemaire, in her difficulties, before an important decision or a difficult problem to solve, never failed to consult him and always, she received enlightenment, courage, and support.

The beloved superior preferred to preside at profession ceremonies and renewal of vows. He cherished the intimate and supernatural character of these oblations made with so much fervor and so generously ratified.

From 1799 to 1825, Father Roux reviewed regularly the annual report of the hospital's accounts which he signed with a firm hand.

Twenty-six years of paternal interest granted to the work of the Grey Nuns gave him a special right to their gratitude. The community rendered its last duty to the beloved Superior by having a solemn service celebrated for the repose of the soul of this benefactor, and father.

In this same year 1831, great renovations were necessary. Mother Lemaire had them undertaken on May 27. Of the chapel, the only thing that remained were the two walls adjoining the hospital. Father Sattin, a Sulpician priest, drew up the plans for construction and took charge of directing the work. Each morning, as soon as he had performed the duties of his ministry, he would climb the scaffolds and encourage the workers with constant zeal.

This work of restoration had to have the seal of the Cross. It was crushing and almost disastrous for the community. This is what happened. Always concerned with recovering Canadian assets, Father Thavenet had placed considerable amounts in the Bank of Duckett and Morland intending to send the monies to the various communities. Authorized to withdraw from this bank the sum of 4,075-5-0 pounds sterling, Mother Lemaire, on February 9, 1832 made six withdrawals totalling 2,900

pounds sterling in favor of Mr. Young. She received 2,985 pounds, premium included.

A few months later, news arrived that the bank had declared bankruptcy and that the withdrawals were protested for lack of funds. Great was the embarrassment of our mothers. A large part of the money received had already been paid to cover the cost of repairs to the hospital chapel. However, the withdrawals were being protested one after another. There were costs to pay, damages, and interests, and requests for immediate reimbursements. From August 14 to September 4, 3426,14,2 pounds sterling had to be reimbursed that is 441,12,2 pounds for costs in addition to the 2,985 pounds which the community had received.

So as not to interrupt the work in progress, another 150 pounds sterling had to be paid each week for the workers' wages. All this was possible only by making heavy loans. Finally, to top all these worries in the thick of the crisis, Mother Lemaire, exhausted by work and sleepless nights was struck by paralysis.

One can imagine the difficulties that befell Sister McMullen on whom rested in great part, the responsibilities of administration. But never perhaps, was the vigilance of Divine Providence manifested in a more touching fashion. "One day," the bursar relates, "I was greatly perplexed. Payments were due and there was not a cent in the coffers. Not knowing to whom to confide my dilemma, our mother being ill, and too weighed down with worries to disturb her, I turned toward Divine Providence whose solicitude had encompassed our house since its origin. At the very moment when I was taken up in these sentiments of trust and abandonment, Father Sattin called me to the sacristy and gave me a roll of gold coins totalling \$5,741.00 adding that the donor wished to remain anonymous. We learned later that this amount came from Father Ignace Raphael Leclerc, former pastor of Saint-Laurent, near Montreal, where he had been living in retirement since 1826.

Shortly afterward, Mr. Parker, formerly a merchant of Montreal, died in London, willing 500 pounds sterling to the Grey Nuns, a similar amount to Hôtel-Dieu, and another to the English hospital. The following September, Mr. Souigny lent without interest 1,035 pounds sterling to the hospital.

Thanks to this help, the construction was pursued with great activity. By August 25, the roof of the chapel was entirely finished and Jean Augé, the roofer, received the balance on his account of 31,18,4 pounds. As for the chapel, it was painted in fresco by an Italian named Angelo, and considered from then on as one of the most beautiful and most pious sanctuaries in town. The faithful of the neighborhood often came there to pray. On great solemnities, on titular feasts of the house, or on Holy Thursday, for example, it was crowded. To complete the beauty of the sanctuary, Father Sattin had a lovely canopy built at his expense above the main altar. Its draperies could be varied according to the liturgical colors. Finally, on April 14, 1833, Low Sunday, the chapel almost entirely renovated, could receive the Church's blessing. Father Sattin, who had so generously contributed to this restoration, deserved the honor of presiding at the ceremony. Father Larré then offered the Holy Sacrifice amid the prayers and joyful singing of the grateful family. On May 25, the eve of Pentecost, the Blessed Sacrament was finally re-installed in the pious sanctuary where for forty more years,⁽¹⁾ generations of Sisters would go to gain strength in order to carry on, without faltering, their difficult and sanctifying labor.

Since she had become the superior, Mother Lemaire had tried each year to improve the buildings and grounds of the hospital. Through her care, the yards had been raised and leveled, canals had been scooped out for cleansing. Poplar and plane trees had been planted to provide shade and coolness.

⁽¹⁾ In 1871, the Grey Nuns left the hospital at Pointe-à-Callières, birthplace of the Institute, to occupy the new building erected on the land of the Red Cross.

But the bare clay access to the chapel still remained difficult at certain periods of the year. During the great springtime floods or during the torrential rains of the fall, it was truly like a swamp and, say the chronicles jokingly, "one can hardly walk through without losing one's shoes."

By obstinate labor, Father Sattin succeeded in 1833, in building a beautiful avenue in front of the house. It was paved with stones at the centre and bordered with a lawn shaded by maple, willow, elm and acacia trees and lilac bushes.

As a last improvement brought about during this era of restoration, let us mention the construction of a new laundry: a small detail at first glance, one which would be useless to point out were it not that it gives occasion to admire the hard-working habits of our predecessors and their edifying abnegation.

A well, formerly dug by the brothers hospitallers in order to supply their brewery, was still used as a reservoir when it was not dried up by the heat of summer. The rest of the year it had only hard water. Most often, water had to be brought from the river in barrels. Then it was poured into the tubs through a gutter placed on one of the windows of the laundry. Until the barrel was emptied, the window had to remain open and this procedure was repeated several times in the day. One can imagine the inconvenience resulting from this system during cold weather.

The total lack of water even obliged the Sisters about 1830 to go, as in primitive times, to do the laundry at Pointe Saint Charles. Imagine a joyous group of novices and young sisters leaving on a beautiful summer morning, with a senior sister in charge, advancing briskly toward the river. Having arrived at Pointe Saint Charles, each one got fearlessly to work, the younger ones with so much heartiness that rinsing the clothes, wringing them, spreading them out and even folding them on the spot when the beautiful sunshine lightened the work, became almost a relaxation.

Nevertheless, the construction at the hospital of a new laundry, provided with a pump to draw water from the river, large driers and an ironing room, was welcomed with great satisfaction.

By obtaining labor farther south succeeded in 1833, in building a beautiful sewer in front of the house. It was paved with stone at the center and bordered with a lawn shaded by maple, willow, elm and acacia trees and lilac bushes.

As a last improvement brought about during this era of reconstruction, let us mention the construction of a new laundry, a small detail at first glance, one which would be useless to point out were it not that it gives occasion to sketch the hard-work and habits of our grand-fathers and their abiding abode.

A well, formerly dug by the brothers Lathrop in order to supply their brewery, was still used as a reservoir when it was not dried up by the heat of summer. The rest of the year it had only hard water, most often, water had to be brought from the river in barrels. Then it was poured into the tubs through a gutter placed on one of the windows of the laundry. Until the tub had been emptied, the window had to remain open and the procedure was repeated several times in the day. One can imagine the inconvenience resulting from this system during cold weather.

The total lack of water even obliged the sisters about 1830 to get as in primitive times to the laundry at Pointe Saint-Charles. Imagine a young couple of sisters and young sisters leaving on a beautiful autumn morning with a senior sister in charge, advancing briskly toward the river. Having arrived at Pointe Saint-Charles, each one got baskets to work, the younger ones with so much baskets that among the clothes, swaying them, spreading them out and even forcing them on the spot when the beautiful sunshine lightened the work, became almost a recreation.

CHAPTER VII

1831 — 1833

What happened within the community during the long construction period? Various incidents, some serious, others comforting, had come in turn to test the faith of the sisters or to restore their courage. Among the latter, let us mention the profession of Sisters Tharsile Guyon, Marie-Rose Coullée, and Sophie Goulet.

Certain observances were adopted for the benefit of regularity and recollection. Thus, the infirmary, which had not yet had any time set aside for silence had this rule established in 1831 as it is still observed today.⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, the restoration of the dining room caused a custom to disappear, ... that of serving breakfast and light lunches in the community room, a custom that had until then, been tolerated because of the few sisters and the frugality of the menu. After October 13, 1832, breakfast and light lunches were taken in the dining room in silence.

In 1835, upon the advice of Father Sattin, our mothers began to recite the MISERERE after the noon Angelus in reparation for faults committed in the Institute. This is a Sulpician practice; it is said that it was practiced at the Seminary of Issy and in Paris where the seminarians chanted this psalm as they made their way to the Church of Saint Sulpice. It is a monastic custom that the seminary had adopted.

During this time, death continued to take lives. In the busiest time of building, while the sound of hatchet and hammer

⁽¹⁾ Deliberation of April 30, 1831.

resounded throughout the whole hospital, while lime and mortar rendered the cloistered parts of the house inhabitable, Sister Catherine Millette became gravely ill. Mother Lemaire had her taken to Saint Louis ward in order to remove her from the noise caused by construction workers. The trial was not to last very long. July 3, after a few days of suffering, the beloved patient died.

Sister Millette left to her companions the memory of a courteous religious: she was called "a martyr of good-nature". The young sisters lost in her a model, a discreet confidante, and a wise counsellor who always listened to them. Sister Millette loved especially the poor. Seeing Jesus Christ in them, she did not spare them her delicate concern nor her zealous care. Having given the full measure of her charity, she was called to God at age 68.

In 1832, three other deaths put the community to the test. Sister I. Forbes-McDonnell died on July 31 at age 32; Sister Victoire Gravel, on August 20 at age 22; and Sister Angélique Leduc on October 25, at age 38.

Not blessed with good health, Sisters McDonnell and Leduc sanctified themselves in the infirmary where they remained through the greater part of their lives, lending themselves heartily to practices of fraternal charity. Apparently healthier than her companions, Sister Gravel was nevertheless a victim of a premature death. In the freshness of her early twenties, she succumbed to an attack of acute pneumonia.

In this same year 1832, a terrible plague struck the entire country. Here are a few lines extracted from an order which the Bishop of Quebec, Bishop Panet, published on April 9, 1831:

"Our dear brethren, you are aware that an epidemic known as cholera-morbus from Asia, has for more than a year been causing havoc in several countries of Europe casting consternation and fear everywhere and taking a great number of victims. Until now, seeing it only from afar we lamented the hardships caused among the people of the old world. But today, we are

alarmed at the spread of this illness which, according to the latest news, has already penetrated to several parts of England and Scotland and is even casting fear among the immense population of the Metropolis.

This plague appears to be threatening us... Our close relationship with the mother country gives us reason to fear that the spring arrivals will bring among us, the germ causing this contagious illness.

It is true that our provincial legislature, in its wisdom, has spared nothing to save us from such a calamity. By a special law passed in its last session, a health office was established; instructions intended to forestall the effects of the plague will be distributed in towns and in the countryside. But what will these measures of human prudence avail if the God of Mercy does not protect us?

Besides, if we must recognize in this calamity the effects of divine vengeance toward the sinful nations of the world, do we not draw upon us the punishment of a Providence too long insulted and ignored?

A moral contagion, a thousand times more disastrous than epidemics, is beginning to spread over our land and to encroach upon our former customs. It would then not be surprising if the wrath of God brought down upon us a calamity the effects of which have already been deadly for so many.

In these circumstances, with a heart filled with deep sorrow, we invite you to prepare yourselves by a sincere conversion for this time of mourning and affliction. Let us together implore the forbearance of our God, so outraged in this century and following the example of the Ninivites, let each one of us be converted..."

The fears of Bishop Panet were indeed justified. It came to Quebec by the "Carrick", a ship from Ireland, cholera-morbus immediately spread through neighboring parishes. On June 10, we noted cases of the illness in Montreal. It started in such a way that in six days it had taken two hundred and sixty-one

lives. Despite the diligent services of medical experts, health precautions, and all sorts of self-sacrifice, the number of deaths continued to increase in the city. By June 23 there had been six hundred and thirty-two.

The disease penetrated our walls. Ten of our poor, stricken with this malady, succumbed. Of this number was our good gardener, Jean-Baptiste Laforme. By mid-October, the epidemic had ceased, but how many deaths and how much fear it had left in its wake!

Slackened because of the epidemic, the work of transformation of the hospital had resumed its earlier activity when Mother Lemaire, the soul of the whole movement, was struck with paralysis. However rest and good care allowed her to recover from this crisis and to take interest in the affairs of her house. At the end of December she was even able to exchange a few letters with Father Thavenet, and by his intermediary to present to the Holy Father an entreaty in view of maintaining her religious family under the direction of the Sulpicians, a privilege which it was threatened to lose. How much thought, how many prayers this serious proceeding had cost her! Her heart was still full of anxiety concerning this when a letter from the Bishop of Quebec dated March 24, 1833, compelled her to answer a series of questions relative to the same subject. Recovering at this time from a second attack of paralysis, unable now to write but in full possession of her faculties, she dictated to Sister Hainault, her assistant, the replies full of meaning with the aid of which the latter drew up the following memoir:

“Your Excellency, I believe, ignores the calamity that threatens us; our reverend Mother Superior has been ill for four months and in addition to this sorrow, on March 14 she had an attack of paralysis in her right arm and is completely unable to use it; but this has not affected her judgment.⁽¹⁾ She has dictated in our presence, Sister Hainault, assistant, and Sister

(1) Certificate dated March 30th.

Thuot, these replies the literal meaning of which I shall try to transmit to your Excellency.

Q.1 — Since the establishment of your house as recognized by Letters patent of June 3, 1753, recorded in Superior Council on October 1, (1 vol. Edit.) of the same year, what rule was given you by the bishop of Quebec and in what year?

R. — We have never received a rule from the bishop of Quebec. Before we came together, at the time when Madam d'Youville was laying the foundation of her community in the town, she received for herself and her companions, from Father Normant, superior of the Sulpician Seminary in Montreal, and our superior, an abbreviated rule contained on three loose sheets (*feuilles volantes*) and which was sufficient for the time. I must tell you, Your Grace, concerning Father Normant, that he is truly our founder. It is from him that we received the land that we presently occupy, with the reservation that the seminary has retained its ownership and that we cannot dispose of it without his consent. As founder, he started our community and by reason of this, he has always helped us, as have his successors, when we were in need, and they have never ceased to help us in every way.

At the time of our establishment in 1753, the little rule of which I spoke, was approved by Bishop Pontbriand and continued to be observed by our sisters. Later, it served in drawing up the rules and constitutions which were judged necessary for us. At the request of Madam d'Youville, Father Montgolfier developed it further and rendered it more complete. According to the wish of His Grace, he provisionally approved the contents until it pleased His Grace to confirm it. These constitutions have since been approved by Bishop Hubert on February 20, 1790, at the request of the community. At the time, the bishop reserved the right to give clarification on the vow of poverty at a later date.

Q.2 — What changes or what modifications were introduced in the said rule, and in what year?

R. — There have been no changes. The rule observed today is within a narrow margin of that which has been observed since the foundation. A few minor customs have been introduced for a better service to the poor and the orderly conduct of the household, but these are of no consequence and have been in use almost since the foundation.

Q.3 — Was the superior of the Seminary of Montreal ever established as major superior of your community, independently from his position as vicar-general of the bishop of Quebec?

R. — What I can say on this subject, is that without knowing whether or not it was because of his position as vicar-general, the superiors of the Sulpicians in Montreal have always been superiors of our community and have been entrusted with its direction; equally for spiritual matters, we have always been under the guidance of the priests from the seminary. Let me add to this, that during a visit from Bishop Deneau, conversing with him in the presence of our now deceased mother about certain matters, he made to me this reply: 'You have a father in the superior of the seminary; address yourself to him; he knows better than I do what you need.'

In another private conversation which I had with Bishop Plessis a few years before his death, he urged me strongly to establish a ward of deaf-mutes. I told him we could not do this without consulting our superior, Father Roux. 'Consult him', he answered, 'and tell him how I wish this to happen.' Was this not considering him as a major superior, Your Grace?

Q.4 — Since the establishment of the episcopal district of Montreal by the court of Rome, have you always been under the dependence and the direction of His Excellency, the Bishop of Telmesse, especially appointed for the spiritual rule of the said district?

R. — Our house came under the dependence of His Grace, the Bishop of Telmesse, only in 1827, when in an interview I had with Bishop Panet, I told him of the earnest desire we had of remaining ever under the administration of the superior of the

seminary of Montreal, he concluded concerning this affair, that the Bishop of Telmesse would be our superior for spiritual matters; he specified in a particular way, retreats, elections, vesturings, the admission of postulants. For temporal matters, we were to continue to be directed by the seminary; this has been observed to the present day.

Your Excellency, I have tried to answer to the best of my ability all the questions addressed to me.

Reread to the superior who declared that these were her true and sincere sentiments."⁽¹⁾

This memoir was clear proof of Mother Lemaire's attachment to the principles of Sulpician direction. It also proves the Sisters' fidelity to the customs and observances that had ensured to the community the preservation of its spirit.

After having given to her dear religious family, this pledge of her maternal devotion, feeling incapable henceforth of confidently watching over its interests, the beloved patient thought only of being discharged of the burden of her great responsibility. On September 3, 1833, this wish was granted. At her request, Bishop Lartigue accompanied by his secretary, Father Ignace Bourget, came to the hospital to receive her resignation. The following day, His Excellency returned, assisted by the same secretary and Father Sattin, to preside the election of the new superior. Sister Marie-Marguerite Dorothée Beaubien, former pharmacist of the community, was entrusted with this office.

As for Mother Lemaire who was increasingly unwell, she had to be admitted to the infirmary. A message from Father Thavenet, this father and devoted friend who had helped her so generously during her administration, consoled and fortified her.

"I note with sincere sorrow that you are paralyzed" he wrote. "Have courage good and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, you are on the right road to paradise. Yet a little while and you will enter into the joy of your Lord, you will see this good Master whom you served for so long in the person of the poor. You will con-

⁽¹⁾ Memoir of April 1, 1833.

template his adorable face with all the virgins who have preceded you in this holy abode"(1).

More than four years were yet to go by before Mother Lemaire was called to this ineffable vision: four long years of silence, of retirement, and of obscure suffering. In seeing this woman, formerly so remarkable by her talents and her extraordinary energy, gradually reduced to powerlessness, one could not help but feel sad while yet adoring the hand of the Sovereign Artist who builds up and tears down, shapes and reshapes as he pleases, the vessel he uses for his plans of mercy and love.

At the eventide of her life, the dear patient had disintegrated. The paralysis, having reached her brain, threatened to extinguish her beautiful intellect. However, she was able to benefit from the help of our holy faith. Finally, on April 12, 1838, her triumphant soul returned to God while she left to her sisters admirable examples of charity and a full apostolate. She was seventy years of age.

Numbering among these valiant persons who believe they have done nothing as long as there is something yet to do, Mother Lemaire had, throughout forty-eight years, spent without respite her energy and strength to improve the state of finances, to promote the works of the Institute, and to maintain them in the spirit of devotedness and simplicity which had characterized their beginnings.

Since the days of the foundress, the superior had been named for life. Authority, thus facilitated by long mandates and supported by lessons of experience would, it was believed, be more forcefully and better respected. Circumstances showed that age and infirmities, in lessening physical strength, sometimes altered the activities of the mind; hence the necessity of going against this custom. For this reason Bishop Lartigue during his pastoral visit of 1835, ordered that in the future, the election of the superior, the assistant and the mistress of novices would take place every five years. This has been practised since.

(1) Letter of October 5, 1833.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL OF MONTREAL
UNDER
MARGUERITE DOROTHEE TROTTIER-DE-BEAUBIEN
FIFTH SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE INSTITUTE

CHAPTER VIII
1833 — 1836

Let us now follow Mother Trottier-de-Beaubien to whom the General Hospital was entrusted. As we follow our beloved predecessors, our paths will be enlightened by their wisdom, will blossom with their virtues, and be scented with their sweet memory.

Nicolet is the place of her birth. On January 29, 1798, she received the grace of Holy Baptism with the names of Marguerite Dorothée. It seems that the gentle Saint Francis de Sales communicated to her soul something of his serene tranquility; as far as we can remember, we find her to be calm and gentle, radiating kindness and charity.

Her father, Mr. Alexis Beaubien, was related to our foundress through Mr. Pierre Boucher, governor of Trois-Rivières, and grandfather of Madam d'Youville. Like this beloved Mother, he loved the suffering members of Christ, with the divine feeling of respect for the poor, the holy value of almsgiving which would characterize Mother Beaubien and make of her an agent of Providence for the needy.

The following fact admirably depicts the kindness of this man. One night suddenly awakened by the barking of his dog, Mr. Beaubien got up, and looking carefully around the buildings, he surprised a man near the gate, filling a bag with potatoes. It was one of his employees. "You poor fellow", he said with painful surprise, "why steal them? You know very well that I would not have refused to give you some. You are offending God! Take them this time, but in the future, ask me for them." Ashamedly, the thief withdrew more terrified by the dog's growling than of his gentle master who restrained the beast by the collar in order to prevent him from biting.

The home that sheltered the infancy of Marguerite Dorothée was abundantly blessed by the Lord: in turn, ten children like "young olive shoots" took their place around the table of this patriarchal family.

To this blessing, the good Master would add another, the cross of a separation: his virtuous wife, Marguerite Durocher, was taken from him by death. Some time after this bitter trial, Mr. Beaubien considered selecting another companion in the person of Madam Angélique Gaucher-de-Louisière. Following this union blessed by God, Marguerite Dorothée found a new mother and greeted with joy the arrival of eight new brothers and sisters. Three of the latter were to follow her in religion: Sisters Normant and Youville, and Reverend Mother Saint-Alexis of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.

Thanks to the good influence of rural life and to the lessons of virtuous parents, Marguerite's soul opened easily to practices of faith and of virtue which were honored in her family. Beggars knew the way to the wealthy home and the name of the joyful giver, always so happy to go out and distribute alms to them.

The adolescent already had a presentiment of God's call and she spoke to her sisters and her companions of the love of God and the apostolate. "What joy it is," she would say, "to be able to spread the love of God." The heavenly Father who wanted charity to blossom in Marguerite, gave her simple and modest

attractions and a devotedness which made her ever eager to help those in trouble.

Having met the Grey Nuns through the intermediary of Sister Lemprohon of whom we spoke in Chapter five, Marguerite believed she had found the home toward which she was drawn by grace. She prayed, sought advice, and obtained her admission to the novitiate on July 12, 1816.

It was with a generous soul, a candid disposition and her youth full of promise that Miss Beaubien entered the novitiate. It seemed that God awaited her. She gave way to joy and was experiencing the happiness of the elect who had attained the place of their choice, when she suddenly experienced a trial. The distance from her dear ones, the persistent thought of home entertained in her heart a deep loneliness which she could not overcome until the day when through the administrators, God made known to her his definite call to the holy vows. From this moment she felt confident, and on July 17, 1818, the future spouse of Jesus was ready to complete the sacrifice. Above this tempest, a love had hovered: that of the poor! Helping them was a duty she fulfilled with great happiness during her novitiate: it would be that of her whole religious life.

Entrusted with the care of orphan girls, the young sister used her time in alleviating their lot. How eager she was to take them in! What care she gave them! It is with difficulty that she consented to part with them, especially when she foresaw that at the door of the convent, dangers awaited them. She believed that nothing should be neglected in order to protect the innocence of children. She instilled into these young souls wholesome thoughts, practises of charity and uprightness and piety that would be their safeguard in the future.

After twelve years of constant and generous self-sacrifice, Sister Beaubien became the pharmacist. The charity with which she acquitted her duties set the sisters at ease and they came to her in trust. She did not wait for her patients to report to her; she went to them with cordiality, inquired about their health, and then, if necessary, tried to remedy the situation.

Sister Beaubien was also good to the poor whom she treated with respect. One day when she was preparing herbs with great care, a young sister struck by her assiduous application to her work, asked her curiously to whom this drink was destined. — “To one of our elderly persons”, the pharmacist replied. She took advantage of the occasion to remind the novice with what spirit of faith one must serve the poor in whom Jesus dwells.

This humble religious “who believed she was good for nothing”, except to live unrecognized and in a childlike submission to her superiors was placed at the head of the community at age thirty-five, after fifteen years of religious life. She succeeded the courageous Mother Lemaire whose administration was surpassed only by that of the foundress. We could have told her, “Be reassured, dear Mother Beaubien; your soul was prepared by God so that the poor might find in you all the beautiful gifts which Providence wishes to give them.”

Father Thavenet expressed to the newly elected superior his congratulations in the following terms: “I congratulate you, not for being superior, but because you were judged worthy of being superior. I pray to our dear Mother Coutlée, whom I believe to be in heaven, to obtain for you from God the spirit of wisdom which filled her soul and which she had so abundantly passed on to our dear Sister Lemaire. May it be transmitted from this excellent superior to you who succeed her.”⁽¹⁾

The new superior seemed in fact to possess the virtues of our early mothers: a deep piety, a great love of the rule, an exemplary fidelity to customs, a frankness that did not tolerate any trickery or double-dealing, an admirable simplicity and love of the poor. The poor, for whom she spared nothing. Like the poet she was able to say:

“The good things one has, death takes away;
The good things one does, God returns.”

Louis Veuillot.

(1) Letter of November 26, 1833.

At the beginning of her administration, Providence provided this compassionate mother with a chance to exercise charity. In the springtime of 1834, a great famine spread desolation in the country. Entire families were reduced to eating herbs and roots. Sister McMullen, then at the Manor of Châteauguay, was moved at the sight of so much misery and she begged Mother Beaubien to indicate to her by what means she could help these hungry families. The latter, initiated from childhood in the saintly practise of charity, instructed her without delay to visit the landholders and to distribute wheat to all those she would find in need.

The inquiry conducted, Sister McMullen spent weeks at the mill distributing measures of flour to the most needy and she was moved with pity on seeing the gratitude and the tears of these good people. "We did not know that the Grey Nuns could do such beautiful things", they said to each other. Thus the distribution had the double effect of relieving great distress and of making the faith appreciated.

Another winter, a severe famine raged in Montreal; Mother Beaubien urged the bursar and the cook to give generously to the poor who would come to their door. They obeyed joyfully as they invoked Divine Providence. Many families were thus assisted without being indicated in the books.

Concerned with the spiritual advancement of souls entrusted to her and desiring to assure them the consolation and enlightenment that come from a visit of the head Shepherd, Mother Beaubien begged Bishop Lartigue to grant to her religious family the benefit of a canonical visit. His Excellency yielded to this mark of trust and respect, by his letter of February 13, 1835.

"Jean-Jacques Lartigue, by the mercy of God and by grace of the Holy Apostolic See, bishop of Telmesse, suffragan and vicar-general of the bishop of Quebec for the district of Montreal etc.

To our dear daughters, the Sisters administrators of the General Hospital of this town, greetings and blessings in the Lord.

Our residency of fifteen years in this district to govern it spiritually in the aforementioned capacity, has oftentimes put us in a position to appreciate the good works of your holy Institute and to rejoice interiorly at the regularity that always marked your house for the glory of God and for the edification of your neighbor. We can truly say to your credit, that the primitive rule has generally been kept faithfully in your community. If some among you did not always observe it with the same perfection, it was because of human frailty which, as long as we shall be in this body of clay, will make us yearn like Saint Paul for the happy state where we shall love God forever and always with the same ardor. However, thanks to the God of goodness, the principal spirit of your sublime vocation has remained to this day. If he who searches hearts and finds blemishes even in his angels, finds some in your community, it is undoubtedly to counterbalance the virtues without which the most beautiful actions have no value in his sight.

It is not so much the urgent necessity of reform in your house that persuades us to make the proposed canonical visit, as it is the desire that we have, according to the great apostle, to be affirmed and consoled by the faith that is both in you and in us. It is because, according to the precept which Jesus Christ gave us, we are obliged to try in a special manner to know the flock which the Supreme Shepherd of souls has entrusted to us, to visit it, to lead it to the wholesome pastures of his law. The flock must also try to know us, to receive us as the ambassador of the Divine Master, to follow us in the ways of holiness. It is also because it is right that being the most noble part of the Lord's flock, you have at least as great a part as other faithful in the spiritual graces which the episcopal visit always brings to hearts that are well disposed. Moreover, it is because several among you have desired this visit and have earnestly requested it."

The prelate ended his letter by indicating certain formalities required for the visit which he set for the following February 17.

On that day, Bishop Lartigue, accompanied by Father Bourget, his secretary, and Father Sattin, chaplain of the Sisters, went to the chapel of the General Hospital about nine in the morning. His Excellency began with a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the examination of the holy oils, the holy relics, and the cemetery, then he dedicated two days to seeing the Sisters, to visiting the wards, and to examining the accounts and other departments of the house.

On February 21, he read to the community assembled his first ordinance by which he granted that "the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament would be given in the chapel of the General Hospital on each first Friday of the Month". Among other regulations, he ruled that "May 3 on which is commemorated the Finding of the Holy Cross, would be considered the titular feast of this chapel and that as such, it would be celebrated as first class with octave; that September 14, feast of the Exaltation, would be the second titular with the rite of double major; and finally that the Sacred Heart of Jesus whose feast is celebrated the day following the octave of the Blessed Sacrament, would be regarded as the first patron of the General Hospital and Saint Jérôme Emilien as the second patron."

A few days were left for the administrators to examine the rules which he intended to establish or to modify. On April 21, he read another letter to the community concerning certain changes, from which we have extracted this passage:

"The election of the superior, the assistant and the mistress of novices shall take place every five years, with the option of maintaining them in office their entire life with the authorization of the bishop. The councillors shall be appointed for life after being chosen among the professed sisters and they shall have precedence over the others after the mistress of novices⁽¹⁾.

(1) In 1851 Bishop Bourget, responding to the wishes of the councillors, ruled that in future they would keep their ranks of seniority.

The election of the other officers shall be held each year during the first week of October by the superior along with the assistant and the mistress of novices. Each professed sister shall have the liberty to make each year a six-day retreat, according to the judgment and the will of the confessor. Two or three sisters shall help the hospitallers serve the meals. The earnings and profits from handiwork done in the wards shall be remitted to the business office contrary to the freedom the hospitallers had had until then of disposing of the revenues for the needs of their respective wards."⁽¹⁾

By a subsequent rule, he established "the practice of reciting the *Salve Regina* after the noon *Angelus*, for the seminaries of Paris and of Montreal in conformity with the pledge of the brothers hospitallers to pray for these two institutions; that of the daily recitation after the rosary of one *Our Father* and one *Hail Mary* for the sisters who were travelling, three invocations to St. Anthony of Padua to perpetuate a devotion dear to our early mothers, three invocations to St. Amable to beg his protection against fire."

The spiritual interests of the Institute were not the only concern of the Bishop's attention. He also had at heart the preservation of the Sister's health and he intended that his advice in this matter be as faithfully followed as any other. In the early years of foundation, the rising bell rang at five o'clock. After a few years, the increase in personnel and of work prompted the sisters to request the authorization to rise at four thirty, and this was granted. In the course of this visit, Bishop Lartigue, judging that the interest of health demanded that the rising time be restored to five o'clock, gave notice to the administrators assembled in council, of this unexpected order: "As early as tomorrow, Sisters, you will ring the rising bell at five o'clock as in previous times."

Mother Lemaire, who despite continued pain had attended the session, replied with respect: "Your Excellency, it was with

⁽¹⁾ Ordinance of April 21, 1835.

the approval of the bishop of Quebec that we changed this" — "I also am a bishop", the prelate replied, "and I order that rising shall be at five o'clock".⁽¹⁾ In the same session he ordered that a dish of meat be served at the Sisters' breakfast twice a week during the summer and three times a week during the winter.

He abolished the custom of taking recreation when the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu would be clothed with the religious habit or make profession. This custom dated back to the fire at the hospital in 1765 in memory of the hospitality offered to our mothers by these good sisters and to perpetuate the sharing of joys and sorrows that had grown between the two religious communities.

On December 28 the pastoral visit was terminated and Mother Beaubien, with a letter received the previous day from His grace, assembled the Sisters for the official reading. "I was greatly edified," wrote Sister Chénier, "by the attitude of deep respect with which our venerable Sisters assembled in the community room listened to the ordinances of the devoted Pastor." Both a resumé and a complement of the advice given in the course of the visit, this letter contained all the rules dealt with and all the observances that were to contribute to the sanctification of the Sisters of Charity. It was preserved with respect and transcribed into the manual of Constitutions then in use in the Institute. In 1851 the main points contained in this pastoral letter were inserted, partly in the new edition of the Constitutions and partly in the book of customs.

In the course of this episcopal visit, the account of which we did not wish to interrupt, a death had occurred in the family ranks. On August 28, 1835 Sister Marie-Joseph Sabourin had gone to her reward at the age of forty-two.

This generous worker had distinguished herself by an obedience characterized by simplicity and gentleness. Discreet

⁽¹⁾ This change obliged the Sisters to make the beds of the poor only after breakfast. There were various other inconveniences which in 1844 changed the rising time to four thirty. Finally in 1897 the chapter ultimately set the rising time at five o'clock, and mass was deferred to six fifteen to allow the sisters to make the beds of the poor before the celebration.

in her proceedings, she spoke little and always in a low voice, not through timidity but through a holy consciousness of the presence of God. The extent of her charity was not diminished by this. On the contrary, she drew from this habitual communication with God a rare ingenuity to render to her sisters the most loving services as a cook, services which she fulfilled with all the love of her charitable and kind heart. The twenty-two years of her religious life may be summarized in three expressions: "To forget, to deny and to devote one's self".

Having courageously completed her mission, she could confidently appear before Him at whose service she had spent her life.

CHAPTER IX

1835 — 1837

September 24, 1835, the sacerdotal jubilee of Father Rocque, Sulpician, Vicar-General of the diocese since 1806 and director of the college for twenty two years, was the occasion for solemn celebrations yet unheard of in Montreal. On the morning of this feast, four hundred students of the jubilarian, led by a band, joined the hundred and seven priests assembled at the Seminary to escort the hero to the parish church. The procession filed forward in the following order: the jubilarian accompanied by two priests, Bishop Lartigue with his assistants and the clergy in surplices. "It is impossible", we read in a narrative of the time, "Impossible to describe the sight of this impressive procession. Never before had Notre Dame Church had such a gathering of clergy and faithful within its walls. The jubilarian celebrated Holy Mass with visible emotion. This emotion overtook the whole assembly when he bowed his venerable head before the bishop and on his knees, renewed the promises of priesthood he had made in his youth. Father Aubry from the seminary in Quebec and a former student of the jubilarian, spoke eloquently of the grandeur of the priesthood and of the meaning of this beautiful celebration."

According to the custom of the time, there was the offering of blessed bread. That which was presented to Father Rocque by his former students was worthy of the circumstance. Of a stupendous height, it was surmounted by an imperial crown and

surrounded by six columns from which floated a ribbon carried by six pupils each representing a distinct profession.

On the banquet table was a cake made with great care by the Grey Nuns. It was a small token of the gratitude which the good services of the jubilarian had inspired in them.

In his capacity as vicar-general of the bishops of Quebec, Father Rocque had a close relationship with the community. He was its counsellor in the absence of Father Superior. It is thus that during Father Roux' trip to Europe in 1826, Sister Raizenne, concerned with elaborating her plans for the Detroit foundation, had several times recourse to his wisdom. His cautious advice always inspired in the future missionary a great deference for the directors providentially set in charge of counseling the community and a childlike gratitude for the religious family from which she had received so much.

Mother Beaubien kept in mind advice received from Father Rocque concerning the government of the community, advice which could be thought to be from the pen of Saint Francis de Sales or that of Father Olier so true was it that persons given to the conduct of the Holy Spirit have a remarkable similitude of tastes and views and are guided by the same principles. With these two holy founders, Father Rocque believed that the advancement of an Institute and the sanctification of its members required that those who govern act in the very spirit of Jesus Christ, according to his teachings. A spirit of faith, justice, prudence, courage, kindness; such were, in his view, the principal elements which constitute good administration. Were it not for its length, this code of religious legislation⁽¹⁾ with which all good superiors should be penetrated, would be worth quoting. However, we take the liberty of extracting these few passages:

“To govern with a great dependence on the spirit of God, because it is his authority that one exercises and his place that one

(1) Father Rocque's advice is inserted in full in the book entitled: “Lettres et avis spirituels des Messieurs de Saint-Sulpice”.

holds. This dependence requires that one does not undertake anything without having seriously considered it in his presence, without having consulted him in prayer, in order to know what to do and how to do it. This single rule well observed, by making government Christian and supernatural, would cause one to avoid the most common faults. Ill-humour, self-gratification and an impetuous disposition mar everything and stand in the way of God's blessings.

To be firm and persistent in having the rule and the constitutions observed but to be very kind in the manner of approach. Jesus Christ gave us the example in the way of leading his apostles, and the saints have followed this model attentively. Kindness wins and opens hearts and allows one to experience the sweetness of the Lord's yoke and disposes one to carry it courageously. Severity, on the contrary, causes one to rebel and become cold".

Always in conformity with the spirit of Father Olier, he adds: "Less activity in business and more trust in God".

"In reforms, fear greatly the desire of a greater good which very often leads to real evil: reflect carefully before going through with it".

Finally, not forgetting the place that the poor must occupy in the life of a Sister of Charity, the man of God insisted on the importance of serving well the privileged members of Jesus Christ, and fully imbued with the conviction that the care given to souls is more important than that given to bodies, he earnestly recommended that they be well instructed in the faith. "Small virtues do not shine forth but they shed a fragrance. They are the violets of the soul." According to our memoirs, "Father Rocque was among those modest persons who, without scintillating, enlighten, convince, and spread about them the love of Jesus Christ. Such was the intensity of this man's interior life that the very sight of him prompted one to recollection. His advice always sprang from the supernatural and imparted contentment and peace".

Father Rocque lived only five years beyond the jubilee of his priesthood. He died May 3, 1840 in his eightieth year.

Following her predecessors, Mother Beaubien professed deep veneration, gratitude, and respect for the society of the Sulpicians. It was a joy for her to invite these priests to our feast days. She asked them to give to the Sisters from time to time, pious conferences in which the spirit and precepts of Father Olier came through. A life of faith and Christian teachings, to live as a victim, a life sacrificed for the salvation of souls, spent in serving one's neighbor, a life hidden in God with Jesus Christ, holy lessons drawn from the mystery of the Cross: such were the simple and profound topics they chose for the humble servants of the poor.

It was a great joy for Mother Beaubien to offer, along with the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu and the Congregation of Notre-Dame, a beautiful monstrance for the parish church of Montreal⁽¹⁾. It was the token of deep gratitude owed to the Sulpician Seminaries of Montreal and Paris, which had so generously given one of its members to work at recovering our funds. Father Thavenet, a Sulpician, never accepted for himself the smallest reward, saying with humility "that in rendering these small services to the Canadian establishments, he was happy to contribute in some way to the glory of God and to have some part in the good that these establishments would do for our holy faith."

In the last days of May 1836, there was great activity around the hospital. At the suggestion of Father Quiblier, superior, the Grey Nuns were preparing to erect a repository for the Blessed Sacrament. Never yet had such a favor been granted them. They wished to prepare a beautiful throne for the Divine Guest. To judge the work entailed, it suffices to recall that in order to level the grounds, certain spots were raised by eight to ten feet. To do this, one cartload of earth followed another for eight days. Finally, when on the morning of the feast, the Blessed Sacrament appeared in the street leading to the chapel, decked with

(1) Our share was 593,72\$.

greenery, the fragrance of ferns and lilacs rose toward the Host along with the scent of incense. The repository sparkled under the double radiance of light from the candles and the glare of the sun. The decorations, the weather, the procession, all harmonized to give this ceremony a seal of majesty and infinite peacefulness.

Only one of the Sisters was absent from this feast. It was Sister Marie-Angélique Magnan detained in the infirmary by a serious illness. Confined to a bed of suffering which would soon become her bed of agony, in perfect union of heart and mind with her companions, she had been content with throwing on the path of her Eucharistic God the mystical flowers of a tender piety and a complete surrender to his adorable will.

“To press forward for what is most perfect” seemed to be the motto of this spiritual person. While sacristan for many years, people used to say “she was cut out to be a sacristan”. Her spirit of faith and her reverence for sacred things was manifested everywhere. She never allowed herself to become familiar with the sacred. All was sacred to her. Her attitude, when she spoke to priests, was a witness to her sincere humility and deep respect.

This Sister brought to recreations her share of mirth and heartiness, but she listened more willingly than she spoke. Recreation over, she entered into deep recollection and her work became, so to speak, a continual prayer. This attention to God gave to her actions the seal of perfection which earned for her the praise awarded formerly to Blessed Berchmans: “She does ordinary things in an extraordinary way.”

Sister Magnan’s charity led her to clothe herself in humility. Never did an unkind word fall from her lips. She spoke well of everybody and followed carefully the rule of St. Francis de Sales, viewing the conduct of others favorably and excusing all that could be excused. If conversation dwelt on the faults of others, she appeared saddened and if she could not end it, she discreetly withdrew.

Everyone admired the simple tastes of this true servant of the poor, her care in putting aside all superfluity, in utilizing even bits of thread, and her preference for worn objects. Sometimes it was even difficult to recognize the initial material. In her true contempt of self, she considered herself the least among her sisters and remained at their disposition for the most humble services. She obtained to be relieved of her services as Sister administrator. Sister Catherine Forbes replaced her.

June 10, 1836 this worthy religious died at age 43 after spending 19 years in religion.

On the 23rd of the same month, another bereavement struck the family of the Grey Nuns. That day, it lost in the person of Father Sattin, a beloved father, who for eighteen years had been their spiritual guide. They had a new protector in heaven.

Our chronicles preserve of him an edifying record truly worthy of being cited here almost in its entirety:

Father Antoine Sattin was born in Lyons, France, February 10, 1767 and studied theology at the seminary of Saint Irénée, where he was noted for his habits of work and practice of virtue.

Admitted to the priesthood March 19, 1791 on the eve of the Reign of Terror, when the Revolution was about to guillotine the king and to force priests to choose between exile or the scaffold, he was forced to leave the mother land to seek refuge and security on Canadian soil, amid a population subject to Britain, but whose hearts remained attached to France.

Having arrived in Montreal September 1, 1794, with nine confrères from the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, Father Sattin was employed in parochial ministry and in teaching at the College of Montreal. In 1815, he accepted to share with Father Chicoisneau, then aged and ailing, the duties of chaplain of the poor and of the children. On the death of this confrère which occurred unexpectedly in 1818, he took on the direction of the entire personnel of the General Hospital.

In full maturity, Father Sattin who was 45 combined rare prudence with great zeal and inexhaustible charity. He was admirably gifted to fulfil fruitfully the delicate duties of chaplain of the community.

He believed as did the saints in a religious institution, God's interest rests largely on its spiritual leaders. He wished to be for ours, a guide who was fervent, devoted, and united to God, a living model of the virtues he hoped to see grow in others. To obtain this standard of excellence, he lived his life in total dedication to the interests of God and souls. He was eager to lead others to holiness. His special charism was to fashion them to austere and crucifying practices of Christian self-abnegation. He used such tact that under his conduct they underwent, almost without noticing it, an amazing transformation and in a short time they were inclined to practise all sorts of sacrifices to deepen interior life.

Everything in this man of God reflected kindness. This kindness burst forth in his conversations where it always dictated the right words to gladden and cheer the heart. It was manifested in the courtesy full of compliance with which he welcomed the great and the small. Hence the praise so willingly given using homonymic terms: "This priest is really as smooth as satin for everyone."

Exact and punctual, he was always on time wherever duty called him. After having heard the confessions of the personnel at the hospital, he would go to his confessional at Notre Dame Church where numerous penitents awaited him. To restore peace to a soul through the powerful words of absolution, was for his priestly heart an inexpressible joy. Ill at times, or exceedingly tired, he never rebuffed anybody. He forgot himself, putting aside all other occupations in order to be at the disposition of anyone who came to him seeking peace, enlightenment, or encouragement to virtue. Father Sattin's condescension never changed into a feeble tolerance which weakens souls and paralyzes their progress. If he was obliged to have a difficult but necessary truth accepted, he could be courageous and firm

while still remaining merciful and kind. A knowledgeable guide, he had made it a rule never willingly to leave anybody in need or harassed by a troubled conscience. He could not tolerate melancholy always so detrimental to progress. As soon as he detected the slightest symptoms of it in anyone, he sought the cause in order to dispel it without delay. In what concerned moral suffering, nothing escaped his clairvoyance. If a sister appeared timid, the prudent director encouraged her to come to him in confidence. He helped her in her difficulties for fear that centering on discomfort she might lose her peace of mind, become discouraged, and wind up seeing the yoke of religion as a burden.

Believing that joy is an element of holiness, Father Sattin wanted people in God's service to be glad, persons always disposed to face their trials as a means supplied by God to sanctify them and to elevate them from worldly things to heights where He alone is all that matters.

We mentioned elsewhere what care he gave to the formation of novices and how, in view of stimulating their fervor, he devoted himself to their academic training. In order to accelerate their spiritual progress, he went so far as to preside at meditation, thus gently initiating souls to this holy practice: contemplation of the divine Master.

The poor and the servants also had a large part of this saintly priest's attention. Such was his friendliness for them that each one believed he was his favorite. And yet, Father Sattin always remained a great enemy of partiality and allowed preferences only for the poorest and most forsaken.

According to him, the young orphan girls ranked in this category. His solicitude towards them was more vigilant and fatherly. He was interested in their well-being, gave them frequent exhortations, taught them catechism, and prepared them with great care to receive the sacraments. In his visits to their ward, he sometimes made inquiries into the conduct of these dear children. When he was informed of some misdemeanour, his countenance, usually serene, became solemn: "My child,

how you grieve me!" he would say to the accused. The latter, falling immediately to her knees, would spontaneously express regret, and promise to amend her conduct.

Father Sattin honored as his patron St. Anthony, the hermit. January 17 became the occasion for great rejoicing at the hospital. On that day, he claimed the privilege of treating the poor of the house. His delight was to go through the wards to see both the children and the elderly joyously assembled around tables filled with goodies.

In 1835, the sisters, deeply grateful for the zeal Father Sattin had manifested for the embellishment of their church wished to give special splendor to his feast. Putting into practice the lessons they had received from their master, they decorated and lit the chapel with a comparable taste. Part of the night was spent in these preparations, for they wanted to surprise him. Great was his astonishment when on the morning of January 17, the carriage, contrary to custom, took him up the avenue that led to the chapel which was already flooded with light. Aware of the secret, Father Léonard his confrère did not allow him time to protest but directed him towards the main entrance both doors of which opened to singing voices for the occasion.

Alas, the splendor of this feast would mark the decline of a beautiful life just as the splendor of a sunset marks the end of a beautiful day. From this moment, the health of the beloved priest, already shaken by toil, continued to decline. On November 2, Father Romain Larré, a French Sulpician native of the diocese of Bayonne, who had lived in Montreal for the past eight years, became his assistant. For four more months Father Sattin tried to practice his ministry at the hospital. On Thursday, April 7, he came for the last time. All the sisters surrounded him with love and respect. A smile of contentment spread over the altered features of the beloved patient. "Can a father feel happier than when he is amid his family and surrounded by his children?" he said with his usual kindness. Someone insinuated that they hoped he would soon resume his duties. "No, sisters", he replied; "I am no more of an age to be useful to you. Time

and illness have sapped my strength and I no longer have the necessary energy to direct a community." One last time he blessed his spiritual family who was never to see him again.

The condition of the beloved patient grew worse. An almost continual drowsiness in such an active person seemed to portend an impending paralysis.

At recreation, he no longer shared in the conversation but seemed lost in semi slumber. One way of drawing him out of this state was to name the Grey Nuns. "And what about the Grey Nuns?" he would inquire with great solicitude.

On June 1, the inevitable happened. A massive stroke removed all hope. The beloved patient languished in this state until June 23 at which time, assisted by the sacraments, he went to receive his reward. Father Sattin was in the 70th year of his age and the 46th of his priesthood.

His funeral service took place at Notre Dame Church on June 25. June 27, as a token of gratitude, the community had a solemn memorial service celebrated in its chapel. Everyone spoke in praise of the deceased. Enough could not be said about the virtues and the kindness of the famous director. Each vowed to keep in mind and practice the advice received from him. These teachings left in souls such a deep mark that thirty years later, Father Bonnissant, a Sulpician, stated that "in the community the influence of this pious, learned and zealous priest could still be felt."

CHAPTER X

1836 — 1838

The chronicles of 1836 record an event of deep significance for the future of the church of Montreal: the canonical and civic establishment of the district as a diocese and of the town as an Episcopal See. By Papal brief of His Holiness Gregory XVI dated May 13, Bishop Lartigue was named titular bishop.

This promotion became, in the mind of the bishop, a new reason to tighten the bonds which already closely linked him to the clergy and the faithful of the diocese. "Our divine Savior", he told them in his inaugural address, "had long called us, despite our unworthiness, to exercise, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, the duties of the apostolate. Well now, the Holy See has united us to you by still closer bonds by establishing your town and your district into a bishopric."

The enthronement ceremony was held with great solemnity September 8, feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary.

Bishop Provencher who came from Manitoba to congratulate his dear friend was able, during the celebration, to make a delightful conjecture concerning the future of the Church by which this new era was placed under the protection of Mary as it established the foundation of the church of Jesus Christ. We quote:

"Your Excellency, the town of Montreal which witnessed your birth, today sees you become its chief pastor. Through a happy

coincidence, the day of Mary's birth is the day your Excellency becomes the first bishop of Ville-Marie.

The burden of the episcopate which you have carried for more than fifteen years will not become lighter. Under another title it will become heavier.

As a successor to the apostles, you can expect to share in their crosses. That is the way that led them to heaven. However, your Excellency, if after considering things divine, we move to human reasons, we find more than one consoling point of view. Your Excellency, on this day, you become the first Bishop of Montreal. This city with its rich district, includes the finest part of Lower Canada and I do not hesitate to say the most beautiful diocese of North America."

The prime concern of the first bishop of Ville-Marie was to name a coadjutor who would help him in the work he would undertake for the advancement of this beloved church. He did not have to search very long for this helper who was so necessary and so desired. Providence had prepared him by sending to him a young clergyman full of zeal and whose modesty and reserve were coupled with perfect refinement. He was Father Ignace Bourget from the parish of Saint-Joseph-de-Lévis, Quebec. His father, Pierre Bourget, and his mother, Thérèse Paradis, were farmers who were deeply Catholic and firmly steeped in their faith. Ignace inherited the family virtues. At the minor seminary in Quebec, he had been perceived by his diligence at work, his piety, and his charity. At the major seminary, young Bourget was a model for his schoolmates. Named professor at the College of Nicolet in 1819, he became in 1821, secretary to Bishop Lartigue. The zeal and the devotedness with which the young Father Bourget (ordained to the priesthood November 30, 1822) fulfilled the duties of his ministry won for him in a short time the trust of his bishop and the affection of the people. And so, Bishop Lartigue was eager to take as his coadjutor the one who for fifteen years, had been sharing his labors. Rome complied with the request of the bishop. Both clergy and faithful applauded this act of public gratitude.

The newly elected bishop received the episcopal consecration on July 25, 1837. The consecrating pontiff, Bishop Lartigue, was assisted by Bishop Flavien Turgeon, coadjutor bishop of Quebec, and Bishop Rémi Gaulin, coadjutor bishop of Kingston. In the sanctuary were the Most Reverend Alexander Mc Donnell, Bishop of Kingston; Benedict J. Fenwick, Bishop of Boston; and about one hundred and forty priests. The Grey Nuns who revered Bishop Bourget, their ecclesiastical superior for the past eighteen months, shared wholeheartedly in the joy of the occasion.

On Thursday, July 27, they were delighted to receive his first blessing. Accompanied by Father Larré, p.s.s., chaplain, and by Father Porlier, pastor of Terrebonne, the new bishop came to the hospital to receive the vows of Sisters Ducharme and Desjardins. A retreat given to the community beforehand by Father Larré and Father Roupe had prepared the two elect to commit with special fervor their final oblation to God.

In the fall of this same year, 1837, four members of the Institute of Christian Schools came to open a house of their congregation in Montreal. They were Brothers Aidant, Adelbertus, Euverte, and Rombault. At this time, it was exactly a century since Brothers Denis and Pacifique had tried to establish the Congregation of Saint-Jean-Baptiste de la Salle, in Montreal at the request of Brothers Jeantôt, Dumoyre, and Turpin. By right of their inheritance from these last hospitallers, the Grey Nuns greeted with joy, the beginning of this work which had been for Brother Charon himself, the object of much research and much concern.

In the course of the summer of 1836, the construction of a new manor at Châteauguay was begun. The first plan had been simply to repair the old building, but it was soon discovered that the old walls would not support a new roof. It was then necessary to demolish the building completely. Finished in the spring of 1837, the new manor was blessed by Father Marcoux, pastor of Sault, accompanied by Father Labelle, pastor of Châteauguay. This edifice, completed at the cost of great effort

and sacrifice was destroyed in the political uprisings of 1837 and 1838. We shall not describe here this violent phase of our national history. We note only that from that time, Canadians were able to exercise freely their right to choose responsible representatives.

We believe it would be of interest to insert the account written by one of ours, Sister Mc Mullen, who, as bursar and administrator of the seigniory of Châteauguay, had to suffer from the difficulties which arose on this occasion. To understand this account, let us say that on the order of Doctor Robert Nelson, then in the United States and on his promise to form "a contingent of American volunteers", a party had been formed in this area under the name of "Frères Chasseurs" (Brother hunters) in view of overthrowing the English government and obtain the independence of the French Canadians.

An episode of the year 1838

related by Sister Mc Mullen

who was the leading heroine⁽¹⁾

For some time, political problems were vigorously debated and there were rumors of a revolt. A first attack had been made, it was said, on the eve of All Saints and the following night there was to be a mass uprising by the population to break free from the "Crown" and to declare their liberty. The Americans would lend a helping hand.

In this expectation, I wrote brief prayers to Mary Immaculate which I placed in each window. Night was coming on; wind-driven rain was beating against the window panes. Inside as well

⁽¹⁾ Mother McMullen was more familiar with English. She wrote the account in French and had it corrected.

as outside, all was very dismal. Moments appeared to me like hours. Finally, toward eight o'clock, I informed the employees about the impending plot. I urged them to restrain themselves reminding them of the harm which could result from acts of insubordination. All responded with frankness and loyalty. On my request to mount guard in turn, the foreman volunteered. I wrote to Mother Beaubien while my companion slept in a neighboring room. About two in the morning, convinced that no one would come in such a storm (the rain was torrential), I went to get some rest. But behold, accelerated knocking was heard. The foreman noticed a group of armed men gathered at the kitchen door threatening to break in. Sister Jauron came forward trembling as she whispered: "The Patriots!" She arrived in the kitchen before me and found it already invaded by the rebels. One of them came toward her brandishing a sword as if to threaten her. The poor sister withdrew.

Although I did not feel very brave, I came before them well determined not to be the first to break silence. Finally, the leader came forward with his hat on his head and his weapon in hand. "Sister", he said, "we are coming to get your arms". Pretending to ignore their stupid plot, I answered: "Our arms! Why?" — "To defend our faith and this is being done at this very hour in all of Canada." In any other circumstance, a smile would have been the best answer to such a request. For the moment, I thought it prudent to save their pride. I insisted on obtaining some information. His reply was insignificant. Seeing that I was not inclined to give in to their outburst, they made threats. Not wishing to impel them to carry them out, I gave the order to the foreman, much against my will, to hand over the arms. He returned with the three guns we had. He had no sooner released them than one of the most imprudent of the band cried out: "That is not all, we want." "Some money?" — "No, it is your men we want." Then turning to the foreman: "Get dressed!" he ordered in an angry tone.

I tried to protest... One of the rebels more sensitive than the others, said to me: "Don't worry Sister, we shall leave you the

man you wish to keep." These words were of little comfort. I could hear these men brutally commanding our employees and crushing them with abuse.

The man who had tried to show some sympathy now tried to impose silence, but he succeeded only in obtaining louder shouts. "Don't be afraid," he said as he looked at me with pity. "In twenty-four hours, it will be all over". "Yes, yes" I replied, "when you have your head bashed in." "That could well happen to us", he murmured.

During this exchange, the famous warriors severely rebuked our employees who were taking their time to follow them. Impatiently, one of these, André Caron, retorted sharply: "You want to make me march, but you shall never have my signature." Roused by this remark, one of the most fiery of the group threw a gun on his shoulder and said: "March, if we don't have your signature, we will have your liver." The youngest of our employees, who had a fearful disposition, looked at me with pleading eyes as if begging me to intercede for him. I indicated to him through my tears that it was of no use.

In this ridiculous squad, I recognized citizens who had at one time shown me much esteem; others whom I had many times helped. At the entreaty of my defender, they left me our foreman. The new soldiers were no sooner equipped than they were roughly pushed to the door and the batallion moved toward the river. It was a pathetic sight.

During the three-quarter-hour that this was going on, Misters Trudeau and Fissiault were huddled in a corner of the attic, trembling with fear. In the noise and confusion, they thought they had heard their names but they got off with a good fright. As soon as the kitchen was evacuated, they came down and deliberated about the means to be taken for protection. To keep them at the manor would be to expose them to further search by the rebels; to send them away would be to deprive us of their help. I settled on the latter choice preferring to risk my life rather than that of these good people. Equipped with a few supplies, accompanied by the foreman, they retired to the woods

very sad at the thought of what the outcome of this revolt might be.

The rain had stopped. The gray autumn sky foretold a gloomy day. I went out on the grounds to see if all was in order. A gunshot which appeared to come from Beauharnois startled me. I was about to go in when I suddenly heard our foreman being called loudly from the other side of the river. It was his sister, Mrs. Poineau, who alone at home with seven children, was desperately worried concerning the noise she had heard during the night from Saint Bernard Island. She wanted to cross the river to inquire about her husband and her eldest son, both employed at the manor. When she was told that both had been taken away by the Patriots, her grief was extreme. I mingled my tears with hers, and after trying to comfort her, I had to go to bring words of sympathy to Mrs. Trudeau and Mrs. Latour, both also left sole guardians of their homes. It is impossible to describe the joy and gratitude of these good women, still under the terrible fear caused by cries heard a few hours earlier.

On my return to the manor, after a light breakfast which I had difficulty swallowing, I prepared to hear Mass at the village, for it was Sunday. Sister Jauron wanted to come with me. I told her she was too weak for such a journey on foot through such horrible roads. She urged me then to take the carriage. "Impossible", I told her. "We cannot hitch any of the horses!" Seeing her torment, I had pity on her and allowed her to come along with a few girls from the house. As for me, I went on ahead after promising to warn her of any danger.

I had hardly gone thirty steps beyond our property when I heard a woman calling from her doorstep: "There will be no Mass because the rebels are assembled near the church." I thanked her for telling me but, nevertheless, continued on my way, determined as I was to reach the village. I was travelling this way through a fine rain that was beginning to fall when a young girl addressed me and wept as she told me that her father had been taken and brought to Saint-Jean; also that about a hundred other rebels were about to leave for Sault Saint-Louis.

I took the time to comfort her; then I hurried so as to arrive before the departure of the squad. I wanted to ask for the release of the old man, Mr. Poineau.

When I arrived at the village, I went immediately to inquire from Father Labelle, the pastor, if there would be a mass. As his reply was in the affirmative, I sent a young girl to Sister Jauron to inform her that she could come to church without apparent danger. In the meantime, I negotiated with the commander of the rebels for the freedom of our old servant. Suddenly, I recognized one of our employees forcibly mixed with a group of armed men awaiting the order to leave. I asked him to lead me to the commander; but there was no commander. "What a strange thing", I thought, "to dare without a commander, to face disciplined troops!" My guide led me to the other side of the bridge where Mr. Poineau had been taken with another group of Patriots. Recognizing among them one who appeared to have a certain influence, I begged him to return the elderly man to me. "Surely Sister," he replied. Believing I had already won my cause, I signalled to the old servant to follow me. "Not so fast, Sister, not so fast! We have to do things in an orderly manner". Calling one of the supposed leaders, he said, "Say Thibert, don't you think it would be better if we gave the old man to the sister?" "Yes, yes," they all cried. "Yes, Sister, take your old man away with you."

Such a clamor drew the attention of those who were farther away and, everyone wanting to know what was going on, I drew near to my protégé who knew not whether to laugh or cry. Finally, one of them, of rather doubtful authority, wanting to bring about his prompt deliverance and mine, began to shout: "Let the Sister pass! Let the Sister pass!" Immediately, the path was opened and each one removed his hat and said: "Pass Sister, pass!" I was able in this way to go through the crowd. I thought my way was clear and I began to walk faster when I heard somebody in the crowd shouting: "Lead the Sister!" and I found myself walking behind the old man and between two foot soldiers. Escorted in this way, I found the distance great. When I

had gone past the bridge, I thanked the two escorts and tried to persuade them that I no longer needed their services. But they replied, "We are doing our duty. We have orders to lead you." "That is unnecessary, I am going to church to hear Mass." "We will go with you up to the door." I had to give in. Having arrived at the doorstep of the church, I turned to thank them again and to dismiss them. "Are you pleased with us?" — "Very much so!" I entered the church happy to be rid of these two troublesome fellows ... but no sooner had I knelt that one of them approached and whispered in my ear: "Tell me Sister, are you pleased with me" — "Yes, yes, and thank you!"

Soon the pastor mounted the altar steps. Because of the difficulties of the moment, he said only a low Mass. About thirty persons at the most were present. With what fervor we begged the Master to spare his people and to give them peace!

As we came out of the church, a good woman noticing my ex-soldier half-dressed (the rebels had not given him time to put on his jacket) came to offer him one with short sleeves. Seeing him before me dressed like this, with arms dangling, a red tuque on his head, and with the shuffling step of a sixty-year-old man, I thought: "Surely, such soldiers will not cause England to tremble with fear."

At the boundary of the village, I had to enter the home of a non Catholic woman who had sent me a message to go to see her without delay. She was distressed about the fate of Mr. Ellice, lord of Beauharnois, taken prisoner with several companions and driven that very morning to Châteauguay, tied up with them in carts. Thinking that my title as administrator of the Seigniorship of Châteauguay also exposed me to serious trouble, this good lady warned me to go away from there. To this purpose she insisted that I accept the services of her husband. I was greatly touched by her charity, thanked her, and promised that in the event that it became necessary, I would willingly accept them.

I then immediately set out for Saint-Bernard Island by cart with two young girls and my aide-de-camp. As soon as I arrived

on the Island, the foreman came to ask me if Misters Trudeau and Fissiault could come out of the woods. I told them to call them and soon the two came into the manor happy to be able to warm themselves. Mrs. Poineau for her part, had no words to express her thanks to me for the return of her old soldier. Her happiness, however, was not complete. What had become of her son, her poor Joseph? Would he ever come back? And her voice was lost in sobs, while I tried to encourage her. Sister Jauron went about serving dinner, for it was past two o'clock. We were hardly at table when a vehicle moving along the far shore drew our attention. It was our good pastor who was coming to the manor to beg hospitality for his mother and his sister. The rebels who had left in the morning for Sault Saint-Louis had been taken prisoners by the Indians, he said and according to the alarm given in the village, these fearful enemies were advancing toward Châteauguay. In order to spare his mother from some painful scenes, he entrusted her and his sister to our care. We welcomed them wholeheartedly. I also wanted to keep the pastor but he preferred to hurry back to the rectory saying that in the event of disturbance he wanted to be among his parishioners.

Terror reigned in the village. The women and children abandoned their homes to hide in the woods. The sick who could not flee cried with desperation. Ellice and his companions held prisoners, were shut up in a small room with windows and shutters closed and sentinels on the watch to prevent any communication. Young girls, mothers with their children, one of whom had advanced consumption, came to ask for refuge. The manor already sheltered forty persons. On seeing the number increasing, I admired the great kindness of Divine Providence who, through one of our good tenants, had supplied us with a hundred bushels of potatoes three days earlier. We were getting ready for the night when the foreman announced the arrival of our pastor. For everybody, it was a joy and a relief. We chatted a few moments about the events of the day and we recited the evening prayer together. Everyone retired; the men in the barn for fear of another search by the rebels, the women

in rooms and corridors, where camp-beds could be set up. We did not get much sleep that night.

The following day, banking on a bit of calm, I went to the village with Mrs. Labelle who wanted to take care of certain precious things at the rectory and the sacristy. On the way, we met a group of rebels. Some were armed with guns, others were equipped with scythes, hoes, rakes, etc., the sight bordered on comedy, but I did not dare laugh.

We found the rectory in darkness and almost deserted. The pastor, having arrived before us, was busy packing the sacred vessels, the church vestments, and various other objects he wished to entrust to us. With our carriage well-loaded, we returned to Saint-Bernard Island toward noon. We had been awaited with impatience and were bombarded with questions. As for me, despite much cause for anxiety, I tried to reassure everyone.

While I was thus trying to calm fears, there came another alarm. "A group of rebels is at our door!" someone cried. I went to the window and what a pleasant surprise! Instead of rebels, I recognized Mr. Joseph Trudeau, brother of Mr. André Trudeau, our prisoner for the past three days, Baptiste, the farmer from Pointe Saint-Charles, and Mr. Desmarais. Immediately, the personnel of the house gathered around them. We could not ask enough questions concerning our community. Mother Beaubien's delicate attention in sending us these consoling angels brought tears of gratitude. But there is no joy here below which is not followed by trial. After a much animated conversation on the part of everyone, the farmer gave notice to me of my recall to the Mother House with Sister Jauron. Dumbfounded, I could only stutter: "It's impossible to leave for the time being. If mother only knew the state of the manor, she would not recall us." — "Well Sister, do as you please. As for me, I have been ordered to bring you back, dead or alive". There was no more hesitation. I obeyed!

To collect the papers and valuables of the seigniory, to prepare a basket of supplies for the crossing, to give the most

important orders to the foreman and to our woman of trust, all that took but a few moments. I begged Mrs. Labelle not to abandon the manor and entrusted its stewardship to her. The conviction that I was obeying a formal order of my superior was my safeguard and my comfort.

We met the pastor who was again arriving on the island. Surprised at our unexpected departure, he wanted to return to the rectory, but we succeeded in persuading him to remain at the manor. Recognizing by his recollected attitude, that he was carrying the Blessed Sacrament, we received the blessing of Jesus and left. To top our misfortune, our best oarsmen had fled to escape an attack by the rebels. Composed of eight persons, our little caravan remained in the hands of inexperienced men. This was one more reason to abandon ourselves entirely to Divine Providence.

We had been rowing for half an hour and all was going well when we arrived where the current was strongest. There we were beset by a violent windstorm. The angry waves dashed against our frail canoe threatening to submerge it. Terrified, our women uttered cries of distress. For a moment, I feared the danger. Recovering my self-assurance, I took over the helm, straightened the canoe, and begged Sister Jauron to recite the Litany to the Blessed Virgin. Everyone answered fervently. For a moment the danger seemed to have disappeared. But soon, the wind rose with such violence that the rising waves lifted us three feet above the ordinary level of the lake and cast us into the depths which threatened at each instant to close upon us. A death-like silence reigned among the crew. The thought that these good people would perish with us overwhelmed me. "My God", I sighed, "You know I did not expose myself to this danger to do my will, but yours!"

The wind continued to blow and was pushing us towards Beauharnois, the principal camp of the rebels. We remained about an hour without advancing, concentrating all our efforts at remaining on the spot rather than letting ourselves be carried away to that place. We were about forty rods from the shore

and our oarsmen were exhausted. Seeing that we could not resist any longer, we tried to raise a flag of distress but our movements almost caused our canoe to capsize. No hope remained for us and night was falling. With renewed fervor, we turned toward heaven. I was then inspired, presuming the permission of my superior, to promise a mass of thanksgiving in honor of Mary Immaculate if she saved us from shipwreck. Disheartened, I regained courage suddenly. Guided by this star of the Sea, I turned the canoe towards the little island of Sainte Geneviève⁽¹⁾ near l'île Perrot to which the current had brought us.

After a quarter of an hour, we finally landed on this much desired island. We thought our canoe would break on the stones, so strong was the wind that pushed it against them. Just as I was setting foot on land, a wave broke on the shore causing me to slip and fall into the water with my bundle of papers. Luckily, Mr. Trudeau was able to retrieve it. This new difficulty overcome, we advanced toward the centre of the island shivering from the cold. While we looked for a suitable place to spend the night, our employees looked for kindling and dry wood to build a fire, but they returned discouraged. Everything was soaking wet. We were forced to be resigned to our fate. But then we thought we heard a voice in the distance. Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Laramée set out in the direction of that voice, and after wandering a long time in the darkness, through swamps and brushwood, they discovered a canoe drawn up on the shore and a short distance away, two men were huddled at the foot of a tree. Several times they called to them but received no reply. Surmising that they were fugitives, Mr. Trudeau tried to persuade them not to fear; they were not their enemies but travellers who had escaped from shipwreck and were looking for wood to make a fire for the women and the Sisters who were part of this caravan. There was another moment of hesitation and the young men finally approached. They told how in their attempt to escape from the rebels, they had broken their canoe and had landed on this island from which they had no hope of

(1) Today called Dowker.

escaping alive. By the admirable care of Divine Providence, one of them had some kindling material on him and Mr. Trudeau had what was needed to strike a fire. Dead branches and wood from fallen trees were hurriedly piled up near the place where we had settled and we soon had a good fire and could dry our clothes and get warmed. Our meagre supplies were insufficient to satisfy everyone's appetite. It did, however, appease the hunger of those who had not eaten since morning. Thanks to the mirth which prevailed, they were found to be delicious.

The recitation of the rosary and night prayer followed. Our thanksgiving rose fervently to God while the wind blew through the tall trees. We were getting ready to take some rest when the rain threatened to extinguish our beneficial fire. This caused more worries and more fatigue for the men who had spent part of the night bringing in fire wood. As for us, blinded by smoke and drenched by the storm, we found the night very long. Finally, about six o'clock, the rain stopped and daylight appeared. We got into our canoe with the two young men. More trouble! We could not put out to deep water because our load was too heavy. We had to come back to land, unload a few boxes and leave one of the young men in charge, promising to come back for him as soon as possible.

When we returned to our canoe, large flakes of snow were falling. Sick at heart, I took my place at the helm. It took us more than three quarters of an hour to cross. About nine o'clock we were on firm ground. Great was our joy. As for me, I felt so happy, that all the hardships experienced in the past three days appeared to me only as a dream. We directed our steps toward the home of Mr. Lynch which was three quarters of a league (three kilometers) from the church of Pointe Claire. We did not have to talk long before he opened the door for us. Our pitiable state was such as to arouse his compassion. Mrs. Lynch brought us before the fireplace and prepared a plentiful breakfast. Furthermore, Mr. Lynch sent two men to get our boxes on the island, along with the young man who must have found the time very long.

About one thirty we took leave of our hosts who were too happy to have served us to accept anything in return. Sister Jauron and I settled on a bale of straw at the bottom of a cart. Thus exposed to the wind and snow I was soon affected by the cold and began to shiver so badly that having arrived at the Village of Pointe Claire, I thought it prudent to get off at the rectory. The good pastor, Father D. Ricard, already aware of our adventure, gratified us with solicitude and kindness and even condescended to put his carriage at our disposal.

Despite all possible diligence, we arrived at Tanneries only after seven o'clock. We could not go through the gates of the town without having our baggage examined by officers, according to the formalities required in this time of trouble. We went to Mr. Paul Deschamps, a friend of the community, who succeeded in obtaining a passport for us. At the gate, we heard the call of a guard on duty: "Who goes there?" — "Grey Nuns", I answered, and the gates opened. On several other occasions, the same question was put; finally about eight o'clock we threw ourselves into the arms of Mother Beaubien and of our sisters who had been sad at heart thinking we had been lost forever.

While this dear family was celebrating our return and joining in our thanksgiving, Châteauguay remained a prey to painful disturbances. The Blessed Sacrament was brought from the church to the manor. The house did not have a chapel at this time so the Sacred Hosts were exposed in a room on a table lit by a tallow candle. Another Bethlehem had been opened to the Prince of Peace. One lady, inspired to go and keep company to the Blessed Sacrament, had no sooner opened the door of the oratory that she was stifled by dense smoke. The candle had set fire to the chair supporting the table and had almost completely destroyed it. The alarm was given and the servants rushed to the scene in time to forestall a conflagration.

Under the constant threat of the arrival of regular troops, people continued to come in considerable numbers to the manor where they thought they would be in safety. The rebels

themselves, so brave when they were far from their opponents, were beginning to realize their foolhardiness.

It appeared urgent to them to get rid of their prisoners and to bring them to the main camp. They left on Saturday, November 12, with their seven hostages: Ellice, lord of Beauharnois; his agent, George Brown; John Ross, a merchant; and Mr. Reson, bailiff of Beauharnois; John Mc Donald, a merchant; Mr. Neveu, farmer at Châteauguay; and finally John Grant, a farmer at Lachine. Ellice and McDonald were driven in a carriage and the others travelled in carts and were seated on straw. On the way, at a certain place called Pigeonnière, a messenger passed by the caravan announcing that the rebels from the main camp had fallen into the hands of the regular army. Bewildered, the leaders of the escort looked at each other dumbfounded. Their prisoners, seeing their embarrassment and fearing for themselves, proposed an agreement by which they would obtain their own release and would assure protection to the rebels. The leader agreed and it was their turn to beseech their captives for mercy, and to flee.

While this was going on in the outskirts of the parish, serious occurrences were taking place at the village of Châteauguay. On Sunday, in the forenoon, the pastor assembled the parishioners by ringing the bell and recited prayers with them. He did not deem it prudent to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries. In fact, as they came out of church, the faithful were assailed by a band of Indians, tattooed and wearing feathered headgear, holding in their hands a gun, a tomohawk, or a lighted torch, yelling abuse and threats against them. Worst excesses could have taken place if Colonel Campbell had not intervened with his troops in order to prevent them.

When I saw Châteauguay a few days later, I could not hold back my tears at the sight of the ruins. Fences, buildings, houses were in many places, completely burned. The Island of Saint Bernard could not entirely escape the pillage. Animals and farm products had been plundered. What saddened me most of all was the sight of mothers weeping over the fate of their husbands

or of their sons made prisoners while they had no refuge and no supplies for their children.

I tried to comfort them and to assist them as I gently reminded them to remember the lesson taught us by these unfortunate events, namely that it is not right to revolt against the authorities appointed to govern a people.

On this same visit, I obtained from the guards the permission to visit the rebels held prisoners down the river. Among them I recognized the two leaders who had made so many threats against us in our house on the night of their awakening to freedom. I had compassion on them and addressed a few words to them. I would have liked to do more for them but it was not in my power to alleviate their lot.

Before ending this account, given in obedience, I want to speak again of my gratitude to God and to his divine Mother for the exquisite vigilance with which they surrounded us during this crisis. I would like to have a thousand voices to sing of the mercy of God and to make persons in peril experience the truth of these words: "The sweet name of Mary is never invoked in vain".

Now that the events are over, it is difficult for us to have an exact idea of the painful situation they had created for the Canadian people. For several weeks to come, the chief centres of insurrection were guarded by the armed forces and communications were intercepted or rigorously censored. To Father Thavenet who in France, continued to look after the business of our house, Mother Beaubien wrote the following note on November 21:

..."I began giving an answer at the beginning of this month. I was interrupted by new revolutionary movements which began on the fourth and drew our attention and our anxious care toward our seigniory of Châteauguay whose parishes numbered among those which suffered from the revolt by imprisonment, pillage, and arson. I conclude now that calm appears to be reestablished. I hope my letter will go through the mail without the risk of being intercepted..."

CHAPTER XI

1838 — 1840

The year 1838 that ended in sorrow for so many Canadian families, had from its beginning been marked by a cross for our community. Here are the circumstances.

Built on this Pointe à Callières, so interesting by its historical importance⁽¹⁾ so picturesque because of its extension into the river, the General Hospital was by its very situation, exposed to frequent flooding. This would become one of the determining

⁽¹⁾ According to the notes of Jacques Viger in *L'Histoire de Montréal* "Champlain came several times to Montreal and even drew a map on which he indicated without doubt the Pointe à Callières as being the place of his first landing and of his first sojourn. He built there several cabins for the fur-trade, planted a garden, and a small brick wall. He noticed at 20 fathoms (120 feet) from this point an islet about a hundred feet long. The wedge of land that he cleared and occupied he called 'Place-Royale' and never Mont-Royal or Montreal".

Be that as it may concerning the foregoing, it is certain that Champlain's place Royale is indeed the spot in Montreal where on May 18, 1642, Reverend Father Vimont, S.J. celebrated the mass of thanksgiving upon the arrival of the first colonists. Father Verreau listed these first colonists as follows: Mr. de Maisonneuve, Father Poncet, Mr. de Puisseau, Miss Mance, Mrs. de la Peltrie, Miss Catherine Barré, Jean Gorry, Jean Robelin, Augustin Hébert, Antoine Damien, Jean Caillot, Pierre Laimery, Nicolas Godé and François Gadois with his wife and four children.

Mr. de Maisonneuve had a fort built on this spot to accomodate the little colony. The house of the fort existed until 1682 or 1683 when it was replaced by Mr. Callière's house. The latter established residency there in 1684. Place Royale then took the name of Pointe à Callières, a name which it kept until the Canadian Customs took possession of this land.

'The Pointe à Callières' was bordered on one side by the St. Lawrence River, on the other by a little river known as St. Pierre River. The name 'Pointe à Callières' spread to the whole neighboring beach".

reasons for the ultimate move of the Grey Nuns' community to the field of the Red Cross in 1871⁽¹⁾.

In the meantime, it had to suffer serious problems each spring and sometimes to undergo considerable losses caused by the overflowing of the great river.

In the year 1838, the mild temperature in mid January led to the belief that winter would pass without its customary frost and snow. No hoar frost that year, no bridge of ice on the St. Lawrence; over the whole region a warm breeze blew from the south. The elders agreed that never before had such a thing been seen in Montreal.

But behold, on the night of January 18, a north wind broke loose and blew violently over the town casting such cold as to baffle any forecast. With this glacial wind, the St. Lawrence froze over, swelled and rose so rapidly that in less than forty-eight hours its level was thirty-six feet above normal.

During the night of Saturday to Sunday, January 21, the employees lodged in the laundry were suddenly awakened by the sound of blocks of ice dashing against each other also the enclosure wall. At once they got up and wondered if they should immediately notify the community. Finally, seeing the rapid rising of the water, they went to wake Sister Coutlée, the bur-sar, and considered means of getting the livestock to safety.

At five o'clock, the rising bell rang as usual and the Sisters, unaware of the danger, made their way peacefully to meditation. A few minutes into their recollection, they were greatly astonished to hear coming from the basement, the voices of men and horses' hoofs.

All the livestock had to be led through these corridors in order to reach the laundry.

When the Angelus ended the spiritual exercise, Mother Beaubien informed the Sisters that the hospital was surrounded by water and it was flooding the whole area. She urged them

⁽¹⁾ Guy Street was opened in 1815.

to adore God's will and to sacrifice holy mass that Sunday. The man sent to get the priest had to return. His horse, taken with cramps had almost perished in the current of icy water. All hearts turned to God and while part of the Sisters and the poor went to the chapel to beg for protection for the hospital and all the families afflicted by the same disaster, the other part hastened to help the bursar rescue the animals and save what supplies they could bring up from the cellars. Despite their diligence, they were able to save only a small portion as everything was already submerged.

This business taken care of, the Sisters and the poor assembled again in the chapel to recite the rosary, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the Miserere, etc., for his part, Father Larkin, then chaplain of the hospital, had attempted an impossible task: to come to say Mass. He had even taken to the water and would thus have crossed the three acres that separated him from our house if his confrères had not dissuaded him, convinced that this act would cost him his life. He returned, but would not celebrate mass before ten thirty in the hope that we would find some means of fetching him. About seven in the evening, Father Larré was able, however, to come to the hospital by canoe to spend the night there, so that in the event that the chapel would become flooded, he could remove the Blessed Sacrament.

After night prayer, Mother Beaubien, seeing her sisters exhausted, sent them to rest while she remained on guard with two companions. Toward eleven o'clock, noticing that water was rising on the lower floor, the vigilant superior gave the warning. Immediately the children and the old folks took their blankets and moved to the floor above. "An indescribable bustle!" say the chronicles.

Luckily the calamity stopped there. For several days more the water remained in the cellars and in the yards and it was only after two weeks of privation and untold fatigue that everyone was able to return to a quiet pattern of ordinary life.

If God sent trials on the one hand, on the other he sent blessings. The reelection of Mother Beaubien as superior general and

more numerous vocations, particularly those of Jane-Mary Slocombe, a young convert from London, England, and of Julie Deschamps, were a consolation to the community because they made possible the opening of new centres of action.

Sister Deschamps about to commit herself irrevocably by the holy vows had had for a time doubt and hesitation. Did she fear that the yoke of the Lord would be too heavy? On the contrary; she feared to find too restrictive the confines within which the community then exercised its works. One day, she frankly exposed her fear to the director of the novitiate expressing the desire to go to France where she hoped to seek admission into one of the houses of the Daughters of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul. "My child, be at peace", answered Mother Thuot, "soon, there will be missions!"

Destined to share the same occupations and to succeed each other in the governing of the Institute, Mothers Deschamps and Slocombe, as we shall see in the next volume, were to contribute forcefully to the development and the strengthening of the community's works.

We have reached the year 1840. More than half a century had elapsed since the death of our beloved Mother Foundress. At the first Mother House, there was still life and activity. Like the psalmist's beautiful tree, the Institute had pushed deeper and deeper its strong roots near the shores that had witnessed its birth; but its shade had not yet covered the neighborhood and if it bore fruit, it was in favor of those who held out their hand or who sought shelter in its foliage.

The Adorable Providence had, however, set for it a broader destiny. This tree would push its roots far and would, under other skies, bear abundant fruit. For the moment, the General Hospital had become a cloister. Instead of expanding, the community sought only to concentrate its strength. It is true that in 1820 a project of expansion was attempted by Sister Raizenne in favor of the citizens of Sandwich. But the foundation of the new establishment was hardly laid when the foundress succumbed to the task and soon her work was dissolved.

This premature death and this fruitless attempt had produced a very deep impression on the community. Some sisters even saw in these events a warning that God disproved any attempt of this kind. "It was only", said Sister Thuot later, "by dispensation and in a covered carriage that the sisters could go out into the town to visit and assist poor families."

The bursar herself never went out otherwise and was always to be accompanied by another sister.

However, despite being held in check in the heart of the community, the fire of zeal was kept burning as a spark under the ashes. The general yearning tended toward a broader scope and the spark awaited only a favorable occasion to break out. It came!

Let us allow Bishop Taché to tell us in what way. "In collecting my childhood memories", he wrote, "I remember that one day in the fall of 1838, my college companions and I were surprised to see that stones and other materials were being brought close to the yard where we took recreation. Curiosity soon brought us to inquire what building would be erected there, and who would live there. We learned that the pastor of Saint-Hyacinthe, wishing to open a refuge for poor individuals of his parish, was about to build a house for them which would be called Hôtel-Dieu."⁽¹⁾

The pastor was Father Edouard Crevier, vicar general of the district of Saint-Hyacinthe, a priest of apostolic zeal and who had "an energetic spirit coupled with a passionate love for the poor."⁽²⁾ After the insurrection of 1837-38, the unfortunate abounded in his parish. He resolved to open a refuge for them. Bishops Lartigue and Bourget, to whom he submitted his project, were delighted, but both hesitated to give him their approval.

(1) Discourse given and published on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Sister St. Joseph, May 29, 1888.

(2) Circular letter of August 1888.

Where would he get the resources for such an enterprise? Drained because of extortion by the government, the parish of St. Hyacinthe could not help him. Besides, who would support the work? The Hôtel-Dieu and the General Hospital, both in Montreal were the only communities dedicated to works of charity in the diocese and the religious were few in number. To these objections, the good pastor replied that he relied on Providence and on St. Joseph, his faithful and dedicated provider. Then, to meet the first expenses, he had an inheritance of sixty thousand francs which he received from an aunt recently deceased. Such unselfishness and such faith drew congratulations from his superiors and with their authorization he set to work.

The materials destined for the construction of his hospital were prepared at Saint-Pie, a nearby parish, and transported to St. Hyacinthe by raft on the Yamaska River. One day, Father Crevier got word that the rafts had broken and that the wood was floating away, carried by the tide. He responded by withdrawing and turning his thoughts to prayer. What went on between God and him? "No one was let in on the secret, but what is well known is that the wood, drawn violently into the rapids, stopped suddenly and assembled in a little bay not far from the place where it was to be used."⁽¹⁾ Such a significant sign from God gave the founder renewed earnestness to pursue his enterprise. He hurried on with the construction and as soon as the "modest two-storey frame building" was completed, he came to offer the direction of it to the Grey Nuns with endowment of the land and funds to provide for the keep of twelve paupers.

The good pastor's proposal came as a shock at first and met with certain hesitation. It would mean dispersing... and our Mothers were so few in number; about thirty at the most. Then, what would be the mode to adopt for this foundation, the first of the Institute? This was the gravest question of all and would have to be mellowed in prayer and serious thought. In order to

⁽¹⁾ Panegyric of Father Crevier.

know better the will of God on this first foundation, Mother Beaubien asked for a novena of prayers. When the novena had come to an end, the administrators assembled in council and experienced the deep conviction that Divine Providence had prepared this field of action for them. In the same sitting, the resolution was passed "to give four sisters who would willingly dedicate themselves to it."

Before communicating this resolution to the community, Mother Beaubien went herself to gain information about the state of the future establishment.⁽¹⁾ Satisfied with her examination, she requested more prayers so that God would inspire those whom He chose to offer themselves spontaneously to the superiors, as the community did not wish to impose this new and delicate mission on its members.

Sister Thuot, assistant and previously mistress of novices, did not hesitate to offer her resignation in order to dedicate herself to the work of Saint-Hyacinthe. She was happy to see Sisters Jauron, Pinsonneault, and Guyon follow her — three young professed she had formed herself in the novitiate. Sister Thuot had just turned fifty-four. From her early years in religion she had applied herself to her work and to her perfection. Her habitual recollection revealed a soul in constant touch with God. Fruit of sober thought, her words were always permeated with charity and reserve. The resolution was not the result of a passing enthusiasm. It was the response of her generosity to the divine call. She foresaw great vexations and numerous privations in the performance of this work. God was offering her this chalice; she would not turn away from it.

Her resignation accepted, Sister Thuot and her three companions were presented by Mother Beaubien to Bishop Bourget, recently placed at the head of the diocese following the death of Bishop Lartigue. The prelate blessed them and encouraged them. He was pleased to be able to complete a work that his predecessor had at heart and he promised to examine

(1) Letter of March 13, 1840.

with our Mothers the basis upon which the new foundation would be established.

The world was astonished in the seventeenth century when St. Vincent de Paul founded the Sisters of Charity travelling the streets, visiting the poor, caring for the sick in their homes, going wherever there was a need. Eventually, the Europeans having seen them at work, applauded the zeal of these ladies,astonishment gave way to admiration. But our young country had not yet recovered from its diffidence toward this new creation. Our mothers themselves were not exempt from certain prejudice. To declare this is not to be wanting in respect for their memory. They thought what dangers were to be feared in this external ministry? Changes in their place of work, the multiplication of houses appeared to them a source of distraction, a weakening of interior life. So, for this foundation, unable to call on past experience, without tradition to enlighten them, they believed it prudent to go by "rules followed in such cases by cloistered communities, using in large part, rules of foundation for the religious hospitallers of the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal."⁽¹⁾

It was therefore agreed that this house would be independent of the Mother House and that the sisters who would be sent there would promise to adhere faithfully to the rule of the Grey Nuns of Montreal. This, moreover, is what stands out in the letter of appointment addressed to the future founders by the Bishop of Montreal on May 4, 1840, from which we quote:

"Having assured ourselves that the funds offered by the said Father E. Crevier were sufficient to begin the good work, that four of our dear daughters from the General Hospital of this town had generously dedicated themselves to this enterprise, and that several pious girls were already requesting to join them; considering that the hospitals of this diocese are far from sufficient for the needs of the sick; desiring to procure the glory of God and the honor of the Church by such a charitable institution;

⁽¹⁾ Historical exposé concerning foundations, sent to the Cardinal prefect for Propagation, December 23, 1880.

having furthermore at heart to procure more spouses for Jesus-Christ, faithful servants of his Blessed Mother by favoring an establishment devoted to them; finally, having an ardent desire to draw upon ourselves and our diocese abundant blessings, we have decided to support the pious and charitable intentions of the Founder by erecting, in virtue of the authority which the Holy Church has vested in us, a Congregation which we hope will be the glory of the faith and will procure great relief for suffering humanity..."

Then the bishop resolved that the founders would form a congregation of Daughters of Charity with simple vows, under the direction of a superior whom they would elect after their arrival in the new house. He allowed them to open a novitiate and ordered that they follow the Constitutions of the General Hospital of Montreal, reserving the right to make certain changes in the future as would appear necessary considering the different duties they would have to fulfill. He erected the chapel of the new hospital under the title of our Lady of Sorrows whose feast is celebrated on Friday of Passion week and bid them "on the part of the Church to honor with all the fervor and solemnity possible the sorrows of Mary in the passion of her Son." He assigned as first patron of the Hospital, St Joseph, guardian and provider of the Holy Family; for second patron, St. John of God, model of dedication to works of mercy, declaring that this was in conformity with the pious intentions of the Founder.

"We place the said Daughters of Charity", he concluded, "under the entire dependence and jurisdiction of the local bishop for spiritual and temporal matters desiring that in all things they obey the particular superiors whom we shall judge appropriate to give them."

Our dear Sisters Marie-Michel-Archange Thuot, Marie-Tharsile Guyon, Marie-Honorine Pinsonneault and Marie-Emilie Jauron, having given evidence of their will to dedicate themselves to the new Institute, we cannot but approve their laudable resolution. We hereby give them their appointment and we declare that from this moment they constitute the new

community of The Daughters of Charity which we have erected, entirely separated in spiritual and temporal matters, from that of the Sisters of Charity to which they belonged until now. Furthermore, we declare them and their successors to be Administrators now and forever of the present and future property of the said hospital or "Hôtel-Dieu".

In granting to the new Institute a canonical existence, in the name of the Church, we give it on the part of God, all the spiritual and temporal blessings which always accompany works of Charity when they are done purely for the glory of God and the service of neighbor. We recommend it to the charity of the clergy and the faithful of the diocese as a work that is eminently Catholic and glorious for our holy faith."⁽¹⁾

This mandate which gives promise of encouragement, blessing and favor for the new congregation, expresses very well the nature of the obligations of the foundresses. They were to retain the Constitutions and the Rules of the Mother House of Montreal, but they were to constitute a community, independent from this house. They all understood this; consequently, this separation became for them grounds for great sacrifice.

By a legal act passed the same day, May 4, 1840⁽²⁾, the foundresses had to renounce the rights and privileges they had had until then in the community to which they declared they no longer belonged except by bonds of charity, prayer and the gratitude they owed to this community. However, in the event that the future establishment were discontinued, the administrators of the General Hospital promised and committed themselves to receive and to reinstate the Sisters of the new foundation.

The departure being set for May 6, the four foundresses hastened to make final preparations. The community supplied them generously with bedding and clothing. Sister Coullée, the

(1) Bishop Bourget declares in this same letter, "We hasten to complete this work which our illustrious Predecessor had almost finished".

(2) The act surrendering all claims by the foundress was signed by notaries Trudeau and Houlié on May 4, 1840.

bursar, provided their chapel with mass vestments and sacred vessels: chalice, ciborium, monstrance, the tray for cruets had been made with the silver melted from drinking mugs, spoons and forks formerly used in the Sisters' dining room. Father Larré, sulpician, then chaplain at the Mother House, gave them six fine linen napkins which were very precious to him because they had been woven in his own home. The sisters used liberally the authorization granted by Mother Beaubien to share with the departing Sisters, furniture and equipment from their offices or departments.

May 6 dawned, sad and solemn. Outside the sky was grey, a fine rain falling briskly soaked the earth and rendered the roads muddy. Inside, the morning Mass and communion had filled hearts with strength and courage; but each meeting with their sisters in the course of the forenoon brought a new flood of tears. About twelve-thirty, the time set for the departure, was also the time for the farewells. Sister Thuot and her three companions were embraced by Mother Beaubien and the twenty-eight sisters who then formed the community. Then they went to the infirmary to greet one last time Sister Ducharme, a cousin of Sister Guyon, who was dying. The ways of these two were very different. Still young, but though her heart was filled with intense desires, Sister Ducharme could already glimpse her reward; Sister Guyon was beginning a career which was to be long and fruitful. Both, agreeable to God, would earn the rewards of a life made beautiful by sacrificial love.

From the infirmary, the Sisters went to the chapel for the prayers of the itinerary. The founders renewed the vows they had made at their profession. Soon the great doors opened and our four travellers got into the carriages that awaited to bring them to the ship. Miss N., a future postulant along with a maid servant and a male servant were part of the caravan. Father James Larkin, Sulpician, favored them with his company a good part of the way.

Rail travel today allows one to travel in less than an hour, the distance between Montreal and St. Hyacinthe. With the mode

of transport of that era, twenty-six hours hardly sufficed for the voyage. From Montreal they had to go down the St. Lawrence as far as Sorel, then up the Richelieu River until they came to a stop facing the Village of St. Charles. From there, there were still twelve miles to travel by cart before reaching St. Hyacinthe. Having boarded the "Queen" steamboat at Montreal about 2.00 p.m., our Sisters arrived at Saint-Charles only at seven the following morning. There they met Mr. Spink, brother-in-law of our Sister Fréchette, who was waiting to take them to his home for a good breakfast.

About ten o'clock, they set out again accompanied by Father Godefroy Marchessault, bursar at the St. Hyacinthe college, who had come to meet the travellers with seven carts to carry the baggage. This kindness of Father Marchessault was to be the prelude of many other services he would render to this house in the future... either by sound advice in thorny matters or by his help in difficult situations.

The little caravan arrived at St. Hyacinthe only towards evening. Nevertheless, the whole village turned out. In order to greet the arrival of the foundresses, the bells of the church, of the college and of the convent mingled their joyous chimes to the music of the band which was installed in the college tower. The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame and their pupils awaited their passing. At the first notice of their arrival, Father Crevier hastened to meet them so as to greet the mothers of his poor and his sick and to offer them a cordial welcome. The priests then came to offer their blessing. "It was a beautiful day for the young town," Bishop Taché wrote later, "and the college students would never forget the great holiday that occurred on that occasion."

About to enter their new home, our sisters were surprised to see near the entrance, a poor feeble-minded man in tatters, evidently placed there intentionally, and who was raking away with his bow on an old violin which emitted the most inharmonious sounds. With respect, they greeted in him the Divine Master whom their faith revealed and received him as the first

of the generations of unfortunates whom they would soon shelter.

As soon as they came in, the foundresses were invited to partake of the meal prepared by the women of the locality. Among the early benefactors, let us mention the name of Mrs. Jean Dessaulles, a noble woman "the image of the ideal wife whom the Sage presents to us with hand and heart always open to pour out kindnesses." Ever since this first contact with the Sisters, Mrs. Dessaulles offered them her services, and until her death in 1857, she never ceased to assist the work with her openhandedness. Among other favors, she handed over to the Hôtel-Dieu of St. Hyacinthe the seigniorial revenues it owed her. Mr. Maurice Laframboise, her son-in-law, with the same generosity, donated the revenues that was due to his wife, Rosalie Dessaulles.

As for the foundresses, on the day following their arrival, they proceeded with their elections under the presidency of Father Crevier, the pastor, assisted by Fathers Prince and Larocque, according to the prescription of Bishop Bourget's mandate. Were elected: Sister Thuot, superior; Sister Guyon, assistant; Sister Pinsonneault, mistress of novices; and Sister Jauron, councillor and hospitaller of the poor and the sick.

The new workers yearned for the happiness of possessing the Blessed Sacrament. On May 11, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was offered for the first time,⁽¹⁾ and the God of the Eucharist took up his permanent abode in a small oratory. Finally, the poor, the friends of Jesus, were in turn received. With their arrival began the privations. But because of the vigilance of the charitable pastor and of benefactors of the convent, in many circumstances our Sisters could say with our beloved Mother d'Youville: "On the verge of lacking everything, we do not at least lack the necessities to maintain life." The supply of wheat, carefully placed in the attic of the hospice by the foresight of Father Crevier, was completely exhausted by September. The

(1) The one who served the first Mass was to become the third bishop and the first archbishop of Montreal. He was Charles Edouard Fabre.

Sisters, however, refrained from pleading poverty. They preferred to entrust their distress to Saint Vincent de Paul, great almoner of the needy. During a novena which they made with much fervor, a merchant sent them twelve bushels of wheat, just what was needed until harvest. Another day, Sister Jauron wanted to buy a pair of shoes for a woman servant of the house. She had only half the money required to pay for them. A visitor came by and put into her hand the amount necessary to complete the price.

In the course of the winter, Mother Beaubien sent them, after her visit, twenty bags of flour. Devoted as usual, the four sisters embraced the work to which they had committed themselves. In order to procure revenue for the house, they did sewing and laundry etc., One day a young novice seeing Sister Thuot busy bleaching wax on a hot summer day while sweat poured from her forehead and fatigue was etched on her features, asked her if she did not regret leaving her mother-house to undergo such hardship — "But that is what I expected", Sister Thuot answered, all absorbed in God, "and I am happy to find here what I was seeking". So true is it that with thoughts of faith one finds the secret of forgetting oneself! It was in the forgetfulness of self that the sisters found the secret of doing good. One day, a beggar woman, a vagabond given to all sorts of disorders, came to Hôtel-Dieu. Sister Thuot received her with kindness and referred her to Sister Jauron's most compassionate charity. In return for her care, Sister received only vulgar words. The heart of this newcomer seemed so hard that nothing could touch it. Without being discouraged, Sister Jauron continued to treat her with love and ventured to slip a medal into the folds of her mantle. The woman noticed it and bluntly threw it out. A second medal was more fortunate. A radical conversion followed. The patient requested a priest, confessed, and died a saintly death. Father Crevier wept with gratitude as he administered the last rites to the dying woman and stated later that the salvation of this single person amply rewarded him for the sacrifices attached to this foundation.

The good work was being effected also among the poor and even among the women whom the Sisters received as boarders. Many spiritual exercises took place in the chapel. These women attended with an eagerness worthy of note. Some of them, touched by the goodness of Our Lord residing among them in the Blessed Sacrament, would get up at night to adore him. This fervor had eventually to be restricted, but the laborious life of the Sisters continued to be for both boarders and poor, a powerful stimulus.

Such was the Hôtel-Dieu of St. Hyacinthe at its early beginning. Today one can admire the vast and magnificent building of the Mother House. Leafing through the annals of 1932, one reads the following statistics: 627 sisters living, 300 deceased, 93 novices and postulants, 836 elderly of both sexes, 1313 orphans, 156 men and women boarders, 365 patients in hospital, 10,250 patients treated annually. These works are carried on in 23 establishments. On August 18, 1886, four of its subjects separated from the Hôtel-Dieu of St. Hyacinthe to found a house of charity in Nicolet. This community soon expanded and had its own works. In 1932, it numbered 248 Sisters living, 55 novices and postulants, 152 elderly of both sexes, 354 orphan boys and girls, 67 women boarders, 200 patients in hospital, 3,050 patients treated annually, 188 children in Indian Boarding schools.

A foundation of a different nature but of great interest to the Grey Nuns, took place in Montreal in this same year of 1840: that of the Major Sulpician Seminary. At first, the seminarians lived on St. Paul Street, near McGill, in a wing of the college of Montreal. Then, in 1857 they moved to a Sulpician residence on the slope of Mount Royal. "Fort des Messieurs" was a residence for the Sulpicians employed at the Mountain mission. This fort was demolished in 1760 but two corner towers of the enclosure wall remained. "These two towers", writes Father Olivier Maurault, Sulpician, "seem to guard the entrance of the Major Seminary whose great and austere facade of grey stone extends beyond the garden. The chapel, completed in 1907, in

basilican style, with exposed beams and masonry in Caën stone recalls the church of San-Miniato in Florence. Let us mention also the recreation yard of the seminarians, embellished with a long canal dug in 1700 and bordered with gigantic elm trees more than a century old."

Borrowing a beautiful image from our Sacred Books, let us say that the Major Theological Seminary, like a tree planted near running water, yields its fruit in due season and its leaves never fade. 70 bishops, more than 5,000 priests were trained in almost a century in this institution blessed by God. Its first superior was Father Billaudèle, from 1840 — 1846; then followed Father Baile, 1846-1866; Father Larue, 1866-1871; Father Delavigne, 1871-1872; Father Colin, 1872-1881; Father Lecoq, 1881-1903; Father Lelandais, 1903-1918; Father Urique, 1918-1924; Father Dorvaux, 1924-1927; Father Yelle, 1927-1933 who was elevated to the episcopate by the Holy See and became coadjutor archbishop of St. Boniface. He was replaced by Father Lesieur.

CHAPTER XII

1840 — 1841

On September 8, 1836, Feast of Mary's Nativity, Bishop Lartigue was installed as bishop of Montreal.

Four years later, the triumphal pomp, the flutter of hope, were followed by his funeral. The first bishop of Ville-Marie "had sustained his combat, sanctified his soul in tribulation, and had founded a bishopric both canonically and civically. For him there remained only to receive the just reward of his works. He continued to merit it by the sufferings of his illness."

For several months, his habitual state of weakness had become increasingly alarming. The valiant bishop had to be persuaded to abandon his work. He was further compelled to go to Hôtel-Dieu to receive the assiduous and compassionate care of the religious hospitallers.

It was with the serenity and strength of an apostle that Bishop Lartigue saw death approaching. He made his final recommendations, received the sacrament of the sick, blessed the attendants, the priests, the religious communities, and all the faithful of his diocese. Bishop Bourget, his coadjutor, and the Vicar General, Father Quiblier, Superior of the Seminary, assisted him. From that time, the venerable prelate, who was now blind and in a state of extreme weakness, conversed only with his God, his Judge, and his Savior. He found his rest in Him on April 19, Easter Sunday.

This bereavement changed Paschal joys into expressions of pain. He lay in state in Hôtel-Dieu chapel for two days, and on the third, his remains were transferred to the parish church where a pontifical service was held. Father Quiblier delivered the funeral oration. After the final prayers, the funeral procession made its way toward the cathedral. On Thursday, after a third solemn service, the body was taken to the crypt under the sanctuary and placed in a vault facing the main altar.⁽¹⁾

Here are a few biographical notes concerning the first bishop of Montreal. Let us go back to June 20, 1777. On that day, Jacques Lartigue, a doctor, and his wife Charlotte-Marguerite Cherrier, after fervent prayers, received from God a child to whom was given the name of Jean-Jacques. Baptized at the church of Notre-Dame in Montreal, he made his first communion there and as a prelude to his functions in the priesthood and the episcopate, he performed the duties of an altar boy.

The young Lartigue went to the minor seminary and became a brilliant student. Having finished his course in 1793, he studied English, then law, using all his talents for the glory of God and the benefit of the faith. After his elevation to the episcopate, he would sometimes say: "I was as able to uphold the concerns of the faith against the godlessness of Philosophers while I was in the world, as I am now." Docile to the voice of God who was calling him to the service of the Church, the young man presented himself to Bishop P. Denaut. The latter admitted him into the sacred militia by conferring the tonsure on September 23, 1797, the same day on which the prelate, coming from Longueuil had made his episcopal entry into the parish church of Montreal. He undoubtedly did not foresee that this entry into Ville-Marie was to be marked by such a singular grace as that of preparing the town's first bishop.

Bishop Denaut who was purported to have remarkable discernment to discover men of merit and a rare talent for making the best use of them, took the young Lartigue as his secretary

⁽¹⁾ In 1885, the caskets of Bishop Lartigue and Bishop Bourget were placed in the vault near the south-west pillar of the new cathedral.

after having ordained him on September 24, 1800. The new secretary's attentiveness to the affairs of the diocese, the talent that he displayed in examining and probing ecclesiastical matters, his zeal in acquiring knowledge, his prudence and his discretion, coupled with his other qualities, soon rendered him capable of helping his bishop. Accordingly, Bishop Denaut would never consent to be without his services despite the fact that the young priest had often asked to join the company of the Sulpicians.

Bishop Denaut having died on January 17, 1806, Father Lartigue was able to follow his inclination. He entered the Company on February 23, 1806. The priests of the Seminary received him with open arms and on February 1, 1807, Father Lartigue became director. For fifteen years he deployed untiring zeal, rare talent for preaching, constant activity for the conversion of sinners, and great charity toward the poor.

Bishop Plessis sharing the esteem of his predecessor for Father Lartigue, gave him as an associate to Bishop Panet, his coadjutor. Selected in 1819 to go to England in order to defend the interests of the Seminary, he returned to Montreal on July 20, 1820. On February 1 of this same year, Pope Pius VII had named him Bishop of Telmesse in Lydia, suffragan and auxiliary to the Bishop of Quebec for the district of Montreal. On January 21, 1821, Bishop Plessis anointed him bishop in the church of Notre-Dame in Montreal amid a throng of faithful who rejoiced at the prospect of keeping among them this well-known pastor with whom Providence had just gratified them.

The episcopal career of Bishop Lartigue covers twenty years of incessant labor and of difficulties of all sorts. The dauntless bishop overcame them with admirable strength.

The zeal for his own holiness filled him with great earnestness for the sanctification of others. He did not consider charity toward the poor to be beneath his dignity. Nothing stopped him, when there was good to be done. The chronicles say, "He was seen to go through the town carrying food to the poor or clothing intended for the members of Jesus Christ, supplying the

necessary kitchen utensils to those for whom he had provided food, selling secretly items he could do without in order to be able to do good."

Bishop Lartigue went once a month to celebrate Mass in one of the three communities, the only ones then established in Montreal. In 1835, at the time of his canonical visit, the precious advice he gave to our Mothers reveals his fatherly interest and deserves our deep gratitude.

This same year, 1840, the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Mary was established in our community. The origin of this Confraternity goes back to 1628. Grateful to the Mother of God for the victory of the French forces in the siege of La Rochelle, Louis XIII wished that a sanctuary be built in Paris bearing the title of Our Lady of Victories. It is in this church that the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was instituted on December 11, 1836 and established on the sixteenth of the same month by Father Dufriche-Desgenettes, the pastor of the parish.

This association of prayers for poor sinners expanded rapidly. Soon it was not only in Paris that the faithful united their prayers and their sacrifices to the Sacred Heart of Mary for this noble intention. The devotion spread rapidly abroad, crossing the seas and penetrating even our shores.

Such fervent cries of trust and love touched the heart of our Immaculate Mother and obtained marvellous conversions, restoring peace and piety to many homes.

Mother Beaubien, whose soul was open to all that could bring about the glory of God, heard the Sulpician Fathers praising so highly the Confraternity, that she wished to enrol her community.⁽¹⁾

The conditions, moreover, were not very difficult. To offer and consecrate each morning to the Sacred Heart of Mary, one's prayers, works, mortifications, good works of the day, uniting them to the homage which this Sacred Heart renders ceaselessly to the Most Holy Trinity and to implore of the in-

⁽¹⁾ Memoirs of Sisters Olier and Baby.

finite mercy of the Heart of Jesus the pardon and conversion of sinners, to recite daily an Ave Maria followed by the invocation: "O Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for us",⁽¹⁾ to inscribe one's baptismal and family names in the register of the Confraternity: such were the principal obligations of the associates.

On March 25, 1840, feast of the Annunciation and the day on which the Church honors the coming of Jesus in the heart of his Immaculate Mother, the Grey Nuns, desirous of cooperating towards the promotion of the Kingdom, lovingly enrolled in the pious confraternity. The names, sent to Father Desgenettes with an offering of three hundred francs, were accompanied by a letter from Mother Beaubien in which the interests of the community were earnestly recommended to the prayers of the associates admitted to closer relationship with Our Lady of Victories in her privileged sanctuary. The favors which she requested most particularly for her dear religious family were a spirit of prayer and an intense charity so necessary to all Grey Nuns in order to fulfill fruitfully their laborious ministry. Then, with the spirit of simplicity and childlike faith which characterized her piety, Mother Beaubien ended her letter with this prayer of faith: "Allow me to request one last favor: that of soliciting for me in particular, the spirit of discernment and of prudence in order to know and to follow the will of this kind mother and that of her divine Son, so that I may govern wisely under her guidance, the house that was entrusted to me. I beg her to be herself its Superior and its special Mother."

One month later, a letter from Paris assured Mother Beaubien "that the names of her daughters had been inserted in the heart which had been offered to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Father Quiblier, Sulpician Superior in Montreal, on his own behalf and on that of the Grey Nuns."⁽²⁾ However, the forms of affiliation or membership certificates of which this letter gave notice

(1) This is the origin of the pious practice by which at each hour we recall the presence of God and recite the Ave Maria along with the above invocation.

(2) Letter of Father Carrière, P.S.S., May 14, 1840, future superior of the Sulpicians, elected on May 8, 1857.

arrived in Montreal only in February of the following year at the time that Bishop Bourget was establishing the confraternity in his cathedral with great solemnity. There was a unanimous thrust of Catholic hearts towards that of the Immaculate Mother. The register of the association had been opened barely a month when already the number of associates had reached 2,200 for the town only. Soon people came from the countryside to join the association. Priests and lay people aspired for the honor of working, by prayer and example, for the conversion of sinners. These humble and ardent supplications were heard by the Queen of heaven and soon, under her invigorating influence, there was a movement in Canada that would renew the country. The chief agent of this movement, Bishop Forbin-Janson, had frequently renewed his courage as an apostle and his missionary zeal at the feet of Our Lady of Victories.

Charles, Auguste, Marie, Joseph de Forbin-Janson was born in Paris on November 3, 1785. His father, the Marquis de Janson, was a lieutenant in the king's army. His mother, descended from Gallian princes, a truly heroic woman, wished at the price of her fortune to save the life of a holy person, during the revolution. This magnanimous endeavor earned for her the honor of being outlawed.

The worthy heir of an illustrious name, Charles was to reveal himself to be a man of character. His career was a succession of trials and tribulations. It began with a storm. From the age of five, he had to follow his parents to Germany where they sought refuge from persecution.⁽¹⁾

On his return to his own country, he made his first communion, attended courses at the Sulpician Seminary, and was ordained at Chambéry in 1811. In 1814 a fellowship of priests was formed in view of restoring the work of the French missions. Father Forbin-Janson became one of its most active workers, and from that moment he engaged in difficult ministry involving overwhelming fatigue. Promoted to the episcopate in 1823

(1) Notes on Bishop Forbin-Janson according to the mandate published by Bishop Menjaud.

for the diocese of Nancy and of Tout, the new pastor remained a missionary. In 1830 the revolutionary uprising again opened for him the way to exile. For nine years, hostilities prevented him from returning to his diocese. In 1839, the apostolic bishop turned his gaze toward America. He crossed the ocean and travelled through the United States where his preaching had marvellous effects. He attended the national council assembled at Baltimore and visited several Indian tribes.

From there, he came to Canada in September 1840, drawn by the urgent requests of our bishops who were desirous of "reviving among their people the fervor which had inspired our fathers in the faith." Quebec received his first apostolic preaching on Canadian territory. At the end of September, the missionary bishop was in Montreal. On October 2, at our mother house, he presided at the vesturing ceremony of Sisters Youville and Normant and received the vows of Sister Manseau. His stay at the Hospital left everyone enkindled with the charity of Jesus Christ by which his own heart was devoured. Kind and friendly, his Grace visited the Sisters after the ceremony. Later he liked to speak of the Grey Nuns as his "Grey Battalion."

The Bishop of Nancy began his mission in Montreal by evangelizing the neighborhood of the episcopal city. Terrebonne and Oka in turn had the joy of hearing his exhortations. When he left Terrebonne, despite his opposition, he was accompanied by thirty-two horsemen and almost as many carriages, for a distance of six leagues. Having arrived by night at Lac des Deux-Montagnes, he visited elderly Iroquois and Algonquin converts all assembled in the same church. A pilgrimage was made to the great Calvary about a league's distance away. All those who could walk, even the mothers with their little children, followed the procession. The rosary was recited in four languages: Latin, French, Algonquin, Iroquois.

From there, he returned to the United States where he remained seven weeks. "On December 7, he arrived at the Port of Montreal about six o'clock. At this season, docking was difficult because of the drifting ice carried by the river. The boat-

men, forced to stop at some distance from the shore, were busy transferring the luggage. While the bishop's partner went to order a carriage, the bishop, thinking that he could reach the shore by himself, in the delusive glimmer of moonlight mistook free water for solid ice and plunged squarely into the opening. Throwing off his cloak, making a few strokes, reaching for a floating block of ice, catching the cable of a nearby raft, took only a few seconds, and when a friendly hand tried to take hold of him, the courageous bishop was already kneeling on the raft." Despite the harshness of the season, the accident fortunately had no harmful effects. It only increased the missionary's popularity.

During his stay in Montreal, the bishop often honored the Grey Nuns with his visits. One day when he had come to celebrate Holy Mass and speak to the Sisters about his great concern, the work of retreats, Mother Beaubien, having in mind the benefit the parishioners of Châteauguay would draw from his exhortations, suggested that he preach a mission to these good people whose spiritual welfare she had at heart, being the land owner. The bishop smiled but did not answer. Mother Beaubien concluded that if a petition were presented to him, he would consider the matter. She wrote to the Sisters at the Manor asking them to suggest this to the parishioners. A few days later, a deputation of prominent citizens of Châteauguay, strengthened by a letter from the superior, knocked at the door of the rectory of Chambly where his Grace was giving a mission. The bishop received them with kindness. He read the letter handed to him by one of the chief citizens of Châteauguay, Mr. McDonald, who was of a different faith, it is true, but who was nonetheless as eager as the Catholics to hear the prelate. The bishop gave them hope that he would very soon be among them.

On September 27, at the request of Father Bourassa, the pastor, our rowboat decked with flags, was at the disposal of the prelate for the crossing between Lachine and Châteauguay. The good pastor had prepared the way very well. About three o'clock in the afternoon, the parishioners of Châteauguay, and even of

neighboring parishes, were assembled in the village or lined the river patiently awaiting the arrival of God's envoy. As soon as the boat appeared, joyous shouts arose from the crowds. Before the bishop had set foot on land, the populace had knelt to receive his blessing. His grace addressed a few words to these people who were so well disposed; then went to the rectory where our sisters were waiting to welcome him. The bishop appeared pleasantly surprised to meet there a detachment of his "Grey Battalion". It was agreed then and there that dinner the following day would be taken at the manor.

Indeed the following morning, about ten o'clock, Bishop de Forbin-Janson disembarked at Ile St. Bernard, accompanied by the pastor and a few priests. Rain having unfortunately darkened this day, it was impossible for the eminent guests to visit the island or even to go up the hill from where such an immense panorama could be viewed. The meal, however, was nonetheless hearty and the kindly condescension of the bishop delighted the guests.

After having brought joy and edification to this house of God, the Bishop of Nancy returned to the parish to open the mission exercises. The reputation he had acquired gave him an amazing prestige over everyone. Protestants as well as Catholics flocked to his conferences. The concourse of strangers was so great that it was thought wise to grant them the children's place in the sanctuary. All had a dignified bearing worthy of the sacred place, and even though many did not understand French, they confessed that the very sight of the man of God was a blessing for them. The abjuration of four men testified to the favorable influence on people of his preaching. Also, on the 29th a young non Catholic woman made a public profession of faith and received baptism in the sanctuary in front of the deeply moved congregation. The bishop accepted to be the godfather of the new convert and Mother Mc Mullen was her godmother. On the same day, 572 persons received confirmation.

"As we had at heart the success of this retreat", wrote Mother Mc Mullen later, "we took charge of the kitchen at the rectory."

The bishop, who included in the same charity the great as well as the humble, wished the ceremony of consecration to the Blessed Virgin to allow as much solemnity at Châteauguay as in the great cities. At his request, the Sisters beautifully decorated the statue of Mary installed above the main altar. The Madonna was resplendent amid numerous lights when the enthusiastic throng cried out: "I believe that Mary is truly the Mother of God", and also: "I dedicate and consecrate myself to Mary forever". It is impossible to describe the emotion aroused by this manifestation of faith and of love.

However, the bishop was only able to launch the retreat having been obliged to leave Châteauguay as early as the 30th. But the pious exercises went on for a fortnight with consoling success. This would cause the bursar later appointed superior of the Hospital to say: "I have the consolation of telling you that Châteauguay has become an earthly paradise, so much has the retreat changed the people. Temperance and the confraternity have taken root there."

The bishop also evangelized the parishes of St. Polycarpe, Bytown, and St. Jean (John) Dorchester; then he ended his peaceful mission on Canadian soil by a proceeding that would assure him an everlasting debt of our gratitude.

The country as we have seen, had just been the scene of a revolution. Many victims deported to Australia in 1838 were still undergoing the pain of exile. The families and friends of the deportees, deprived of the heads of the household for four long years already approached the Bishop of Nancy concerning their distress, begged him to intercede for them with the British government. Canadians had come to consider him as their protector, to whom it seemed, nothing was impossible. Their hope was not in vain. Bishop de Forbin-Janson went to Quebec with Bishop Bourget in view of obtaining from the Governor-General, Sir Charles Bagot, the recall of these political exiles. He even furnished 24,000 francs toward the expense of their return. He did more. On his return to Europe, he went to plead

their cause before the British Court. Some time later, these men were returned to their spouses, their children and their country.

The Bishop of Nancy left Montreal on November 18, 1841, to go to New York from where he would embark for Europe on the "Baltimore" on December 8, 1841. He arrived happily at the Havre on the 27th of the same month. On his return to France, he founded the admirable and eminently Catholic work of the Holy Childhood. He died at his brother's home, the Marquis Forbin-Janson, on July 18, 1844 at the age of 58, prematurely exhausted by his apostolic labors.

At the end of the retreat preached by Bishop de Forbin-Janson, the pastor of Châteauguay went about actively instructing the children of his parish. Tactfully, he succeeded in getting his parishioners to subscribe to a sum sufficient to build a stone convent 66' x 44' and he offered the direction of it to the Grey Nuns already established in his parish. But the latter thought that the time had not yet come for them to take on the education of young boarders. They did, however, contribute to the success of the work either by supplying funds,⁽¹⁾ or by rendering sisterly services to the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame who later directed the convent.

The retreat given in Montreal by the Bishop of Nancy lasted forty days. The closing of this mission coincided with the solemn installation of a Chapter attached to the Cathedral.

This institution to which we owe important services took place on January 21, 1841, the twentieth anniversary of Bishop Jean-Jacques Lartigue's episcopal ordination. The Chapter was composed of men attached by state to the episcopal curia and whose duty it was to help the bishop govern the Church according to Canon Law; hence their title of "Canon".

The first titular canons were Fathers Antoine Manseau, vicar-general; Hyacinthe Hudon; Jean-Charles Prince; Alexis-Frédéric Trudeau; Etienne Lavoie, and J. Octave Paré. The

(1) The Community contributed 400.00\$ for the building of the convent in Châteauguay.

honorary canons were Fathers Vincent Quiblier, Superior of the Sulpician Seminary; Pierre Viau, pastor of Saint-Sulpice; F. Xavier Demers, pastor of St. Denis; Paul Archambault, pastor of Vaudreuil; and Jean-Zéphirin Caron, pastor of St. Clément in Beauharnois.

After the institution of his Chapter, Bishop Bourget wished to go to Rome to offer the homage of his filial love to his Holiness Gregory XVI.

His departure took place on May 3, 1841. Canon Paré and Father Power, pastor of Laprairie, accompanied him to Europe aboard the steamer Albany. A large number of citizens were at the wharf at the time of embarkation to offer the beloved travellers their best wishes. Fathers Manseau and Hudon, administrators of the diocese, as well as Father Quiblier, Superior of the Seminary, accompanied them as far as Saint-Jean. The bishop and his companions disembarked at the Havre on June 1.

The bishop went to Notre-Dame des Victoires and placed at the altar of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart a list of many conversions gained through her intercession. He also handed the pastor a list of one-hundred and twenty-seven parishes in Canada that solicited their aggregation to the Guild of the Virgin.

After a sojourn of four months in Europe, Bishop Bourget returned to Montreal on September 23. A few days later, he issued a pastoral letter in which he expressed his happiness at being back among his flock. A special circular letter addressed at the same time to his priests informed them of certain projects concerning the education of children, the care of the poor, the organization of temperance societies, etc. He also informed them of various indulgences, one of which authorized the adding of SINE LABE CONCEPTA (conceived without sin) to the litany of the Blessed Virgin.

CHAPTER XIII

1840 — 1843

Educated from her childhood by the purest Christian truths, Mother Beaubien kept throughout her life, a great refinement of sentiment and heart. She had the spirit of prayer to a high degree. It was in meditation and in visits to the Blessed Sacrament that she developed this spirit of simplicity and childlike faith which remained characteristic of her piety. To this person of faith, to love God and neighbor was the same thing. She served God with an eye set on the needs of the poor and of her sisters. In their times of illness or of sorrow, she allowed herself no rest until she had relieved and comforted them.

Distressed at this time by the illness of several young sisters whom neither care nor medication could restore to health, she urged them to turn to God for their cure. An extraordinary wave of piety was at that time drawing people toward Blessed Alphonse Rodriguez, a model of holiness acquired in the performance of the most humble duties. The resemblance of Mother Beaubien's spirituality with that of Blessed Alphonse "rendered his faith and loving simplicity very dear to her." Filled with confidence toward him who appeared to enjoy such influence on God, she recommended recourse to this amiable Saint.

Among the numerous cures obtained in our house and attributed to the intercession of Blessed Alphonse, that of Sister Rose Barbeau deserves to be singled out. This Sister had been suffering for three years from a malignant tumor pronounced by Doctor Charlebois to be incurable. After this declaration by

the doctor, Sister Barbeau, resigned to the will of God, was awaiting death when Mother Beaubien in 1840 suggested that she begin a novena to Blessed Alphonse. The patient whose obedience equalled her lively faith, received this suggestion as an order from God.

"I began the novena on June 27", she said in the testimony she later gave to Bishop Bourget, "and the community made it with me. I was hoping then that obedience and the prayers of our Mother and of our Sisters would obtain for me the desired effect. From the beginning, I experienced an increase in pain accompanied by extreme weakness. On the seventh day, at five o'clock in the evening, I went to pray before the picture and the relic of the Saint. I remained there a half hour and felt no pain. I had a presentiment then and a firm trust that God through the merits of his faithful servant, would have pity on me. However, the pain returned with increased intensity and obliged me to go to bed. The crisis lasted only an hour. The pain gradually eased. At eight o'clock, I felt the need to eat. I ate two small spoonfuls of mashed potatoes and drank a little coffee. A quarter of an hour later, I thought my stomach would burst under the violence of the pain. This lasted until ten thirty.

Then I fell into a peaceful sleep and woke up shortly after midnight. I did not feel the slightest pain. I fell to my knees to thank the Lord for the favor he had just granted me. I remained two hours in this position without any fatigue.

At five o'clock I went to our Mother to tell her of my joy. She appeared astounded to see me looking healthy. I went to Mass and received holy communion. After my thanksgiving, I returned to my Superior and assured her that I was perfectly healed. 'Put yourself to the test', she told me. 'Take food which until now did not agree with you.' Without delay, I had my breakfast and went to the procurator's office where I remained almost an hour without experiencing fatigue.

To try out my strength, I went for a carriage ride. I was as comfortable as if I had never been ill. Since then I eat of anything that is served without being inconvenienced at all."

To this testimony imposed on her by obedience, Sister Barbeau added a detail which reveals to us her natural piety:

She wrote: "I had obtained from Mother Superior the permission to make a few promises to the Saint, among others, that of changing my name for his; but these names having already been adopted by two of my companions⁽¹⁾ I thought that that of Mary would please him since he had such veneration for her. I asked him then that if he agreed to this little convention, he should give me a proof by obtaining my cure one day before the end of the novena. This happened according to my wish."

Thus, Sister Rose Barbeau would be known hereafter only by the name of Sister Marie Barbeau. Sister Angélique-Victoire Brazeau, healed several days earlier in similar circumstances, would be called Sister Alphonse and Sister Antonie Howard, a young novice, equally indebted to the Saint for the recovery of her health, would be known as Sister Rodriguez.

Both as a witness and the one to receive the testimony of several other extraordinary favors obtained by our poor through the intercession of the Saint,⁽²⁾ and judging that it was the will of God that his servant be especially honored in our Institute, Bishop Bourget used the privilege obtained from the Holy See during his voyage to Rome in 1841 to establish in the chapels of our houses, "the novena in honor of this humble religious with 40 days of indulgence on one of the days of the novena under the required conditions."⁽³⁾

The good bishop wrote: "Our special intention in granting to all the houses of the Institute such a precious favor is to merit for them this beautiful spirit of religious simplicity which burst forth in such an admirable manner in this saintly lay-brother for

(1) Sister Brazeau was called Sister St. Alphonse and Sister Howard was known as Sister Rodriguez.

(2) On April 7, 1840, Bishop Bourget came to the community accompanied by Father Manseau, Vicar General, and Father Quiblier, Superior of the Seminary, to see the Sisters and the poor healed through the intercession of Blessed Alphonse.

(3) Mandate of October 15, 1849.

whom this admirable virtue so justly merits the name and the privilege of Mary's Favorite Friend."

On July 7, there was the blessing of a new mill in Châteauguay. The pastor, Father J.B. Labelle, accepted to preside at the ceremony. Mother Beaubien went for the occasion accompanied by Sisters Barbeau and Brazeau. This was a great and pleasant surprise for Sisters McMullen and Valade who, residing at the manor and knowing that the two patients were nearing death, had not yet been informed of their sudden cures. Together, they glorified God, the author of all good.

Two benevolent works undertaken in Montreal a few years earlier took on a greater magnitude in 1841 thanks to their incorporation obtained from Parliament on September 18. We have already mentioned in chapter five, the origin of these two works born of a common inspiration and destined to produce excellent fruit in different ways, but it is only right to give more details here. We take them from the notes of Father J. Viger:

"On December 13, 1827 a few Canadian women gathered in a private home and considered the extreme distress of a great number of poor in Montreal. To relieve these ill-fated people and to offer a more efficient remedy to their situation than that of collecting alms from door to door, they conceived the idea of forming an organization to help them. Their goal was to provide subsistence for the poor in a general and economic manner by means of soup, meats, and other foods which would be distributed to them each day during the colder months, from December to May. It was decided to collect pledges to provide for the outlay of the new society and to call a general meeting of the women of Montreal who wished to take part in this good work. This meeting was held on December 18. It was attended by French Canadian women. The Baroness of Longueuil was called to be president, a distinction she enjoyed until her death⁽¹⁾ and which was conferred upon her as many times as the society remained in existence."

(1) This virtuous woman died February 18, 1841.

Such were the origin and the goals of the Society of Dames de Charité which, during three winters and until April 15, 1830, distributed to the poor of Montreal, each day of the season, up to 600 portions of soup, beef, potatoes, etc. without taking into account the help given to a great number of these poor people in various other ways.

The women associates had already assembled in a house on St. Eloi Street, a few poor, elderly women. They resolved to increase the number of these and for this purpose, to seek a place which would allow them at the same time, to continue the food distribution. The Fabric of Montreal, having granted them free use of the house situated on the former site of the Recollet Fathers on Notre Dame Street, the Dames de la Charité hastened to fetch from their homes, elderly, infirm, and invalid women to bring them to their refuge so that they could feed, and clothe them, and care for them. They were able to accommodate as many as twenty.

In 1832, as we mentioned, the Asiatic cholera broke out furiously in Montreal. At the new shelter there were six victims of the ten elderly residents. The Dames de la Charité, seeing their work disappear, began to look for another. They placed under the care of the widow Gamelin, their four protégées and went towards the orphans whom the terrible plague had deprived of their parents. For the third time in five years, they were modifying their work without changing their goal: that of relieving suffering humanity. Such had been, since 1827, the care given by the members of this charitable association, the first founders of the Catholic Orphanage whose direction after many trials and tribulations, was definitively entrusted to the Grey Nuns in 1889.

As for the little refuge opened for poor women on rue St-Laurent, it became the cradle of the now flourishing work of the Sisters of Providence. It is there that Mrs. Gamelin, née Emélie Tavernier, widowed at twenty-seven, resolved to sanctify her sorrow by devoting herself to the misfortunes of others and initiated herself to her role of mother and servant of the poor.

More than two thousand religious in one hundred and two houses constituted in 1927, the splendid crown of the foundress.

Three other colonies of apostles and missionaries came at an interval of several months to establish themselves on our shores. The first group, made up of four Oblates of Mary Immaculate: Fathers Honorat, Superior, Telmond, Beaudrand, and Lagier were received in Montreal on December 2. These new apostles opened a novitiate in Longueuil and prepared a host of workers for the evangelization of wilderness areas still so numerous, in our country. Let us admire the benevolence of Providence who through them, was to prepare Fathers, guides and supporters for our future missionaries to the Red River and the Northwest.

On June 2, 1842, Fathers Chazelle, Martin, Tellier, Luiset, Hanipaux and du Ranquet, all members of the Society of Jesus, came also to this land soaked with the blood of their martyrs, to resume after an interruption of almost fifty years, the works and the apostolic virtues which Fathers Breboeuf, Lallement, Jogues, etc., had begun in Canada. After some wavering, the little colony finally settled in a house gratuitously put at their disposal by Mr. Charles-Séraphin Rodier, a generous citizen of Montreal. This house situated at the edge of town, on Saint-Antoine Street at the corner of Richmond, occupied the site where our convent of Bethlehem now stands.⁽¹⁾

Bishop Bourget said the first Mass there on September 6, 1843. Having no other resources to sustain the establishment than the fruit of their preaching, the priests lived on alms for several years. On May 25, 1844, our community took upon itself to wash and mend gratuitously their clothing. They continued this for nine years, that is, until 1853. The four last years, however, the reverend Fathers paid women for the washing. Sister Séguin supervised the washing and did the mending herself. For five years, our Sisters sent them each week a certain quantity of bread, meat, and other supplies. On each feast of

⁽¹⁾ After eight years spent under this hospitable roof, the reverend Fathers transferred their novitiate to Sault au Recollet where it is now.

St. Ignatius, July 31, they received a hot meal from the General Hospital.

Father Martin donated to the congregation in 1847 a tableau of Alphonse Rodriguez — now seen in our sacristy.

It is in remembrance of these kindnesses that the Jesuit Fathers come each year to say Mass in our chapel on the feast of the Epiphany.

Towards mid December, four Sisters of the Sacred Heart arrived at Laprairie across from Montreal. The boatmen, whom they had asked to cross the half-frozen St. Lawrence, answered: "Never have women been seen on the river in such weather!" The crossing took place, however, but not without peril. Our Lady, invoked by the travellers, was watching over them. "Long live Our Lady of Bon Secours" the boatmen shouted as they landed. The Mother Superior Kersaint and her three companions, numb with cold were entrusted by Bishop Bourget to the care of the Sisters of the Congregation. The most charitable care was lavished on the foundresses while the pastor of Saint-Jacques de l'Achigan, Father Paré, with paternal solicitude, prepared a reception for them in his parish. On December 27, 1842, the four sisters arrived there. The students soon filled the new sanctuary built in honor of the Sacred Heart. On August 6, 1846, part of the community and the boarding school established at Saint-Jacques, was transferred to Saint-Vincent, on the Isle of Jesus, and later, the whole establishment moved to Sault-au-Récollet.

The community of the Sacred Heart numbers two hundred and fifty sisters and more than eighteen hundred students distributed in the various schools."⁽¹⁾

What joy Saint Madeleine-Sophie Barat must experience in heaven, she who said toward the end of her life: "I would have founded the society for the soul of one single child!"

(1) "Sur les pas de Marthe et Marie".

In this same year, 1842, our community lost, in the person of Sister Mézière, another of these sisters who are at once a model and a support for the fervor of an Institute.

Marie-Louise Lepellé-Mézière was born on April 13, 1761 of one of the most honorable families in the country. Her parents had raised her in the practice of Christian virtues. Compelling circumstances, among others, the death of her brother already widowed and leaving her the care of his two daughters, obliged Miss Mézière to go and live with the Grey Nuns along with the two young orphans as boarders.

Aware of the responsibilities she had assumed towards her nieces, she gave herself wholeheartedly to their upbringing and thought of her future only as something to be delayed until Providence had settled theirs. She was then thirty. Her life, already so trained to sacrifice, was an excellent preparation for religious life. To the teachings of experience, she brought the docility of an adolescent, a great love of work together with an extraordinary attraction for mortification.

She gave to the poor of the Hospital a generous part of her rich patrimony⁽¹⁾ and embraced the harshness of poverty with a generosity that could not be surpassed. In religious life, Sister Mézière was as remarkable by her spirit of simplicity and poverty as she had been remarkable in the world by her concern to dress in the finest fabrics. Though she had a delicate constitution, she did not hesitate to conform, from the time of her entry, to the very frugal fare of the era. To be content with dry bread and water at breakfast, to eat only corn in times of dearth, to observe rigorously the fasts prescribed by the Church, to observe punctually the practices of penance prescribed by the rule, not to recoil before any act of self-denial: all this did not satisfy her thirst for self-sacrifice. Sister Mézière obtained from her superiors, the privilege of practising greater austerities. An affinity of attractions and aspirations had established between

(1) While she was a boarder at the Hospital, Miss Mézière had the generous inspiration of getting Mr. Beaucourt to paint on canvas the portraits of the Venerable Mother d'Youville, of Mother Despins, and of Father Poncin.

her and our beloved and famous Sister Cherrier, a very close friendship. Rivaling in virtue and zeal, both were enlivened by following more closely Jesus Christ crucified. When the Sisters saw the two ascetics conversing together, they would instinctively say: "See, our two Desert Fathers are holding council."

Having reached an advanced age, when her stomach could no longer tolerate ordinary food, she required an order from Mother Beaubien to urge her to accept some mitigation. Sometimes she went as far as to wet with tears, the toast she was given in the morning and evening. But, obedient above all, Sister Mézière was careful not to lose this occasion to grow in self-denial. Abhorring exemptions and dispensations as breaches to the common life of which she was so fond, it was for her a painful sacrifice when her poor eyesight no longer allowed her to recite the Office of the Virgin Mary. Classified among spiritual persons who maintain constant communication with God, Sister Mézière had a deep love of silence. When she was obliged to break it, she watched her words scrupulously so as not to harm anyone. Her practice was to reveal of others that which turned to their commendation. However, she had to struggle all her life against a natural vivacity which was sometimes betrayed by slight outbursts. But she knew how to amend admirably well her least wrongs either by humbly excusing herself as she knelt before her sisters or by obliging them with kindly consideration. Finally, the serenity of her countenance, her grave and dignified bearing, the restraint of her gaze, all bore witness to her intimacy with Jesus. Thus her heart, disencumbered from worldly affections, yearned for the days of Holy Communion. Finding her delight in this heavenly food, she wished to receive it daily. As a striking reward for such an ardent devotion to the Eucharist, this beloved senior died without agony only a few moments after receiving the divine viaticum, assurance of the eternal union.

Two events, of which we still experience the benefit, deserve to be recalled to the memory of a grateful posterity.

In the course of the summer of 1841, Father Quiblier, Superior, donated to the Grey Nuns a set of Stations of the Cross. Mother Beaubien, remembering the devotion which our holy Foundress had had for the Savior's cross, wished the installation to take place on the feast of Saint Marguerite, July 20, patronal feast of this beloved Mother. These same stations today deck the chapel of our Senior Sisters' infirmary.

Another donation, made by Father Larré, a Sulpician in 1839, and which was much appreciated by our Mothers, is that of the clock in the assembly room, still faithfully marking the time of religious exercises. The good chaplain used to come regularly each week, to wind it and adjust as needed the precious mechanism while with each rhythmic turn of the key, he uttered this profession of love: O, my God — may I love you — forever and ever.

Let us say to the praise of this devoted priest, that he had as much at heart the regularity of souls. In his conferences, Father Larré did not hesitate to remind the Sisters of the austere beauty of religious virtues and their multiple demands. But along with all true servants of God, he knew how to indicate ways of practising these great virtues readily with joy and love.

In the year 1843 a new movement was created within the community. An apostolic wave passed over everyone. Ceaselessly urged by the missionary bishops and seeing the immense needs of the dioceses, Bishop Bourget thought of asking religious congregations, ours in particular, to detach from their communities, colonies of apostles who would contribute to establishing the Reign of God in wilderness areas.

In view of this and to set on more solid bases the foundations he has in mind, the zealous prelate busied himself, along with Father Larré, at re-editing our Constitutions. Thus to the old Constitutions of Father Montgolfier which constituted the substance of these rules, they added, "the various changes imposed, either by the bishops in their canonical visits, or by the requirements of the times and the expansion of the work"; and they inserted certain special directives touching the foundations

that were about to be accepted. To close the collection of the "Original Commitment" were two venerable parts written by Father Normant and on which rested the moral edifice of this community because they enclosed the whole spirit of the Institute as inspired to the founders "and which by virtue of this deserve to be religiously preserved", say the editors.

Hereafter, the Grey Nuns called to spend themselves at the work of foundations, would draw up a handwritten copy of these rules which they would take to their new homes as their rule of conduct, the nourishment of their fervor, and the safeguard of their spirit.

It was at the time this renewal was taking place within our religious family that the quinquennial election of chief officers occurred.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL
UNDER
MOTHER ELISABETH-FORBES MC MULLEN
SIXTH SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE INSTITUTE

CHAPTER XIV
1843 — 1844

Let us continue to listen to the voices of the past. Anyone who loves the Institute has a genuine attraction for the slightest details of its history. "They are like golden nails which fasten to the memory, the principal facts to which they refer."

For this purpose, let us go back to our former Mother House, on the morning of October 2, 1843. A solemn ceremony had just taken place. Bishop Bourget, attended by Fathers Roupe and Larré, Sulpicians, had presided the quinquennial elections. The majority was in favor of Mother Forbes-Mc Mullen. The ringing of the bell was now calling the Sisters to thank God with a TE DEUM and to pay their respects to the Mother they had chosen. To support her in her laborious task of Superior General, the Chapter gave her Mother Beaubien as Assistant. Sister Catherine Forbes maintained in the office of Mistress of novices, would also be a great help to her.

Following the example of her predecessors, Mother Mc Mullen would work toward making love of the rule prevail as well as the spirit of charity so characteristic of our community.

Bishop Gay said, "It is of the nature of religious life well understood and conducted in a saintly fashion, to develop notably the virtue of love. To love less would be a strange consequence of a close union with God who is all love."⁽¹⁾ Before witnessing the development of this powerful life in our community under Mother Mc Mullen, let us go back to the beginning of this beautiful existence which was to be so precious for the Grey Nuns.

Mother Elisabeth Forbes-Mc Mullen was the daughter of John Forbes, born in Glengarry, Scotland, who came to Canada at age twenty with a regiment of Catholic Highlanders commanded by General Fraser.

After the capture of Quebec, where he had fought, John Forbes with several of his countrymen went to settle at Rivière du Loup as a farmer. The locality was named Fraserville in memory of the head of these new colonists.

It was at Rivière du Loup that John Forbes at age thirty-six, married Ann Nancy Mc Donnell age fifteen, daughter of Alexander Mc Donnell and of Mary Mc Mullen, born in Glengarry, County of Inverness, Scotland. After a few years, the Forbes family went to live at Saint-Andrew-West, near Cornwall. The old church of Saint-Andrew, which still exists and serves as the parish hall, beside the magnificent gothic church, was built by the piety and zeal of the newly arrived Scottish Catholics. It appears that John Forbes was one of the masters of this charitable enterprise, for he himself canvassed the various parishes as far as Quebec for funds for the construction of the new church. The faithful of St. Andrew did not always have a resident priest. The pastors of Saint-Régis, Fathers J.M. McDonald and Roupe sometimes went to say mass. Reverend Father F. Fitzsimmons, a Franciscan, pastor of St. Andrew frequently visited the Forbes home and celebrated Mass. On February 12, 1806, Elisabeth, our Mother Mc Mullen, was baptized there by him.

(1) Vie et vertus chrétiennes.

When Mr. Forbes died at the advanced age of 101, he still enjoyed a fully lucid mind. Fearing neither work nor hardship, he had acquired beautiful farms in view of keeping his thirteen children near him and bequeathing to them a family home.

The Forbes family gave the Church two bishops in the person of Mr. John's nephews, Bishops John and William Forbes, three sisters to our community in the persons of his three daughters. Catherine, born on April 14, 1804, made her profession under the name of Sister Forbes on June 30, 1824. She performed the duties of mistress of novices from 1838 to 1853 and for more than a quarter century she was administrator of St. Patrick's Orphanage in Montreal. She died on March 28, 1877.

Isabella, born in March 1800, made her profession on February 22, 1825, under the name of Sister Mc Donnell and died on July 31, 1832.

Elisabeth, who was the third, had the good fortune of growing up in this family of faith, integrity, and solid virtue. Consequently, the beautiful qualities of mind and heart with which God had endowed her, developed rapidly.

At the age of seventeen, the gifted young girl heard God calling her to follow him in the realm of charity. Her elder sister, Isabella who had closer affinity with Elisabeth, shared the same yearning and answered the call with equal generosity: "Come, follow me!" In the novitiate, they found their sister Catherine glowing with the desire to work at her sanctification. Their mutual love, resting on the same love for God, would now be nourished in sacrifice.

The characteristics of her race: authority, generosity, energy; Elisabeth possessed them all. With a clever mind, richly endowed, sustained by a solid education, having a rare ease of understanding and of adaptation, full of courage and prodigious activity, the novice immediately applied herself to developing these gifts of the Lord.

God perhaps wanted to render more supernatural the zeal of the future sister. Soon after her admission to profession, he sent

her an illness which brought her to death's door and procured for her the benefit of Extreme-Unction. Several of the administrators judged it prudent to return the novice to her family. Mother Lemaire, however, decided she would pronounce her vows. She did so on February 22, 1825 trusting in the word of the Master who said: "Take my yoke; it is sweet and light and you will find rest for your souls."

Gifted with sound judgment and great competence in business, Sister McMullen was first employed in the bursar's office, then was soon named treasurer. Having a childlike docility and a supernatural respect towards her superiors, she went about her duties with spontaneity, without hesitation, as if she were ready beforehand for all that had to be done. Possessing a great love for the community, she would never have missed an occasion of displaying her interest towards it. As soon as an issue arose, she saw at a glance its various aspects, and immediately went to work if obedience or circumstance required or allowed it.

We saw her great compassion toward the unfortunate during the famine of 1832 and the insurrection of 1838. If, as it has been said, man is kind to the degree that he forgets himself, gives of himself, or sacrifices himself for the benefit of others, then Mother Mc Mullen's kindness was extraordinary. Nothing was an effort for her when her thoughtfulness, always on the alert, made her surmise a distress to ease, a sorrow to comfort or to spare. She possessed the knowledge of the poor of which the Psalmist praised the blessedness in Psalm XI. It is towards the weak and the lowly, the sick and the humble that her feelings were most easily aroused to evangelical charity. Her mind was also constantly on her far-away daughters. They were the object of her maternal affection.

Where did this delicate charity come from? From her piety, we shall see, as we outline as closely as possible, the portrait of her soul. Piety branded Mother Mc Mullen with a strong imprint and for her, it was much more the expression of filial love toward God, Christ, and the Church, than the mere use of rules and formulas.

The maintenance of religious discipline was her preoccupation, but this alone did not satisfy her; she also desired its spirit. Accordingly, while watching over the integral observance of the rule, she commended intimate union to God. It is in it that she drew insight, strength, religious affection for her sisters. One noticed the kind Mother's fervor at Mass and the care with which she followed the Church's liturgy. She was admired in her collaboration with the priesthood. She cultivated with great care in herself and around her, the love of the Church, veneration for the Holy Father, and respect toward priests. Without difficulty, one perceives in her letters, her submission to and her veneration toward her ecclesiastical superiors.

It is appropriate to emphasize here, her enthusiastic admiration for authority. Called by her occupation for twenty-seven years to support and assist five of our Mothers General, she always remained in the background, having faith in the wisdom that God by his very nature, gives to legitimate authority. She gave them to the full, the tribute of her entire submission, humble deference and admirable zeal.

As a sister deeply devoted to her community, Mother Mc Mullen found the means of securing a multitude of precious documents and of drawing up very useful memoirs.

Let us speak of the apostolate of this beloved superior who combined with the refinement of a religious, the strength and valor of a soldier. From the beginning of her administration, Mother Mc Mullen saw opening up before her the vast field of distant missions with the founding of the Red River group. Let us relate this story. It will make us appreciate the noble works of charity and the heroic courage of our first missionaries.

It was in 1731, that a Canadian nobleman, after having distinguished himself in European wars, had returned to his native land. Born on the banks of the St. Lawrence, Mr. Gauthier de Varennes de la Vérendrye had travelled up the great river to its source in the North West. There, the Laurentian chain presented an obstacle which had not till then been overcome. Beyond these mountains were unknown lands as yet to be dis-

covered. Uncertain data gave rise to the suspicion that there were lakes and rivers flowing toward the Pacific Ocean, this western sea which was the object of the dreams and aspirations of explorers in North America.

Mr. de la Vérendrye was aroused by the ambition of endowing his native country with the rich territory that might be lying west of Lake Superior. The adventurous discoverer estimated the advantages that would result from the discovery of a passage linking the waters of the St. Lawrence to those which, it was suspected, flowed into the western sea. Therefore, on June 8, 1731, Mr. Pierre Gauthier de Varennes de la Vérendrye left Montreal, at his own expense and peril, to explore the land to the West as far as the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

The illusions with which rank, fortune and the world glitter before those who esteem them had faded for a niece of Mr. de la Vérendrye, a young widow 30 years old. The world had lost its enticement; fortune threatened to be no longer favorable. In a word, the earth became too small for the heart of Madam d'Youville. She, too, had to make new discoveries: to find a passage through the ruggedness and perils of life to an ocean of peace where her heart, wounded by things of earth, could experience security and find the source of untold blessings. In June, her uncle had bidden her farewell. In July, the youngest of her children died and was buried beside his father who had passed away a year earlier. As Madam d'Youville wept over all these losses and separations during the summer of 1731, she resolved on the advice of Father Dulescoat, P.S.S. her director, to give herself entirely to God and to work only for Him and for the poor.

Precisely at the same time as legitimate ambition urged discoverers towards the Red River, a thought of generous abnegation inspired the foundation of the Grey Nuns' Institute destined to take root on the borders of the Red, Assiniboine, and Saskatchewan Rivers, on the shores of all these rivers discovered by the noble family of the de Varennes, uncles and cousins of our beloved Foundress.

Many Indian tribes inhabited these far-away lands. Some Jesuit priests had accompanied the discoverers, shared their toil, and mingled their blood with theirs as they fell under the hatchet of the Indians. The conquest of Canada by England put an end to the French expeditions and the missionaries abandoned the idea of going to the North-West. The religious consequences of the discovery of the West were thus paralyzed for a long time.

The Catholic Church was avid for the salvation of souls, of all souls: and so its leaders in Canada longed for the time when it would be possible to send other missionaries to the land discovered by de la Vérendrye and already soaked with the blood of martyrs. Insurmountable obstacles delayed the accomplishment of this pious project until 1818, at which time Fathers Norbert Provencher and Sévère Dumoulin went to settle at the Red River. We are not about to describe the works of these apostles but we must make known one of the concerns of Bishop Provencher who, having become a bishop on May 12, 1822, understood that something essential was lacking so that his work might be completed and assured of future success. He needed a community of religious to prepare young girls for the duties that God demands of Christian women. But where would he get religious who would consent to come to the Red River? In Quebec the Red River was considered to be a dangerous far-away land. Bishop Provencher wrote to this and that community asking for sisters. All sorts of difficulties blocked his project. Tired of his lack of success, the missionary bishop came to Montreal on September 9, 1843, to pour out his soul to his intimate friend, Bishop Bourget. He told him of his great distress concerning the fate of so many children who were growing up in ignorance. He did not conceal his frustration.

Bishop Bourget listened with obvious sympathy. Suddenly his face lit up: "My dear", he said to the missionary, "it is Grey Nuns you need..." "Grey Nuns? But they are Sisters of Charity who work with the crippled and the dying. Would they accept to teach little Indian girls on the far-away banks of the Red

River?" "Nothing prevents us from proposing this to them" replied the bishop of Montreal in a tone of gentle conviction.

A few days later, the two bishops went to the General Hospital. A deeper silence than usual pervaded the establishment. "Our Mothers were preparing to celebrate on the following day, September 14, one of their principal feasts, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross." At that time, according to the custom, they were assembled for the annual Chapter.⁽¹⁾

Advised of the arrival of the visitors, Mother Beaubien, then superior, immediately went to greet them and she ushered them amid her family fortunately assembled. A few friendly words were exchanged and soon Bishop Provencher broached the subject he so wished to settle.

In a description rendered vivid by the ardor of his apostolic zeal, he showed our Mothers a harvest of souls to prepare for heaven: children to instruct, Christian mothers to train, sick to care for, old folks to shelter and to lead to God. With winning simplicity he concluded, "As I left the Red River, I said to God: You know that I need good religious to help me to do your work here. Lead me toward the community where you wish me to find them. And I left trusting I would be heard."

Then, turning to Mother Beaubien, he inquired, "How many Sisters are there here?" "We are thirty six your Grace." — "Thirty-six? But you don't need such a large number! Are there not some who would like to dedicate themselves to the service of our missions?" The only reply was a bashful silence which betrayed a generous glow. The bishop understood the consequence of it and he retired with a hopeful heart. The apostle's zeal had emitted sparks which set hearts afire.

An old family tradition, we remember, held that Sister Prud'homme had predicted the establishment of the Grey Nuns at the Red River several years before Bishop Provencher had

(1) This chapter was held to see to the financial accounts and infractions of the rule since the last chapter. Ways and means were taken to remedy the situation.

penetrated this region. "It is not the present generation," she said designating the novices, — "which will go to this country, but that which will follow it." And in the year of her death (1820), she said with conviction to Mother Coullée who was introducing a young candidate to her: "Mother, this young lady will become an excellent missionary for the Red River."

The outcome would eventually prove the forecast. On October 12, of the following month, Bishop Provencher could write to the Bishop of Quebec: "My affairs with the Grey Nuns are going well. These dear Sisters request that I provide their Sisters a little revenue to purchase their clothing. They shall count on the country's resources for their food. They would be content with thirty louis sterling which shall be theirs to use. Are you prepared, in Quebec, to lay out four or five hundred louis for those who will be named? Nothing is as yet concluded."

The bishop of Quebec's reply, dated October 16, was a real consolation to Bishop Provencher. Approval, encouragement, congratulations, the promise to provide the requested sum; all came at the right moment to facilitate his project.⁽¹⁾ On October 19, he decided that the time had come to present his official request to the superior of the Grey Nuns.

She was then Mother Mc Mullen, recently appointed to replace Mother Beaubien at the election of October 2. Previously assistant in the community, Mother Mc Mullen was no stranger to the negotiations that had been initiated. Only her position as first superior prevented her from going herself to work at the foundation in question. Her correspondence testifies⁽²⁾ that in the past she had attempted proceedings with the bishop of Montreal in order to obtain permission to dedicate herself to the Indian missions. One can then imagine with what a kindly attitude she received Bishop Provencher's proposal.

(1) Bishop Provencher venerated the jurisdiction given to his first superior the bishop of Quebec. He therefore submitted to him his personal views to obtain wise counsel.

(2) Letter of April 26, 1844.

The bishop was requesting three sisters for the future foundation. "He wished its principal goal to be Christian teaching and the training of youth in managing a household, and claimed that in time, works of charity could be added, such as were in practice at the Mother House. To bring Christian teaching into families which lived in darkness, to modify their manners and customs, to perfect homes, giving rise to skills such as the making of cloth etc... to put a Christian seal on all that goes on in a home so that people might practice virtue and prepare for eternity, by utilizing things of earth to earn true happiness: such was, above all, the plan which the great missionary had in mind."⁽¹⁾

This was a magnificent program worthy of a heart in which two loves blossomed: love for civilization and love for the Gospel.

To contribute to the establishment of "this beautiful work", the bishop deplored the fact that he could not offer much by way of contribution to those who would have the courage to devote themselves to "this beautiful work." "However", he wrote, "here is what I think I can promise them: the cost of the trip; a house proportioned to their needs which will be assessed on the spot. Pertaining to this house, there will be a garden; a 100-acre farm; five hundred louis sterling which the community can invest as it sees fit. One must expect that the beginning of this foundation might be difficult; but I can truthfully say that it is my intention that the generous and charitable Sisters who will come to help me fulfill the duties of my office and lighten the burden of my solicitude toward the end of my career, will not lack for necessities to realize the goal of the foundation, unless I personally lack the means."

These proposals impelled our Mothers to make a decision. In such a serious matter, must they not consult the Holy Spirit? The Sisters, the poor, and the children joined in fervent prayer.

⁽¹⁾ Letter of Bishop Provencher October 19, 1843 and mémoires of Bishop Taché.

On October 30, the Administrative Council accepted the mission of the Red River.

There remained only to name the four foundresses. So as not to err in this important choice, all implored anew the One of whom it is said in Scripture, "that He gives wisdom to those who request it."

The following were designated: Sister Marie-Louise Valade as superior, Sisters Lagrave, Coutlée-Saint-Joseph, and Lafrance.

Involved in the administration of the Hospital either as councillor or as trustee, Sister Valade who had pronounced her vows on October 21, 1828, possessed a knowledge of business. Her poise, her discrimination, and her knowledge of the human heart soon proved that she also possessed the secret of governing minds. Zealously committed to the rule, to the traditions and customs of the Institute, she secured for herself a transcript of these sacred articles so as to imbue her teachings with them.

Sister Lagrave, the young candidate in whom Sister Prud'homme had glimpsed "an excellent missionary for the Red River" was joyous and serene of character, animated by constant union with God. She was delightfully charming at recreation, and furthermore, she was ingenious in taking on the greatest part of drudgery.

Still young, Sisters Coutlée-Saint-Joseph and Lafrance would bring to their new environment the rich contribution of a zeal and energy which would not be disheartened by the most demanding sacrifices nor by the most difficult tasks.

Such were the four missionaries chosen by God to go to this wilderness where, with their sweat and their tears, they would write a poem of charity.

"Let us bless the Lord", Bishop Provencher wrote from Trois Rivières when he learned that all was settled and that his wishes would finally come true."⁽¹⁾ Let us bless his Divine Providence which condescends to support me in such a special and visible

(1) Letter of the Bishop of Quebec.

way. Now, I have all my people and their fare. Last week, I received letters which made me admire God's goodness. Sir George Simpson granted me the fare for two priests and four Sisters for the price of 175 louis sterling which I did not hesitate to transmit to him."

Urged to go to France in the interests of his missions, Bishop Provencher took advantage of his trip to Eastern Canada in order to be there as early as the beginning of January. Not knowing exactly how long his sojourn in Europe would last, he instructed the missionaries to be ready to leave in the spring as soon as travelling by canoe would be possible. The missionaries, wholly taken up with their adopted work, busied themselves with the preparation required for the foundation. God, who had wanted to test the generosity of his servants, reserved for them the joy of greeting their bishop on his return to Montreal on March 25. The departure was set for April 23.

Several days later, a letter from Monsignor Signay of Quebec came to comfort the future missionaries and show them the pious solicitude with which the Church condescended to take interest in their project.

Bishop Bourget, who followed with interest the developments of this foundation, gave them this sound advice in his letter of appointment:

"Our dear daughters, may the Lord fill you with the spirit of your venerable Foundress. Do not forget that you are going to preach Jesus Christ in a far-away country by the practise of religious virtues. To accomplish this sublime mission, live your rule with love. Obey your worthy bishop blindly and those he will give you as directors. Have among you but one heart and one soul. Love each other enough not to fear mutual warning of faults. Maintain with your Sisters in Montreal bonds of tender affection. Daughters of the Cross, do not get discouraged in the great difficulties you will encounter in your holy enterprise. When all appears hopeless to you, believe firmly that God will come to your help. Be deeply convinced of this truth, that alone we can do nothing, but with God all things are possible. This is

the secret of success in the most important matters. Count yourselves fortunate that the Lord wishes through you to make his Holy Mother known, loved, and served. Always remember that at the foot of the cross, we became children of the Mother of Sorrows.

May the sweet and holy peace of God be with you!"

The bishop recommended that the missionaries renew their consecration to Mary at the altar of the confraternity and that they put their journey under her protection. The ceremony took place on the twentieth at Bishop Provencher's Mass. A choir of young ladies sang appropriate hymns. Their voices filled with emotion caused many tears to flow. The courageous Sisters alone appeared impervious to sadness.

On leaving the cathedral, the foundresses, accompanied by Mother McMullen, were led to the convent of the Sisters of Providence where a substantial breakfast was served to them⁽¹⁾; from there to the Bishop's residence; then to the Sulpician Seminary; and finally to the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu and to the Congregation of Notre-Dame. All vied with each other as to who would praise most highly the generosity of the missionaries and all offered their best wishes for the success of their future mission.

On the morning of April 23, 1844, Bishop Bourget came to the altar to offer to the Eternal Father in one same oblation, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and that of the first four Grey Nuns who were offering themselves for the glory of his name. Sister Lagrave who had directed the choir for the past twenty years, did so for the last time that morning. But only her impressive voice could be heard, for such was the emotion that touched all hearts. This was not yet, however, the hour of sacrifice for an unexpected incident deferred it to the following day.

(1) New establishment of the Sisters of Providence situated near the cathedral, today Saint-Jacques church. That house is known as "Asile de la Providence."

On the twenty-fourth, five priests, friends of the Hospital or relatives of the foundresses, came to celebrate Mass for the success of the journey. After a few words with them, the new missionaries kissed their Sisters good-bye. Then they went to the chapel between two rows of old folks and orphans who were there to pay homage to the greatness of their sacrifice. After the prayers of the itinerary, the little colony directed its steps toward the avenue leading to the church. In this season, the avenue was beautiful as the sap rose in the trees and the birds chirped merrily while building their nests.

Kind friends had put their carriages at the disposal of the travellers to take them as far as Lachine. Mother Mc Mullen and her assistant accompanied them. One last good-bye to the Sisters and the poor along the avenue, and the carriages soon disappeared from view. Our first missionaries sped away from their dear monastery with the thought that never again would they see the persons and places so dear to their hearts. At Lachine the travellers stopped at the home of Sir George Simpson. The governor of Hudson Bay with his usual courtesy, invited them in for refreshments before going to the place of embarkation at Dorval Islands.

Toward eleven, the company of travellers was advancing in full current on the river. Suddenly, the sky grew dark, lightning flashed, thunder roared, and soon rain fell in torrents. The narrator wrote, "It appeared that the evil spirits, enraged at seeing four poor sisters braving danger to bring the knowledge of God to souls under his control, had unleashed the fury of the elements against them." Then the travellers, soaked by the downpour landed on one of the islands and set up their tents for shelter.

On the following day, the 25th, by four o'clock in the morning, the small fleet was travelling full sail, under the patronage of St. Mark. The birch bark canoe occupied by the Sisters was forty feet long by five feet wide. Eight men handled the oars. The craft contained a cargo of four thousand pounds besides sails, tents, bedding, food supplies, and cooking utensils. The

Sisters were seated more or less comfortably among the luggage. Such would be their abode for a two-month duration.

Our dear Mother Mc Mullen who had accompanied her first missionary daughters to their place of embarkation, who had sustained and encouraged them, also found the means of sending them a kind message four days after their departure.

“Our last farewell on this island which witnessed your first attempt toward your great adventure caused me great pain. If it had been in my power, I would certainly not have left you. I would have escorted you right to your destination, happy thus to have relieved your fatigue and your privations. But God, who gave me an intense desire to go to the Indian missions of the Red River, did not allow me to accomplish my project.

Since you were the fortunate ones called to engage in the work for which I was not found worthy, offer to God for me, part of your sacrifice.

Listen to me saying to you, Courage! courage! God will not be outdone in generosity. The salvation of a single Indian is worth more in his estimation than the treasures of the whole universe.

Recommend me and our community to the prayers of these children of the woods. Tell them that I love them and that they are close to my heart. Make our Mother d’Youville known to them, that her name may echo through their forests and plains. Saint Francis Xavier rejoices at seeing you on your way. Following his example, go forward undaunted by difficulties.”

Let us also follow our first missionaries in their journey of fifty-eight days.

Those who have travelled much or read much are aware of the early means of travel in the Northwest a century ago.

The birch bark canoe, the oars, the tent were the implements used. Rapids, portages, encampments filled the imagination with visions of danger and hardships of every description which the traveller apprehended.

In 1844 our first missionaries made their long journey to the Red River in this manner. Through fifty-eight days they sailed along huge banks and were exposed to great dangers. Let us examine their frail canoe, let us reconstitute the impressive crossing of the rapids. Bishop Taché gave such an accurate description of this in the account of his first journey that we shall borrow from him a few excerpts.

“The canoe is of birch bark sewn together with roots of the fir or spruce tree. The bark is lined with very thin boards of cedar or other light wood; these are called ribbands. Across these ribbands at approximately five inch intervals are the curbs or protective rim which brace the whole canoe. These curbs are called floor timber or floor plate. Their extremities are fastened to the wood that goes all around the canoe and the ends of which are curved to form the prows. The canoe is approximately thirty to forty feet in length, five in width and two in depth. It is solid, has a great capacity, and is so light that two men can easily carry it on their shoulders. The craft is propelled by means of oars which the travellers row rhythmically with surprising strength and speed.

The person at the helm stands alone at the back. The steersman is also alone at the front. The middle men are placed in pairs on seats destined for them.”

Bishop Taché adds, “what great difficulties the travellers have in the rapids! If the rapid is not too great, it is crossed on a tow line. The passengers go by land when that is possible. The men at the ends of the canoe take hold of their long poles, the only implement which they use in such circumstances. The prows of the canoe are firmly fastened with a long cord at the end of which the oarsmen take their place, usually in the water, where upon a signal from the steersman, they exert strong effort to tow the canoe.”

“I have never seen this operation,” says Bishop Taché “without a sentiment of distress. In the dashing of the waves which break against the rocks, in the nervous voice of the steersman giving orders, in the exertion of the men on the tow-

line, in the danger to which the canoe is exposed as it is suspended precariously over the abyss, there is something which wears one out and which would make me prefer portages if this mode were not longer.

When the violence of the rapids does not allow crossing on the tow-line, then the travellers must resort to a portage. The canoe is unloaded. Two men carry it on their shoulders. Two others accompany them in order to replace them from time to time. The rest of the crew follows with part of the cargo; then come the missionaries with the remainder of the luggage.

For these portages the men wear a special harness, consisting of a large band of leather which they wear on the forehead. At the extremities of this band are sewn two others which are narrower and much longer and which serve to fasten the burden. These are the branches of the harness. Each man must wear two of these head-pieces. Some can wear as many as eight but these are rare exceptions. Each man fastens a piece of luggage to the braces of his harness and places it on his back, with the band against his forehead. He applies a second over the first so that it bears on the neck. This second piece does not appear placed to consolidate the voyageur; however, it helps him by counterbalancing the first and preventing it from drawing the head too far back. Despite such precautions it has happened that travellers who were too weak, toppled over and injured their head against rocks. Such accidents only happen on steep banks. It is in this manner that the men carry all the luggage and three or four trips are required to do it. One must have a heart of bronze in order not to be touched by the hardships of these poor men.

Let us add, besides, that when the fragile bark receives a flaw, it must be immediately unloaded on the shore and undergo repairs. There are two ways of carrying out these repairs. If the damage is considerable, a patch is applied and must be sewn on with spruce or fir roots. If the damage is minor, it may be repaired with resin. Since all the seams are covered with resin to prevent water from penetrating, it often happens that this

resin melts with the heat and comes off on stones. The canoe must then be resinated even several times a day."

It was amid such hardships that our missionaries journeyed. The route included the Ottawa River from Lachine, the Mattawa, Muskoka Lake, Nipissing Lake, Frenchmen's River, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, the Kaministiquia River, Rainy Lake, Lake of the Woods, the Winnipeg River and numerous other streams. These fourteen hundred miles were cut up by seventy-eight portages and almost as many semi-portages.

Bishop Provencher who was to support our missionaries by his presence and to give them the solace of daily Mass, having become ill at the time of the departure, they were forced to leave without him and were deprived of this joy and support which in the future would be rarely lacking for travellers in the same condition.

The diary of our first missionaries, written at the daily stops or at the nightly bivouacs, is not drawn up in a literary fashion. This is not necessary! Thought is born of the heart. By their pen it is expressed simply. It will be all the better received by our religious family. Let us glean a few extracts from their letters.

Sister Valade writes first:

"At the Island of Dorval, we were still near enough and we spent the night as we were, but the next morning, when we had to leave everything that was dear to us, my heart swelled. The travellers sang to forget the sadness of this moment. I admired Sister Lagrave who sang, 'Béniissons à jamais...' (let us bless the Lord...) As for me, I had only my tears with which to bless the Lord..."

And on May 2, Sister Lagrave, the singer, wrote:

"What shall I tell you? I can hardly collect a few thoughts. I believe the high wind has scattered them over Lake Huron. I sit on a rock; my head is spinning, my heart is fluttering. Let me tell you first that the journey is very difficult... much more than I expected; however, God will grant me the grace to make it to the end... Sister Valade and I have not slept since

our departure; our two younger sisters are managing fairly well. The bad weather is lasting and when the rain stops, contrary winds delay our progress. When we must encamp, we are usually soaked by the rain or shivering from the cold. It is true that we build a good fire; but while we burn on one side, we freeze on the other. We set up the tent, and spread an oilcloth on the ground with a blanket over it and our bed is made. You can imagine how chilly we are, especially when it has rained all day. When it rains through the night, and this happens quite frequently, our poor abode does not protect us very much and our clothing is wet. Despite everything, I am filled with courage to carry out the will of God even if it were to cost me much more. I have embraced the cross and I want to carry it until death if need be, according to the spirit of our holy rule."

"On the rocky crags where we are encamped today, there are many snakes. The men have killed four. Yesterday, we jumped several fairly dangerous rapids. The boatmen uttered cries of joy as we crossed these rapids. I laughed heartily but the other sisters were as pale as death. So far, we have had no misfortune. Sometimes the portages are long and tiring, especially for me when we must climb mountains, open a way through the brush, cross ravines on tree trunks which are dry and rotted; I do not feel safe!... But if we have difficulties, mirth is not lacking."

Until now, our missionaries were filled with encouragement amid the tedium and fatigue they experienced. The Divine Master was now going to test them in a crucible.

The steersman wanting to set sail had just called, "All aboard! All aboard!" The Sisters came down hurriedly from the rocky crag. Sister Lagrave was also making haste when her left foot slipped between two rocks, she fell and was unable to get up again. Her companions came to her help but all their efforts were fruitless. She was heavy and the pain was excruciating. Two men then picked her up carefully and carried her to the canoe.

"You see that the good Lord is honoring us with his cross," the poor superior wrote to Mother Mc Mullen. "I thank him with all my heart; however, this cross would have been less painful upon our arrival rather than midway along the route. May the Divine Will be done!"

The whole crew was dismayed by this accident. There was no more singing in order not to tire the dear Sister. "For sure," the boatmen said to themselves, "she won't be singing her beautiful hymns for us." They did everything they could for her and carried her with precaution to the different encampments. In order to be less burdensome, Sister Lagrave willingly consented to spend the whole day in the canoe and to be taken out only at night.

At mealtime, while everyone was eating on shore, the Sisters brought her her portion prepared with great sympathy. At night, they prepared her bed making it softer at the expense of their own comfort.

The dear disabled Sister tried to be merry and she encouraged the boatmen to resume their joyous songs. She found the courage to finish the letter she had begun on the rocky crag of Lake Huron.

"... As I began my letter, I was not expecting the accident that happened to me. I told you that as I sat on a cliff near Lake Huron my head was spinning. Now my feet are the problem. I had a bad fall as I was about to board. My left foot slipped and caused me to land on it. The pain was so severe that I thought I had fractured it in several pieces. They carried me into the canoe where I found little relief. But what could I do? I thanked God for this portion of his Holy Cross which I accepted. We shall probably travel eight days without making any portages. The Good Lord who is testing me may heal me in this interval.

In the evening of the day on which I injured my foot, we stopped at Fort de la Cloche. Mr. Cameron received us with delicate courtesy. He put at our disposal his little house where there was a warm fire; we needed it. As soon as I had been

settled in this cottage, I was visited by several Métis and Indian women. You cannot believe how happy I was. I kissed the mothers and children believing I was already at the Red River, my adopted country. These wonderful women appeared distressed at seeing me in pain. We left the following morning at four o'clock. They returned with their husbands and accompanied us to the shore.

I shall close, dear Sisters. I am in pain and very cold..."

In a letter of May 16, 1844 Sister Lagrave wrote further, "It is because of the help of your fervent prayers that I feel so full of courage today.

I confess that I do not recognize myself, so happy am I to be able to imitate our Divine Master who had no place to lay his head. God is so good to relieve the grief that filled my heart. I find myself as happy to lie down on my blanket as I was to lie on my feather bed."

The craft moved along several more days and finally arrived at Sault Sainte-Marie. This stop was eagerly desired by our Sisters. It was here that Mr. Doré would transfer to other hands the direction of the expedition. He fulfilled his task splendidly. Now, he would go back laden with letters.

The farther one goes away from home, the keener are the memories. On coming upon some object which elicits the thought of it, one questions it as if it could answer. How often have we not entrusted to a passing cloud, to a bird flying toward the horizon that has disappeared, a message of love? The dear missionaries did this. As he left them, Mr. Doré took along their letters but it was with regret that they saw him go. He had been so kind to them!

An unexpected and even un hoped for meeting was a happy diversion from the sombre thoughts which our Sisters had harbored because of the departure of Mr. Doré. What a surprise for them when they noticed among those who came to meet

them on the beach, two priests whom they knew and whose presence at the Sault they could not explain! They were Fathers Laflèche and Bourassa, companions of Bishop Provencher. Having left with His Excellency on April 27, they already should have reached St. Boniface. But Divine Providence seems to have retained them at the Sault to console our sisters. They would travel on from there with them and say Mass for them.

A few hours of rest in this fort gave the travellers the advantage of knowing its position. It is a centre into which civilization is beginning to find its way. Since their departure from Ottawa, the Sisters had seen nothing but uncultivated land, rugged rocks, uninhabited places. Here at Sault Ste. Marie, there was life. They noticed a fair number of French Canadian families who appeared happy to welcome the priests and Sisters.

Sault Ste. Marie is the water course which joins Lake Huron to the majestic Lake Superior. Because of the vast expanse of the latter, it was impossible to cross it by canoe. They had to travel along its northern shore which was a longer route. The distance could be about 140 leagues.

Let us again glean a few lines from Bishop Taché's account.

"When we see Lake Superior, we are no longer surprised at the extent and majesty of the St. Lawrence. Only from a source as pure as it is plentiful could our beautiful river flow; and the king of lakes needs the king of rivers to carry its waters to the ocean." The illustrious archbishop adds: "In Lake Superior, there are a good deal fewer islands than in Lake Huron, which increases for canoes the great difficulty of navigation. When this large body of water is put into motion by the wind, ocean-size waves arise, so that the crews of two canoes with sail lose sight of each other completely, from one billow to the next. It is easy to understand that birch bark is a very feeble shield against the raging tide."

Until these new worries came about, the little community navigated peacefully in abandonment. Care and consideration were given to the poor invalid. Sister Valade, the Superior, kept

in her motherly heart all her concerns. She remained silent about them. Sister St. Joseph, the patient's untiring nurse, increased her tender care. Sister Lafrance continually prayed or spoke of heaven and of the merit of trials. Everything went well for several days. Soon Thunder Bay, a dangerous spot, appeared in the distance. They had to venture through it. The wind was favorable... Suddenly, it began to blow furiously. The waves heaved mightily, breaking against the sides of the fragile vessels, causing them to vibrate so violently that without God's help, the boats could have foundered at the next impact. The pilots struggled desperately. Everyone believed this to be the end and recommended his soul to God's mercy. There was a dismal silence... Suddenly the steersman uttered a cry of faith and hope: Pray! Pray! Let us pray together! We never call upon God in vain! Mary is the Star of the Sea! They began the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and immediately entered an inlet where they were sheltered against the storm. Another cry of gratitude this time, rose toward their powerful Protectress. All the travellers recited the rosary together. A period of calm beamed upon their thanksgiving. They landed at Fort William.

Navigation on the Great Lakes had come to an end. It was here, at Fort William, that the big canoes were exchanged for lighter ones in view of the many portages which were yet to be made. Because of this event Fort William was noted in the diary of the travellers. But another unforgettable incident would be engraved in the memory of the Sisters. They had hardly disembarked when the boatswain informed the Superior that the crew could no longer carry the crippled sister. She would have to be left at the Fort until she recovered. This was crushing news for the Mother and her daughters! Mother Valade could not believe what she had heard! This man had been so kind and the boatmen so attentive and obliging. What excuses were presented! What entreaties were put forth! But the boatswain, far from lending a favorable ear, disappeared completely so as to be inaccessible to any other course.

Finally, Father Laflèche succeeded in approaching him. He described to him the predicament of the Sisters, but in vain. The boatswain persisted in his scheme. We can imagine the distress of the poor Sisters; or rather let us read a letter from Sister Lagrave; it will help us understand the touching scene. This is what she wrote:

"... After two hours of lively discussion, it was decided that I would stay at Fort William until I was able to walk; otherwise I was to go back to Montreal with the leader when the canoes returned. Father Laflèche was entreated by our Mother to transmit this message to me; she did not have the strength to do so. By his demeanor, by the pallor of his face, I knew that all was finished for me. 'Sister', he said to me, 'it appears that it is the will of God that you remain here for some time. The men say it is impossible to carry you.'

I cannot describe what went on within me. I tried to contain myself and I placed myself the best I could, in the heart of my Savior crucified, remembering that a Grey Nun must truly be a daughter of the Cross. Almost immediately, a sentiment of resignation replaced the anguish. I became calm and disposed to submit to all that the Good Lord would ask of me."

"Oh, how admirable are God's designs when we entrust ourselves entirely to them!" wrote Sister Valade. "Suddenly, one of the clerks of the Company to whom I had recommended my interests, came in joyfully to tell me there was no longer any need to fear. At the Fort, they had consented to allow all four of us to leave together. You can easily imagine our relief then, and the joy of our dear Sister Lagrave! Dinner was being prepared at that time. I assure you that we ate with a hearty appetite. Everything was seasoned with such great contentment!"

Missionaries of the Red River, you are approaching that far away country, your land of adoption. You have just crossed the point that will separate you forever from the place so dear to your existence. Continue onward! This land will be your land... its people, tribes, nations, will be your people...

One night, the travellers arrived near a waterfall. To go around it, they had to climb a rock twelve to fifteen feet high. Those who were agile simply followed the steep pathway, but how were they to get our poor invalid up with the stretcher? Father Laflèche suggested that the stretcher be fastened to the top of the rock. The leaders climbed up and threw ropes to the boatmen who fastened them firmly to the stretcher which they then raised. While those above helped by pulling, others jumped into the water to hold the canoe. They were not successful, however, in preventing it from swinging back and forth. At a given signal, the ropes tightened, the men on the rock above pulled carefully. It was thus that was made this perilous ascent while the Sisters looking on were petrified with fear.

Sister Lagrave, always trusting, let herself be carried and deposited on the rock where her companions joined her. Deeply impressed by such great peril, they offered fervent thanksgiving to the Lord.

As they continued their journey, they crossed Rainy Lake which empties into Rainy River. The river has a course of some thirty leagues and is said to resemble Chambly River. The fertility of the soil it moistens seems to respond to the beauty of its clear water.

At the end of Rainy Lake, there is a place called Coutchiching. The first house and the first fort in the country were built there.

Fort St. Pierre was built under the orders of Mr. Christophe de Lajemmerais, a brother of Mother d'Youville, who had come to this place to continue the expedition with his uncle, Mr. de la Vérendrye. His cousin, the young de la Vérendrye, accompanied him.

The canoe continued to advance. They reached Lake of the Woods, a real labyrinth because of the multitude of its small islands. It is here that the brave discoverer of the North-West suffered the painful loss of his son massacred by the Sioux along with Father Aulnauld a Jesuit priest, and twenty-one

Frenchmen. Crosses erected along the coast recalled the memory of these martyrs. What devotedness and heroism the sight of these crosses elicited! As our missionary Sisters remembered them, they felt their courage increase as well as their joy at being called to this providential mission.

The distance to cover through the islands of Lake of the Woods is sixty-four miles from the mouth of Rivière de la Prairie to the portage at Rat River. The canoes entered the Winnipeg River almost immediately, where they encountered many rapids and waterfalls. It was in this river that the travellers made their seventy-eighth portage without mentioning an equal number of semi portages.

We can imagine how glad the boatmen were to pack away their harness! With great contentment they sailed their canoes to the lower part of the river at Fort Alexander.

Lake Winnipeg came into full view. It had to be crossed; therefore they took courage. They reached the mouth of the Red River. Now there was hope! Hearts were beating faster. The view encompassed the whole horizon at once. The river was narrow, sometimes flowing rapidly, and especially, it had a winding course. As they neared the end, the canoes seemed lighter. Wanting to accelerate their progress, the missionaries took the spare oars and began to row... they were so eager to arrive!

The travellers stopped at Fort St. Pierre. Sir George Simpson was there. He came aboard. Kind and gracious as he had been at Lachine on April 24, he invited them to stop off at his place until the following day, so that he might notify Bishop Provencher. They were so close to port... only twenty-five miles!... They thanked the governor and rowed away.

Evening came and shadows covered the coast line. Just as in nature, silence reigned in the craft. The oars rhythmically paddled the water which was now peaceful, now foaming. The moon rose like a queen in the starry sky. From the whole aerial court, splendor descended on the valley. Meanwhile reflection

on the water produced a few shadows... of certain buildings perhaps? or of the rooftops of some beautiful homes? Not at all! There were none at that time along the Red River. But there were two white steeples appearing. The missionary Sisters could hardly guess what they were. The men shouted with joy: "It's the Church! It's the Church!" Yes it was the Church, the cathedral, the bishop's residence and its dependencies. Finally, here and there, were a few dwellings. This was St. Boniface, the object of their desires!

The oars quickened their pace... then slowed and finally, stopped completely. They had reached the long desired shore. It was night time. One o'clock had just struck in the homes where everyone was asleep... Sister Valade and her companions wanted to wait until dawn, under the tents, so as not to interrupt the dear bishop's sleep. But the boatmen had left all the equipment at Fort St. Pierre and besides the crew was hungry.

Pushing the crafts on to the shore, in one leap they crossed the distance to the bishop's residence where they aroused the household. Fathers Lafèche and Bourassa did not wish to be overtaken. They also ran to the episcopal residence. Bishop Provencher was surprised. Overwhelmed with joy, he made haste.

Accompanied by Father Mayrand, a missionary priest, he went to the river bank carrying a lantern. By its feeble light, he sought his religious family. He did not yet know of the accident Sister Lagrave had. He was shocked and showed her fatherly sympathy. They all directed their steps toward the house. The happy pastor eagerly put everything at the disposal of our Sisters and Ursula, the housekeeper, put forth her best effort to make them feel welcome.

Finally, Bishop Provencher told the Sisters to have a good rest and to sleep in as late as possible. A priest would say a late mass for them; but at six o'clock our missionaries made their way to the church where they offered themselves anew along with the Sacred Victim.

What was St. Boniface like in 1844?

In 1844, St. Boniface was not a village, not a borough, still less a town. It was a vast plain where could be seen here and there, a few cabins surrounded by a fence within which cattle grazed on the sparse grasses. The only thing which was poetic at this time on the banks of the Red River was sacrifice, self-immolation. Our missionaries experienced this. However, they found compensation in the fatherly attitude of Bishop Provencher.

On June 23, 1844 the first Sunday after their arrival, he introduced them to his people. The beloved pastor told his dear flock of the great joy he was experiencing. It was like the NUNC DIMITTIS of the holy old man Simeon. He had seen his wish come true! Here were Sisters of Charity, mothers for those who were in need and teachers for the children. In his powerful and thrilling voice, the virtuous pontiff intoned the TE DEUM, a hymn of thanksgiving which the priests continued in chorus with the Sisters alternating with them. It was in a common sentiment of pious joy and deep faith that Holy Mass was celebrated. Like the early Christians, all in this holy assembly praised and blessed the Lord in close fellowship.

After the celebration, our missionary Sisters were led by the parishioners to the bishop's residence. They looked kindly upon this display of friendship and complied with the customs of the country by shaking hands with everyone.

Bishop Provencher had not wished to build a convent without first being assured that the Sisters would consent to come and settle in St. Boniface. Consequently, all he had to offer them as a temporary residence was a house almost in ruins. Our Sisters willingly accepted it. They were eager to live in this "Bethlehem"; yet while they cherished their solitude, they were desirous to devote themselves to the work for which they had come to this far-away land. To open a school was for them

the most urgent task. It was the wish as well as the dominant idea of Bishop Provencher.

On July 11, 1844, their home was invaded by a considerable number of girls. On the following August 14, the boys were received on the ground floor of the bishop's residence. Bishop Provencher was happy to see these fifty-three Sauteux, Métis, and Sioux children coming and going to their respective classes. It was a comfort for him to come in during a lesson or an exercise and to examine the progress of these pupils. Impressed by the good results which were beginning to show, his hopes soared. "You are the mysterious little grain of which the Gospel speaks, which will grow and bear fruit", he told the Sisters.

Sister Lagrave was designated to go to the missions seven or eight miles from St. Boniface to teach catechism. She was accompanied by a girl and drove her own horse. No matter what the weather, rain or snow, cold or dampness, she went her merry way every Monday and Thursday by cart or sled. One must admit that the encouraging results of her efforts mitigated the unpleasantness and fatigue of the journey. When the Sister arrived, men, women, and children assembled around her. Everybody wanted to profit by her teaching. They listened, asked questions, listened again. They did not tire of hearing her. Her audience numbered about one hundred. Sister Lagrave knew how to enhance the value of her teaching by melodious hymns. The older folks were touched by these refrains which they had learned at the time of their First Communion. Sister was also the doctor of the whole region.

Other services were likewise appreciated. From the time of their arrival in St. Boniface, the Sisters accepted to be choristers at the cathedral. A choir of young men trained by Sister Lagrave, eventually replaced them. After class, the Sisters visited the poor and the sick in their homes. They took care of the cathedral sacristy, the church vestments, and altar linens.

In her correspondence, Sister Valade tells how they spent the long winter nights. "We are kept busy spinning wool to make blankets and cloth etc... We may win a prize for our work. Every

year, a reward is given to encourage the making of flannel and cloth, and one for the best result in spinning. To the person who does the most work, five louis are awarded; to the highest quality three louis. For lesser merit, less is given. Everyone can be rewarded in some small way. We hope this year to further our gains."

So at the end of the day, by the light of a tallow candle, tufts of wool lengthen and thin out between the fingers of our spinners. Often there is no need of this smoky lighting. The silvery moon casts its beams through the window and the northern lights lend brightness to the night.

From this peaceful occupation, they pass willingly to the rugged work in the fields.

Bishop Taché said: "I saw the Grey Nuns, and I still see some, equipped with a pickaxe digging up the soil to coax it into producing vegetables and other produce necessary for the sustenance of their establishment. I have seen them and we see them every day following the example of their untiring foundress, devoting themselves to all sorts of labors and skills to obtain the means of doing more good. I have heard them, no matter what their function was, requesting as a favor, a pas-time, the permission to spend nights at the bedside of sick persons. In a word, I must admit that they do all the good that is in their power and they do it so willingly that one cannot even suspect what abnegation these ministries require, what sacrifices and what energy."

Others will come after them and will make long and difficult journeys in order to assist the poor Indians stricken with various illnesses. Once in rainy autumn weather, the roads were so bad that the Sisters, visiting the sick, had to leave their footwear in the mud and go to the home of their patient on stocking feet, laughing all the while at this adventure.

Two of them installed a temporary hospital above the laundry of their mission. They worked there for two years. Modern hygiene would be horrified at such a project, but what science

did not do, the devotedness, the charity, and the good will of our heroines accomplished. It is from this dark corner of the attic that the idea arose of a hospital at the Red River, a hospital which today has a bed-capacity of 800.

However, the principal work of our Sisters was the teaching and training of children. Thanks to the wise advice, the valuable experience, the universally recognized virtue of Bishop Taché, grandnephew of our beloved foundress, the work of our missionaries prospered. Schools, convents, orphanages, hospitals, sanatoria, and shelters sprang up. At the present time in the province of St. Boniface, there are 270 Grey Nuns of Montreal, distributed among 15 communities where they treat or teach yearly, almost 2,000 students, orphans, old folks, and disabled, maintain 1050 beds, and care for 12,000 patients.

This foundation of the Sisters of St. Boniface coincided with the arrival in Montreal of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. This was a happy coincidence. This time, it was Bishop Provencher who was the intermediary of Bishop Bourget. For three years the bishop of Ville-Marie had reiterated to Mother Marie de Ste Euphrasie Pelletier, the superior general in Angers, France, his desire to have Sisters who would come and establish a house of the Good Shepherd. The project presented certain difficulties, but the apostolic Vicar of the Red River in a trip to Europe, pleaded the cause of his venerable friend with such zeal that the obstacles disappeared.

At the beginning of May 1844, four Sisters, Sisters M. de Sainte-Céleste, superior, M. de Saint-Gabriel, M. de Saint-Ignace and M. de Saint-Barthélémy, came to erect on our soil the tent of the Good Shepherd. They were awaited with anticipation. Bishop Bourget and Father Arraud, a Sulpician, particularly rejoiced at their coming and supported them in their work of zeal and of mercy.

On April 30, 1933, His Holiness Pope Pius XI declared Blessed, Mother Marie de Sainte-Euphrasie, the foundress of the Good Shepherd Sisters.

The Institute which was being established in Angers, just a century ago, now numbers 9,511 Sisters. This spiritual army occupies 34 provinces and 320 monasteries on the five continents. Canada has nine of them.

Had the Blessed Foundress not told her daughters as she was dying: "I bequeath to you as a heritage, zeal for the salvation of souls."

Almost at the same time was born the Institute of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, founded in 1843 by Eulalie Durocher (Mother Marie Rose), dedicated to the Christian training of childhood and youth. More than 50,000 students today benefit from the teaching given by these Sisters. Foreign missions in Basutoland and in Japan are also the object of the devotedness of the daughters of Mother Marie Rose.

After a short life filled with merit, she died a saintly death at the age of 38. Her memory was acclaimed by public veneration. Among other testimonies, beloved Bishop Bourget wrote to the community: "In private I invoke your foundress as a saint and I hope that the Lord will glorify her in the sight of mankind by granting that the honour of sainthood be bestowed upon her by the Church."

On October 27, 1927, Bishop G. Gauthier, coadjutor Archbishop of Montreal, set up a tribunal for the proceedings for the beatification of Mother Marie Rose. In 1932, the French Academy honored her history, written by Father Duchaussois, O.M.I. under the title of "Rose du Canada."

CHAPTER XV

1845

At the time when Mother McMullen became the director of the Institute, the community and indeed the entire country was entering a phase of vitality yet unknown. The ever increasing immigration tended to widen the spheres of charity. Many works were offered to the generosity of the Grey Nuns. Hardly had Mother McMullen prepared the departure of the missionaries for the Red River when, to comply with the wish of Bishop Phelan, bishop of Carrha, she had to open another mission in Bytown.

The town of Ottawa, formerly called Bytown in honor of its founder, Colonel By, had been in existence only eighteen years when the Grey Nuns settled there. Two thirds of its six thousand inhabitants were Catholics. For the past year, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate had been serving its only parish. Bishop Phelan, coadjutor and administrator of the diocese of Kingston, seeing the needs of this growing population, delegated the superior and pastor of the mission of Bytown to request Sisters of our community.

On October 20, 1844, Reverend Telmon, O.M.I. wrote to Mother McMullen. "Bishop Phelan had conceived the delightful plan of establishing in this town a community of Grey Nuns to care for the sick and disabled. His Grace believes that this work would not, at first be great enough for the Sisters to spend all their zeal and occupy all their spare time, so they could teach and catechize a great number of young ladies whom ignorance

and a lack of training is exposing to an early and calamitous perversion.

This plan, which would be advantageous to this mission, has been delayed until now because of the expense required for the building of the new church. This building is not completed. It will even take a long time to pay what must yet be spent; but that is precisely why I would like to hasten the arrival of the Sisters. The care of the suffering members of Jesus Christ and the salvation of his most needy members are more urgent than completing a material temple. Although our funds are limited, I am confident that we will be able to lodge, equip, and provide for the Sisters you would send us.

There is nothing I would not do myself, even to letting them occupy the rectory if I could not find anything better for them. I shall attempt to get the citizens to supply furniture and I don't doubt that the number of children they will have to teach will supply enough for their maintenance. In any case, I shall not leave them in want. I shall fast so that they may eat. I reckon that God, for whom we work, will help us. Providence will supply the most urgent needs. The love of religious poverty will help us to face the inevitable privations and thus we shall make ends meet. After the proofs of heroic self-sacrifice given by all your sisters for the difficult mission of the Red River, I am sure that not one would refuse to come to share our apostolate and even our poverty.

I beg you earnestly, Reverend Mother, to give me three of your Sisters for the purposes I have exposed above. I am writing also to the bishop of Montreal begging him to consent to this foundation and even asking him to support it by his authority."

To the request of Father Telmon, O.M.I., was added that of the Bishop of Carrha, the coadjutor bishop of Kingston.

"Let us pray", said Mother McMullen to her administrative council; "Let us seek God's will on this new foundation. The important thing for us is to procure God's glory and to be use-

ful to souls." We must believe that this foundation entered into God's plan since on December 6, the good Mother wrote to Bishop Phelan:

"After having the Holy Sacrifice offered twice and having prayed much for the important work of our foundation in Bytown, after having considered the serious obligation the chosen ones would have to live up to, we concluded that instead of three sisters, you would need four. The foundresses are Sisters Beaubien, superior, Thibodeau, Charlebois, and Howard (called Sister Rodriguez) from Ireland."

The bishop of Kingston expressed his joy to the good Mother Superior and thanked the council. On January 3, 1845 he wrote to Mother Beaubien in these terms:

Dear Sister,

"Since you and your dear collaborators have kindly accepted the Bytown mission which Divine Providence has destined for you, where you will found an establishment for the training of children of poor families, the care and relief of the sick and the general good of the faith, I agree to the conditions set forth by your respected superior, Mother McMullen. If you find it necessary to tell me anything concerning these conditions, you have only to write to me.

We shall do all in our power to facilitate the foundation and I hope that with time, we shall have the means to set you up according to the spirit of your rules. In the meantime, there will be difficulties to face. This is always the case when it comes to doing God's work. You must be brave in bearing all the crosses which Jesus Christ will present to you. Such is the lot of true servants of this Divine Model.

I rejoice at your coming to share with me the work of charity toward your neighbor which you formely had the opportunity to practice in Montreal. For some time, I had been praying to the God of mercy to grant me the favor of having an institution such as you will found in Bytown. He is granting it to me by giving me volunteers from a mother house for which I have always had great love and respect, sisters directed by sons of

Father Olier of whom I have the honor of being an unworthy brother. Kindly let me know the date of your departure for Bytown.

† Patrick, Bishop of Carrha."

Bishop Phelan's expectations were to come about sooner than he expected. Mother Beaubien, whom the good pastor had just encouraged to accept the cross, was stricken with paralysis on January 11. Sister Fréchette, whom the Council had proposed as a replacement for the patient, did not feel capable of such a mission. In this painful trial, the administrators turned to God and then designated Sister Bruyère as superior of the new foundation. The latter was twenty-seven years of age. The responsibility was heavy for such young shoulders and Sister Bruyère must have shuddered in accepting it. While she considered with sad resignation her new mission and the responsibilities she was assuming, her companions congratulated the Council for this nomination. The orphans of whom she had been the educator for the past four years, praised her charity, her piety, and her tender love toward the poor. HER TENDER LOVE TOWARD THE POOR! It would really be by this sign that the divinity of her mission would be recognized.

Sister Bruyère would open the furrow, she would sow, and God granting growth, would cause a great tree to spring up, spreading its powerful branches as far as Africa and Asia. But the future was hidden, no one suspected at this moment, what great things God wanted to bring about by means of the docile instrument he had chosen. The superior foresaw in her mission, only difficulties of all sorts and numerous obstacles. This prospect made her place her trust in God and in the mother community, as would demonstrate the request drawn up by the foundresses of Bytown and signed before their departure on January 23, 1845.

In order to bolster their courage, the future missionaries went to the cathedral on February 15, to dedicate their foundation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Vicar General, Father Hudon, celebrated the mass and Reverend Father Telmon, O.M.I., of Ottawa having come to meet his collaborators, gave a touching homily and read the Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin. They then went to the Bishop's residence to receive counsel from Bishop Bourget. "I feel as though it is the Blessed Virgin herself who is counselling you as she inspires me", said his Grace.

He recommended "that they should not lose sight of their inability and their unworthiness. With this in view, they were never to undertake anything until they had carefully thought about it before God.

To work for the success of the enterprise as if success depended only on one's efforts and then expect the success only from God as if one had done nothing.

Pray and get others to pray, especially the poor and the children, in order to obtain the blessings of God on good works.

Render prayer efficacious by unity and charity. Be one in heart and soul with one's sisters, regardless of differences in mood and character.

Maintain with the Mother House, intimate and loving relationships. Take every possible means so that time and distance may not lessen this harmony. Consider this foundation as a branch which must remain connected to the trunk in order to receive from it the sap which will produce fruits of life in its own time.

Know how to make the rule loved: get the subordinates to join in one's projects and good works; to get them to appreciate them as if they were their own work, is the art of government. The Superior must earnestly ask God for this talent which is so necessary.

Finally, adhere faithfully to all rules and observances and preserve as the most precious treasure, the spirit of one's state.

Such are the principal rules which I beg you to meditate; they will assure the prosperity of the new charitable establishment entrusted to you by Providence.

Never forget that Our Lord built his Church on the poor manger of Bethlehem. 'Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you his kingdom,' by entrusting you with this work of mercy. Pray each day for him who is your humble servant and father in Jesus Christ and who will never cease addressing ardent prayers to the God of light from whom comes every perfect gift, so that you may be firm and resolute in your generous purpose."

From the bishop's residence, the missionaries went to the seminary and to the other religious communities of Montreal. In the evening of the same day, Father Quiblier, the superior, came to bless them once more and to bring them "The Life of Father Olier."

At dawn on February 19, our whole religious family was gathered at the foot of the altar and received Holy Communion for the intentions of the foundresses. Mass celebrated by Bishop Bourget was fraught with emotion. It was the hour of sacrifice. On the paten with the Divine Victim, loving hearts were being offered. After a quick breakfast, the bishop again encouraged the new missionaries to carry bravely the standard of charity to the people who were awaiting them.

It was time for the farewell! There were tears, and this scene could have contradicted those who say: "Sisters live in convents without knowing each other and die there without having loved each other." One last good-bye to Jesus in the Eucharist, a prayer to Mary, a blessing from the Bishop, Fathers Larré, P.S.S., Telmon, O.M.I., and Rev. McDonnell, the vicar general of Kingston. Our travellers were on their way by sleigh to Bytown.

The journey lasted two days over difficult roads. Four miles from Ottawa, our Sisters noticed a long line of eighty vehicles... a touching mark of welcome on the part of those who came to meet the Sisters of Charity. It would have been splendid had

the sun been shining, but alas! the skies were dark and there was a biting wind. No matter; there was a stop and an exchange of greetings; then the line-up moved on.

The whole population of Bytown in their Sunday best was awaiting the Sisters. All were gathered along the roadside to see them pass. Finally, toward five o'clock, the carriage stopped at the church door. The four foundresses entered to the singing of the "Laudate." They recited the "TE DEUM", the "MEMORARE" to the Blessed Virgin and the "SUB TUUM", "but the voices were dampened by tears", said a witness.

The newcomers went to work immediately. Schools were opened, students registered, and the visiting of the poor was organized without delay. On March 10, the foundresses took possession of their house. Despite its minute size, they found a way of taking in a few patients. Later, an annex was added which provided room for a greater number of Jesus Christ's suffering members. The months went by rapidly in a succession of incredible tasks. And it is thus that, amid the most crushing but also the most consoling work, the project in its infancy was beginning to grow and to become alive in the Church.

On April 18, 1845, the Bishop of Carrha signed the Act of Foundation giving it canonical recognition. The following is an extract from the mandate:

"...We requested a few Sisters from the General Hospital in Montreal for the care of the sick, the teaching of young girls and other works mentioned. In view of the fact that our request was granted...

- 1 — We, by the present ordinance, erect a Congregation of Sisters of Charity in the town of Bytown and we permit them to live together according to the rules of the Mother House in Montreal.
- 2 — We place the said Sisters of Charity under the complete dependence and perpetual jurisdiction of the local bishop, wishing, however, to submit them to the spiritual

direction of the Oblate priests who will always be selected by the superior general for this responsibility.

- 3 — Our dear daughters, Sisters Elisabeth Bruyère, Eléonore Thibodeau, Marie-Hélène Antoinette Howard called Sister Rodriguez, and Marie Joseph Ursule Charlebois, having indicated their willingness to dedicate themselves to the new Institute in Bytown, we approve their laudable purpose and their zeal and we hereby accept their appointment which the worthy and venerable bishop of Montreal had the kindness to grant them and we declare to them that from this moment, they form the new community of Sisters of Charity which we have erected above, and that in addition, they and their successors in this capacity, are from this moment and forever, the administrators of the said community established in Bytown..."

The Ottawa house was then established with full autonomy under the entire dependence and permanent jurisdiction of the local bishop but like the other foundations, it was bound to follow the rule of the Grey Nuns of Montreal.

Mother Bruyère, faithful to Bishop Bourget's recommendation, requested the advice and help of Mother McMullen. These letters, filled with mutual expressions of affection, make us fully understand and appreciate the unity of minds and hearts which has always reigned among the daughters of our beloved Mother d'Youville. Let us confirm this together:

"Very dear Mother,

I hope you will come soon. Your presence here will be beneficial in all respects. We ignore many things which would be important for us to know. We need instruction; there is even much to rectify, for we are novices in all that we are doing and we need an experienced person to come to our help. Do not forget, I beg you, the daughters who think of you constantly and who are tenderly attached to you."

On June 2, after seeking advice about immigrants whom it had been proposed be sent to the hospital, Mother Bruyère closed in this way:

“Please come yourself, dear Mother; you would be of such help to us! If you could see how perplexed I am, you would hurry to come to our help. It is true that I do nothing without consulting our Superior and Father; but in so many things I would need the advice of a Mother! What means should I employ to persuade you to come? Oh, if you only knew how much we long for your visit...”

A few days later, she wrote: “Your letter caused us such happiness and brought us such good news... the confirmation of your forthcoming visit, thanks to Bishop Bourget and to our Sisters of Montreal, to whom I am most grateful! They had pity on poor exiled sisters. May God reward them generously! According to your wish, we shall wait for you until the holidays. See, Mother, how patient we are! But do not think that if you were not to come, we would still remain patient. There would indeed be an explosion... and who knows what would result?”

Mother McMullen visited the new establishment with deep interest and expressed her satisfaction many times despite what dear Mother Bruyère had thought and written. This is what she reports.

My very dear and good daughters,

If my visit brought you unspeakable joy, it did not afford me less consolation. My heart was deeply penetrated with contentment, having found in you such good will along with the desire to observe faithfully our holy rule and to live as true Grey Nuns. A Grey Nun, in my estimation, is a simple person, of little worth in the eyes of men, but who is gifted with a noble and generous heart, who sacrifices her will, her likes and her desires for the sake of the peace and unity of her community. Yes, my dear daughters, a true Grey Nun is capable of making sacrifices; that explains everything. Be generous then, in the service of our Good Master and remember that abnegation and entire submission are the touchstone of perfection. Is this

not enough? No, religious who wish to live happily and perfectly must have the heart of a child, a flexible will, a mind devoid of all desire except that of loving God perfectly.

My dear daughters, I am good only to preach to others virtues which I do not practice myself. As I close, I whole heartedly embrace the Sisters of Bytown, including my dear little postulants.

Ever yours in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Sister McMullen

Today⁽¹⁾ in the field of apostolate opened in 1845 by the four foundresses from Montreal, there are 967 Sisters, and 420 deceased. The novitiate numbers 134 novices and postulants. The works of their sixty establishments are as follows: 300 elderly persons, 310 orphans, 617 patients in hospital, 13,579 patients treated annually, 1,649 children in boarding schools, and 20,215 day pupils.

Two English-speaking groups, detached from the Ottawa community, comprise two new autonomous religious families: The Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, whose Mother-House is in Philadelphia, U.S.A. and the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception who have theirs in Pembroke. These young Institutes are developing rapidly. In 1930, Chuchow, China received the first Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. A few years later, South Africa welcomed the zeal of the Grey Nuns of the Cross from Ottawa. On September 29, 1931, five missionaries went to Basutoland to found the mission of Our Lady of Pontmain. Four other sisters were added in 1933 to assist the little missionary colony which was having difficulty coping with the task. What thanksgiving must be rendered to God for the lot that befell them!

(1) Statistics of 1932.

Let us point out another foundation in Montreal. It sprang forth in this same year 1845, from the kind heart of Bishop Bourget which was the source of so many beautiful works. The etymology of its Latin name, MISERIS COR DARE: "To give one's heart to the disadvantaged" helps one to comprehend the highly redemptive and sensitive work which was to be the secondary and specific goal of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy.⁽¹⁾

The compassionate charity of a pious widow, Mrs. Jetté, née Rosalie Cadron, developed early in the family and found many occasions to be put into practice in the town of Montreal where it was quickly noticed by the shrewd Bishop Bourget. One day, he called for her and said: "Since it has pleased God to use you in order to do much good to poor children, would you not like, my daughter, to pursue this work and to extend it by founding a community which would forever increase and improve the good work you have so successfully begun?"

Rosalie must have been terrified at this proposal. "But to the will of God, true Christians offer no resistance."⁽²⁾ Accordingly, on May 1, 1845 the foundress settled, alone at first with a penitent, in a humble house on St. Simon Street. The refuge Sainte-Pélagie had just been created.

On December 1, 1846 for the first time ten novices received the holy habit of the Sisters of Mercy. On January 16, 1848 the first Sisters made their profession before Bishop Bourget. Among them was Rosalie Cadron who took the name of Mère de la Nativité.

Bishop Bourget told them, "Your vocation, my dear daughters, is to work at purifying and sanctifying the unfortunate persons who having had the misfortune of losing their innocence, seek a refuge in religion, where they may atone for their sin and hide their disgrace."

(1) "Sur les pas de Marthe et de Marie".

(2) "Par lui".

When Mère de la Nativité, the foundress, died on April 5, 1864, her community numbered 33 professed Sisters, 11 novices, and 26 daughters of St. Madeleine. In this span of nineteen years, the community had welcomed nearly 2300 penitents.

On December 16, 1844, Rev. Jean-Baptiste Thavenet, P.S.S. died in Rome. He had been the untiring defender of our interests with the holders of our revenue in France. News of his death reached Montreal only on February 3, 1845. The community then hastened to have a solemn service celebrated in gratitude for the inestimable services rendered so disinterestedly. Nothing was spared to give our family in mourning the character dictated by our gratitude. For this purpose, our Mothers borrowed the wall hangings from the "Parish". Many priests and friends of the deceased, by their presence, gave witness of deep attachment to this eminent Sulpician. The Grey Nun Community continued to ask God to reward this generous benefactor for his self-devotion in serving the Institute.

On May 8, 1845, the bells tolled again, calling the Sisters to the chapel, this time to implore God's mercy for Sister Angélique Hainault-Deschamps, an aunt of our dear Mother Deschamps.

To seek to acquire the spirit of our beloved Foundress and to become suitable for her preferred works, such had been the ambition of this fervent Sister. She applied her iron will and her heart of gold to this through the fifteen years she gave to the service of abandoned children and through the nine others during which, in the capacity of assistant, she had shared the mission of the Superior.

Her spirit of faith made her see God in all things: in her superiors whom she loved and respected, in her companions whom she treated with charity humbling herself for the slightest failings toward them.

Her admirable sensitivity for the virtue of poverty made her not only employ her time conscientiously, but also to be careful not to cause others to waste theirs.

Sister Hainault gathered as "gifts from God", the little vexations and sacrifices which are inevitable in common life and thus she prepared for herself a beautiful reward in heaven. The spirit of mortification did not leave her through her illness. She understood that Jesus wanted to purify and sanctify her by prolonging and increasing her pain.

Strengthened by the help of the Holy Church, trusting the protection of our Heavenly Mother, Sister Hainault died peacefully on May 6, 1845. She was in the 55th year of her age and the 30th of her religious profession.

It was also in this same year on July 25, that Bishops Jean-Claude Prince, bishop elect of Martyropolis, and François Norbert Blanchet, bishop elect of Draza and vicar apostolic in Oregon, received episcopal consecration in Montreal.

Our Mothers attended this solemn celebration which lasted five hours. One hundred and forty-eight priests and fifty-seven seminarians were present. Lay people filled the nave of the cathedral. "Never yet, had such a religious solemnity taken place in Canada", reports *Mélanges Religieux*.

CHAPTER XVI

1846

The years had gone by. Three quarters of a century had elapsed since the death of our beloved Mother d'Youville. Had her compassionate charity ceased to be transmitted to her descendants? Did her daughters, her faithful imitators, no longer hear the wails of the poor, the cries of the orphaned? Oh, let your minds be at rest. The most tender compassion towards those who suffer had continued to urge on the heirs of our beloved Foundress and their love for the poor, in most cases, had gone as far as forgetfulness of self. We have seen it in our dear Sister Bonnet who was hospitaller to the women for thirty years.

Let us examine the community more closely. With the help of the register of professions let us establish that since 1831, 23 Sisters, namely Sisters Pinsonnault, Apolline Ducharme, Adine Desjardins, Gertrude Coutlée-Saint-Joseph, Charlotte Pomminville, Eléonore Turcot, Hedwidge Lafrance, Mathilde Manseau, Ursule Charlebois, Antoinette Howard-Rodriguez, Elisabeth Bruyère, Zoé Beaubien, Hélène Beaubien, Julie Chevrefils, Louise Pope-Olier, Odèle Simard, Esther Bohémier, Petronille Clément, Marguerite Rivet, Hedwidge Robin, Emerance Cinq Mars, Marguerite Ouimet and Rose Virginie Allard had come to increase the number of hospitallers. On the other hand, twelve Sisters from the community had gone to devote themselves to new foundations and eleven had passed away.

Thirty-three professed Sisters remained at home as well as seventeen novices and postulants. Thirty-three Sisters to over-

see the administration of a Mother-house and to take care of 336 poor children and elderly of both sexes!

The scanty notes of our chronicles indicate the responsibilities of each: a single hospitaller in each department, having forty orphans under her care, being in charge of their training, education and clothing. The Superior General in a letter to the Bishop, expressed the regret at having to grant dispensations for spiritual exercises. "I am forced to do so"; she adds, "otherwise the work cannot be done".

Divine Providence guides all things; it prepares events in such a way as to show that the impossible can become possible.

On September 17, 1846, Bishop Bourget, preparing to make his second voyage to Europe, announced to the community assembled for his visit, that Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Sulpician Seminary since August 21, 1846, would be our ecclesiastical superior during his absence. At the same time, he expressed his desire of seeing the work of home visitation reorganized. Until now, our Mothers had had food and many alms distributed. We saw this in the story of Mother Beaubien who authorized Sister McMullen and the bursars to assist outsiders stricken with distress. They also visited the sick in their homes. Sister Thuot's note indicates this clearly; but with increasing needs, a more regular organization became necessary; and so our Sister administrators unanimously accepted the Bishop's proposal.

His Grace left for Rome on September 29 accompanied by Father Baile, director of the major seminary, and Reverend Léonard, O.M.I. On the eve of the departure, Mother McMullen entrusted to the distinguished travellers, a small golden heart containing the names of all the Sisters, to be deposited at the Virgin's altar in Chartres. For His Holiness, Pius IX, newly elected to the Pontifical throne, she sent a summary of the history of the Institute drawn up by Father Chalbos, P.S.S. along with a picture of our beloved Foundress and a plan of the General Hospital.

Bishop Bourget was kind enough to go to Chartres to offer to the Virgin the gift of the Community. He also presented to Our Holy Father, the booklet intended for him. His Holiness accepted it gratefully.

Reverend Léonard, O.M.I., who was going to Marseille, brought along a reliquary for Bishop de Mazenod.

Father Baile brought to Father Louis Courson, the Superior General of the Sulpicians, a showcase for a watch which was embroidered on red velvet. The following letter accompanied the parcel:

Montreal General Hospital

September 27, 1846

Reverend Father,

The favourable occasion which has come up affords me the pleasure of carrying out the wish of the Community of showing its deep respect and of assuring its pious and faithful remembrance toward the Superior of the Fathers who direct it.

Our Sisters shared their joy on learning of your nomination as Superior General. With all the Sulpicians, they also thanked the Lord.

May God preserve you for a long time, who are so valuable to the interests of the Community, and by our fervent prayers may He shower you with blessings.

You are aware, Reverend Father, that in Canada you have daughters who hold you in respect and who try to walk in the footsteps of your sons, of your confrères, but perhaps you do not know how much they need prayers to follow faithfully the examples of these beloved priests. As children of the same family, they claim a share in your pious remembrance. During the absence of Bishop Bourget we have Father Billaudèle as Superior. Our Chaplain, Father Larré, is full of zeal toward us. The Lord has blessed us by being always under Sulpician guidance. May he continue to do so. Such is our daily prayer...

From Paris, the respected Superior replied to Mother McMullen as follows:

My Dear Sister,

I was keenly sensitive to the consideration you manifested by writing to me through Father Baile and I thank you.

Your country is very dear to us. It reminds us of the zeal of our pious founder, of the devotedness of the generous workers who dedicated and spent their lives establishing the Church of Montreal and preparing the charitable institutions which are its glory today. We remember these apostles who worked so hard and so successfully in North America. From heaven above, they see what their labors and their struggles have produced. They are your protectors and ours. Let us ask them often to sustain us in the purity and simplicity of the faith, in the fervor of our charity. May they preserve us from a disastrous laxity in our habits of Christian living! Let us be their worthy followers! Alas! We are living in evil times; we are exposed to great dangers. Amid luxury which weakens us, laxity which corrupts, let us remain as our forefathers were, and for this purpose let us adhere strictly to our rule in the traditions and customs which they bequeathed to us. In Canada as in France, it will be in this fidelity that we will find peace and security. We would be exposed to perdition if we rashly engaged in innovations of which we cannot estimate the consequences.

The details you give me concerning your house afford me great consolation. A Community consisting of thirty-three professed Sisters and seventeen novices can suffice for many needs. It has all that is necessary for its spiritual life and for the demands of its work. Be confident; God will not permit that you lack the subjects required by the ever increasing number of your poor. He will also distend your heart so that it will have as much compassion as is required by the distress which is ever increasing. He will give you more and more of the dispositions of His adorable Son whom you represent to the unfortunate; for such is your beautiful and admirable vocation. Jesus Christ lives in you. He lives in your heart by the sentiments He in-

spires and it is by your hands that he exercises His tender care toward the elderly, the crippled, and the orphaned.

You have a claim to our prayers. We count on yours and on those of your charges whom we love along with you. Let us remain closely united in devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and in devotion to the most Holy Virgin. These are the two poles of which we must never lose sight.

I remain most sincerely, Sister, in the "charity of Jesus living in Mary",

Your most humble and most obedient servant,

L. de Courson

On October 20, Father Billaudèle came to fulfill his first duty as Superior by reading to the Community the policies for service to the poor. Our Mothers adopted them with joy and thanksgiving.

The following is a brief summary of this rule as drawn up by Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary:

- 1 — The main object of the Institute being to assist the needy, the Sisters of Charity must, as much as their work at home will allow them, apply themselves to visit and care for the poor and the sick of the vicinity with so much zeal that they will meet their numerous occasions of making God loved and of helping their neighbor.
- 2 — The first disposition that must be maintained by those who will be named to this duty is a great mistrust of self, which without depriving them of the courage and confidence necessary to succeed, will often show them the dangers of their position and will keep them always in the holy and wholesome fear of offending God.
- 3 — The greatest danger to which they may be exposed is the loss of their interior life; they shall avoid this by frequently renewing purity of intention, having nothing in mind but to bring about the glory of God and the wel-

fare of the poor. Let them then be on their guard so as not to let themselves be taken up by a desire to please the world; for if they were to give vent to wordliness, they would thereby lose the right to the powerful help which God gives to those who forget themselves to think only of Him.

If from the beginning, they acquire the habit of seeing with eyes of faith in their poor and their sick only the very person of Jesus Christ whom they go to visit in the poverty of his manger or in the torture and shame of Calvary, nothing will become easier or sweeter for them than the practice of this purity of intention, and then all their actions and their words will be as many acts of charity, as many merits for heaven.

- 4 — Obedience shall be the first rule to be followed by those who visit the poor, as for those in any other occupation. They shall then take the instructions and advice of the Superior and follow them exactly.

They undoubtedly will not be able to resort to the superior as often as if they were working in the Community, but they will not undertake anything new, such as the general visitation of a neighborhood or any business that does not enter into their work, without her permission. They will also make her aware, as soon as possible, of all they have encountered which was out of the ordinary. They shall make it a duty to consult her in all of their difficulties. They shall submit with love and joy to obtaining permission for the extraordinary things they will need for the time and which she herself will determine. Finally, they shall render an account frequently and in details, as is indicated in the Rule, of all the works entrusted to them. They shall do so monthly or more frequently if required.

- 5 — In order to draw up this report with greater clarity and ease, it will be useful for them to carry a notebook in order to record points which they may be inclined to for-

get, such as the number of families visited and helped, extraordinary help given etc... Besides, this notebook will be very useful, even necessary for an orderly conduct of business and a recall of important details.

- 6 — Before leaving for their visitations, the Sisters shall always ask the Superior's permission to do so or that of whomever replaces her, and they shall take from her any orders that may be necessary. They shall then plan what they must do; their main visits so as to carry them out more effectively; they shall prepare all their provisions and the medication they might need; they shall take all possible information concerning the spiritual and physical needs of the poor and the sick in order to render their visits more effective.
- 7 — Thus prepared, they shall leave as early as possible in the morning, after breakfast, or after the afternoon reading. Before leaving they shall go to the chapel to adore our Blessed Lord and to request his blessing. They may recite the VENI SANCTE SPIRITUS and the AVE MARIA or the AVE JOSEPH and the ANGELE DEI and then be on their way under the protection of their Guardian Angel, faithful to all that is prescribed in the "Rule Book" concerning silence, reserve, modesty, etc...
- 8 — The simplicity of their actions, of their gaze, and of their whole demeanour can never be too great; however, they shall be careful not to display too much constraint and contention in their deportment; as it is by refined manners, a sweet disposition, a serene countenance and pleasant words that they shall inspire a love of virtue, and win their way into minds and hearts to incline them towards what is good.
- 9 — Attending to all the needs of their poor as good mothers in times of illness and health, it shall be especially when the needy are in danger of death that they shall be doubly zealous and vigilant to help them die a happy death. Imbued with all the sentiments and attitudes that Chris-

tians must have in order to die a saintly death, and on which they shall meditate from time to time, they shall attempt to convey them to their patients.

They shall always carry a crucifix to which are attached the plenary indulgence for the dying and that of the VIA CRUCIS, and they shall teach their patients how to gain them.

They shall also, as much as possible, carry with them holy water along with a book of preparation for death. They may also have a few pictures of the most Holy Virgin, of the dying St. Joseph and of the Guardian Angel, and they shall teach their patients to make holy use of them.

Finally, to enliven their zeal toward the sick, they shall often remember that nothing equals the efforts of Satan to tempt the faithful in their final hour so that they may die in sin.

- 10 — Among the many acts of corporal works of charity which the Sisters will have to practise in the areas entrusted to them, they shall often have to obtain employment for the poor capable of working. Drawing them out of indolence will be as useful to their soul as it is useful to their temporal welfare.

It shall also be a point of zeal sometimes to turn young persons away from workshops or places where their virtue is in danger, in order to establish them in safer places. For this, they shall try to acquaint themselves with various places where good and honest employment may be found without endangering morality. They shall also keep a list of Christian families where they can place these persons as domestic help if need be. On the other hand, during their visits to families, they shall gather all the information which may be necessary in order to place them in accordance with their ability and their virtue.

11 — In all of their visits to help the poor, the Sisters of Charity recall the mystery of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary. They shall have the attitudes of generosity, sacrifice, and love which was in the heart of this incomparable Mother of Charity and thus experiencing a decrease in their fatigue, they shall purify their motives and increase their merit.

On October 23, 1846, Sisters Mallet, Assistant, Olier, Brault, Ste-Croix, St. Alphonse, and Thibodeau entered fully into this life of zeal and apostleship. It appeared to them as charity were introducing its servants into its temple and bringing them to the needy families saying: "Behold God is sending me to you in order to fulfill the promises he has made to help the poor and not to abandon those who place their trust in him".

Our mothers tried to keep these promises made in the name of charity, considering themselves as daughters of the Eternal Father, concurring with him in the same work. How often they admired his merciful conduct toward the sick, the afflicted, the sinners. Our archives record many edifying facts. We shall be content with taking a look at only the following statistic: In four months, the visitors made 700 visits to poor French and Irish families, 600 visits to the sick, assisted 90 dying persons, spent 66 nights at wakes. In the month of January, 650 poor persons were assisted at the Mother House. Before this great number of indigents needing aid, the administrators considered having a wing built, onto the hospital "to serve as a depot for the poor".

On January 27, Mother McMullen gave an account to Bishop Bourget, then in Europe, of the work under their care.

"Your Grace and dear Father,

... I cannot allow such a favorable occasion to go by without giving you a few details on what has happened since your departure.

The most important event and the one of greatest interest to Your Grace will be to learn that according to your wish, we have, since last October, organized our service to the poor in

their homes. The western part of town was assigned to us. How great is the misery this winter, and how little employment there is! People are suffering from hunger and cold. Our visiting Sisters found several families in granaries, without heat or food, having to eat only bran. Father Huart is Chaplain to the French speaking poor, assisted by Father Connolly for the Irish.

Meetings of the "Dames de la Charité" are being held on the first Friday of each month with Father Billaudèle, Superior, presiding.

Your Grace, your daughters have more than ever need of your prayers to fulfill worthily the work of serving the poor. We have reason to hope that it is pleasing to the Eternal Father; for since we have undertaken it, several young ladies have come forward for the novitiate.

I have one more service to request of you, Your Grace. For a long time, I have been collecting notes of interesting events of our Institute. Could you, as you go to the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, ask somebody to do research on Mother d'Youville's correspondence with Father Cousturier, the Superior? You would in this way render an immense service to our Institute, a service for which I would be most grateful to you.

All your daughters kneeling before you request Your Grace's fatherly blessing and offer their respectful homage.

Your Grace's humble and grateful servant,"
Sister McMullen

On the following March 18, Bishop Bourget answered Mother McMullen from Paris as follows:

"Reverend Mother,

... I can reply only briefly to your last letter which I received in Paris. I am deeply touched by all the details you give me concerning the services which you and your kind Sisters have given to the poor of Montreal in this year of distress. God, who is so good, will repay you a hundredfold, my dear daughters.

I have entrusted someone in Paris to do all the research you need for the interesting biography of your beloved Foundress. I hope this will not be in vain.

In Rome I requested a renewal of the Indult which granted a plenary indulgence to the faithful who shall visit your chapel on the feasts of the Holy Cross. In case this is not sent in time, you may appeal to Monsignor, the administrator, concerning those to be gained in May.

With all my heart I bless your good Sisters along with all their poor, etc.

† Ig. Bishop of Montreal."

The meetings of the "Dames de la Charité" referred to in the letter addressed to Bishop Bourget were inaugurated in November, 1846. The duties of these women consisted in having an eye on the needs of the poor and informing the Sister visitors. To this end, they met once a month and solicited alms for the needy.

In order to encourage these women in this excellent work, the Superiors resolved to have them make a retreat in our chapel. Father Billaudèle took the responsibility of animating it. These annual retreats took place until 1866.

The archives record names of the early benefactors: Mrs. O. Berthelet, Miss T. Berthelet, Mrs. A. Larocque, Quesnel, Saint-Denis, Chaput, Lévesque, Chalut, Toupin, F. Beaubien, Valières. The names of the Irish women are also inscribed in the register: Mrs. McGrath, C. Wilson, Focte, Bancroft, H. Nelson, McDonnell, Campion, Tully.

June 1, 1846, our Mothers were united in the deep and intimate sorrow of the great Catholic family: the Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, had passed away, or according to the beautiful expression of Cardinal Lambruschini, "he had left the chair of St. Peter to enter into the repose of the Saints. Like the sun which, having completed its course, hides in the sea of immortality without having paled in the haze of old age. Or to speak

non figuratively, he died for the Church". He died offering the sacrifice of his life for "his beloved spouse", as he himself said.

The 261st successor of Saint Peter died in Rome at the age of 81 years and 8 months, after reigning fifteen years.

The Community utilized in favor of the dear deceased, the treasures of the Church which the papacy constantly puts at the disposal of the faithful.

It is known how the conclave meeting on June 14, 1846, had by evening of June 16, unanimously given Cardinal Ferretti as a successor to Gregory XVI. By its harmony, its rapidity, its providential circumstances, this election was the most extraordinary mentioned in modern history. God is master of hearts and of voices. In memory of Pius VII, the main protector of his youth and his predecessor at the See of Imola, Cardinal Jean Mastai Ferretti took the name of Pius IX.

Early in the year 1846, two more tombs were opened in our religious family: those of Sister Esther Bohémier (or Boëmier) and Sister Rose Virginie Allard.

Sister Bohémier was only twenty-four years old. She had earned the blessing of her vocation by a painful trial. Her parents, honest farmers from Sainte Anne des Plaines, resolved to give their daughter in marriage to a young man of the area. Before this proposal, young Esther was too respectful of the wishes of her parents to reveal to them her attraction for the religious life. Matters unfolded, the bans were published... but the young lady's irreconcilable feelings persisted. Finally, she decided to reveal them to her confessor. The latter intervened, had preparations stopped, and advised the parents to allow the young lady her freedom.

On her "return from Babylon" she entered the temple of the Lord on October 20, 1842. In her joy, she could only repeat: "Lord, your servant has again found the courage to cry out to you"! (1 Kings 1 V.28)

Attollité portas ... Open up, open up, gates of the temple (Ps. 118.19). Let the King come to his betrothed. Jesus and Esther

shall meet here. This shall be their dwelling place. What a delightful thought!

She seemed eager to reach her goal. A faithful novice gifted with a religious disposition which was manifested in every detail, a fervent professed Sister, she soon had woven her crown. Afflicted with consumption, she was snatched from the Community January 14, 1846. At the moment of death, gathering every last bit of her strength as if to make the final leap, the dear patient said: "I am leaving".

Sister Marie Rose Virginie Allard's life was "like that of a rose whose life span is but a day." Before dying, she would, however, let fall from her cup a few of her tears. Born in Pointe Claire on October 1, 1827, Rose had heard her dying mother say to the Virgin Mary. "I give you my two daughters. Make Grey Nuns of them". From that time on, she urged her father to allow her to leave for the convent. The reply was slow in coming. Finally, it came on June 15, 1844. Rose was gifted with a fine spirit, charming manners, a silent generosity; so many qualities required to become a good Sister of Charity.

Alas! often the most determined and the most sincere persons encounter physical ailments which moderate their zeal. Sister Allard, still a novice, was afflicted with a serious illness. Her father was notified. He came to the Mother House to get his daughter thinking she would recover better at home. She took advantage of his presence to extol the joy of her vocation. It all ended in this way: "It is better to die than to return to the world!" Her father saw in these words the expression of the divine will. The illness rapidly became worse despite the patient's efforts to be or to appear better.

She pronounced her vows conditionally on March 4, 1846. Now with the wind of suffering, the breath of God could propel her boat toward heavenly shores. She was ready and yearned for the blissful union, a joy which St. Joseph granted her on March 17, 1846.

CHAPTER XVII

1847 — 1848

On May 27, 1847, the bells of Notre Dame Church pealed loudly to give notice to the clergy and the faithful of their pastor's return after an absence of several months. The population came in large numbers to meet their beloved father. The TE DEUM was intoned to thank God for the favors granted him during the voyage.

Then on behalf of the clergy, the Bishop welcomed the Holy Cross missionaries who, on his repeated invitation, had come from France to educate and train the children of the village of Saint Laurent, situated on the Island of Montreal.

Filled with ardent zeal, these missionaries embarked at the Havre on April 30; on May 27, after a difficult crossing, they landed at New York and came immediately to Montreal in the company of Bishop Bourget. The pastor of the parish of Saint Laurent had come to meet them at Notre Dame Church.

Despite poverty bordering on destitution, the Fathers, Brothers, and Sisters faced their situation courageously, and trusting in Divine Providence, they set to work. "If our foundation is based on sacrifice and suffering," they said to themselves, "it will be all the more solid."

The venture was a complete success. In 1929, the Congregation of the Sisters of Holy Cross and the Seven Sorrows had seventy establishments of which twenty-one were in the United States.

1220 Sisters shared the education and training of more than 30,000 children.

The congregation prided itself in having a mission in Bengal, Asia. The first four Sisters left on October 31, 1929 with Father Boulay, C.S.C., vicar-general of Chittagong.

In the early days of June, the Grey Nuns welcomed with joy their beloved bishop who came to celebrate the Eucharist at the General Hospital, to give the papal blessing, and to comfort people distressed by the news from overseas. A great famine was threatening the Irish people with complete extermination. "The most astounding spectacular scene" said Father Quinn, one of the victims of the typhus, "was not to see people dying but to see them live, so great was the distress."

"In the span of three years, more than four million of these unfortunate victims who had miraculously escaped death, sought exile. As walking shadows they went, weeping and seeking the hospitality of more fortunate countries."

Ireland's calamity became a universal calamity. All eyes were turned toward the "Isle of the Saints", which we can also call the "Isle of Martyrs."

The Sovereign Pontiff, father of the Universal Church, was saddened by Ireland's distress, she who was always so staunch in the faith. Appealing to the bishops of the whole world, His Holiness Pius IX wrote: "We strongly recommend that in charity, you exhort the people entrusted to your care to give generous alms for the relief of the Irish nation."

The bishops responded to the Pope's appeal. From all parts of the world, considerable amounts were sent to the people of Ireland. In the absence of Bishop Bourget, Bishop Prince, his coadjutor, had solicited the cooperation of the clergy and of the faithful for this cause. His appeal had easily moved people's hearts as the Irish were already represented in the country and elicited there much admiration because of three centuries of religious struggle. The alms abounded. In Montreal alone, they rose to 8,676.00\$, a sizeable sum for the time.

When Bishop Bourget returned to his Episcopal See, the civil authorities were taking measures to shelter the immigrants. Large structures called "shelters," "penthouses" or more commonly "sheds," were being built at Pointe Saint-Charles.

In the early days of June, ships from overseas were arriving in Montreal. Real funeral convoys landed both night and day. From between the decks and even from the holds, thousands of men, women, and children were removed. Most of them were suffering from typhus; wasted by hunger and harassed by fatigue from a voyage made in the most deplorable conditions, they were as ghosts. The sight was indescribable. Those who saw it recoiled in horror...

In faith, what could Montreal offer to these unfortunate people? Genuine Christian Charity.

HISTORY OF THE TYPHUS

First Part

Heroes of Charity

The Sulpician Fathers were the first to go to the ship. To respond to the urgent needs of the poor immigrants, Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary, ordered the closing of the College of Montreal and called the directors and the professors to come to the aid of their confrères already at the service of the plague-stricken.

While the Sulpician priests went to the port to receive the dying people, the Grey Nuns at the General Hospital were feeling the urge to follow their beloved founders to the scene of suffering and death. They awaited only the order. Our beloved Mother McMullen, then Superior General of the community, wished first to consult Father Billaudèle, the Superior of the

Seminary. The latter being absent at the time of her visit, she abandoned her plan to the Lord. On the same day, Father M.J. Richards, a Sulpician priest, chaplain to the poor, accompanied by Father Connolly, came to solicit the cooperation of the Grey Nuns at the field-hospitals. The good Mother, who only awaited the approval of her superiors, accepted the proposal with joy and went immediately to the Immigration Office accompanied by Sister Ste-Croix, whose dedication was to be remarkable during the disastrous period. They were received with great courtesy and respect by the Intendant who gave the Grey Nuns the authorization to care for the plague-stricken, allowing them to hire helpers. Mother McMullen, astonished at first by the cordial reception, was later less surprised when she heard that she had been preceded by the good Father Richards. The latter, seeing the Intendant's difficulty in finding personnel capable of nursing these unfortunate people, had suggested that he ask the Grey Nuns. The Intendant was a Protestant. He knew very little about Catholic institutions and was puzzled as to whom he should approach. One understands his happiness at seeing the Grey Nuns offering their services. He promptly had them taken to a house almost in ruins at the river's edge, and which they called a hospital.

What a sight met the eyes of our Mothers! Hundreds of people: men, women, and children were jumbled together on the bare floors. The dead and the dying were in the same shelter. Others were on the wharfs or on pieces of wood here and there along the river. This sight did not discourage our Mothers. On the contrary, they felt their soul rising to the height of the mission which God was preparing for them. Their meeting of the Superior of the Seminary and the sight of the courageous Father Morgan, a Sulpician lifting a patient from the ground to place him on a cot stimulated their zeal.

On their return to the Mother House, they had no words to describe what they had seen. After supper, our beloved Mother McMullen appealed to the courage and generosity of her daughters. In calling them to combat in a new field of sacrifice,

she left them free, however, to consider their attraction and their strength.

Even the novices were not to be deprived of the holocaust. The good Mother disclosed to them the challenge which was being offered, and she told them that the cross of a martyr was even more glorious than would be the cross of their religious profession. Following the example of their elders, responding to the bugle call like brave soldiers, all wished to be part of the battallion of apostles of charity.

On June 9, say the old manuscripts, eight Sisters and five women left for the "sheds." On the following Sunday, the thirteenth, their number had grown to twenty-three. They were our Sisters Saint-Joseph, Denis, Christin, Labrèche, Caron, Collins, Blondin, Montgolfier, Dalpé, Limoges, Primeau, Chèvrefils, Perin, and postulants Thériault, Reid, Bruyère, Lepailleur, Maréchal and Sauvé.

The community at this time numbered thirty-seven professed Sisters only and eighteen novices. There remained at home then, only the senior Sisters and the crippled to replace the hospitallers in charge of the elderly and children. The good St. Francis de Sales had once said: "When the house is on fire, we throw everything out the windows." The fire of divine charity was burning in the whole General Hospital.

The first shelters for the immigrants were built at Pointe Saint-Charles on land along the canal belonging to the Community. These penthouses, separated by partitions were contiguous to one another and measured 150 — 300 ft. in length and 25 — 30 ft. in width. The furniture consisted of plain boards attached to the partitions and more or less sloped as those seen in barracks or in police stations. These pallets were soon replaced by beds, also made of rough wood and covered with mattresses or simply with straw.

Let us imagine hundreds of men and women lying in a disorderly fashion with as many as three or four in the same bed, indifferent to everything and moaning pitiably. In these badly

infected quarantine camps, our Sisters would expose their lives. All day long they busied themselves at relieving great misery. To feed the sick, the government supplied bread, meat, and tea. Many charitable people offered other necessities. The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame who regretted not being able to follow the Sisters of Charity to the sheds, sent supplies of sugar, tea, biscuits and other foods. Soldiers brought to the gates part of their rations. However, on the outside, other people were lying sick and helpless. The Sisters tried to come to their aid without counting their efforts. The distress was indescribable. The death-rattle of a dying nation filled the ears of our Sisters. The ill-fated Irish, persecuted for their faith, consumed by hunger, had left their homeland to come to a foreign country where they would drink to the dregs from their chalice of bitterness. Heaven alone knows what martyrdom these people endured!

Each day was toilsome and rich in merits. At nightfall, after entrusting their patients to persons hired for the night, our Sisters returned to their convent. They entered prudently so as not to spread the contagion. On the following morning, at the early hour of Mass, they gathered around the altar to receive the God of the Eucharist, their strength and consolation. Filled with courage, they returned joyfully to their work of charity. One morning they were astonished to find Fathers Richards and Caroff, Sulpicians, at the bedside of the dying. True sentinels, they had not wished to abandon these people at their hour of death. The Sisters upon arrival made the general rounds of these large dormitories. One of them, noticing that one of the patients was agitated, stopped to assist him, thinking that he was in his final agony, when suddenly she noticed that he was between two corpses. She had the latter removed immediately, and he became quiet... but soon the pangs of death came upon him in turn and he had to be removed. The bodies remained exposed in the open air until the time of burial in a neighboring field which had been set up as a cemetery.

The stench produced by this accumulation of corpses and the horror which it naturally caused, added to the heart-rending tableau of the situation an even more sombre aspect. Our Sisters, nevertheless, circulated calmly through these various enclosures. Sister Brault spent her remarkable energy and strength on these patients. She was the director of one of the "sheds." As it became necessary from time to time to make more room, she helped to carry to a conveyance, the poor patients destined to another department. Then she would return to the remaining ones to administer medication and give relief in any way she could.

Sister Desjardins always appeared with a smiling face. If she had had her brushes and canvas, she could have painted the dismal scenes of these wretched shelters. But it was toward these poor patients that she practised all her skills.

At the other end of a dark hallway, the silhouette of Sister Marie Barbeau could be seen. She was putting forth great efforts to discover the patients in greatest need. In fact, there was in this isolated place, a lean-to feebly lighted by a small window. The floor was of hardened earth. A fair number of convalescents were busy there shredding rope to earn a small ration. The Sister was ever with them, looking after their needs with concern, and remained in this hovel without paying attention to the humidity or other inconveniences. This courageous Sister displayed amazing energy. It was good to see her with the sick. What care she gave them! What attention! What kindness! The most repulsive services were those which she rendered with the greatest eagerness. One day she was busy in a department of five hundred plague-stricken patients. Suddenly, she noticed a dying woman. She ran to her bedside and prepared her to receive the last rites of the Church. The dying woman gave forth a repulsive odor. The dear Sister wanted to remove her from her fetid couch to another bed. A young doctor arriving on the scene offered his services but hardly had he lifted the putrid body when he was forced to leave. He deeply esteemed how virtuously she overcame the repugnant situation.

Some time later, this young Protestant doctor, stricken himself with the plague, requested that the Sisters be at his bedside. He became a convert and stated that he owed his conversion to the beautiful example of the Sister of Charity.

Another day, the same Sister was sweeping the "shed" when an officer arrived with a squad. Surprised at seeing the little Sister thus occupied, he gave orders to his soldiers who took up the brooms and cleaned the place in a short time.

Sister Ste-Croix Pomainville had offered herself eagerly for services in the field-hospitals. Surrounded by patients, she consoled them by thoughtful words emanating from her gracious heart.

Sister Deschamps, who would later be Superior General for twenty-five years, found time amid her occupations to spend Sundays at the "sheds" in order to relieve the Sisters. She always remembered fondly the moments spent with Sister Ste-Croix. Nor did she ever forget the impression she had at the sight of eighty caskets piled up beside the hospital, ready for burial on Monday.

Sisters Olier, Blondin, Cinq-Mars and others replaced each other. Sister Blondin in particular, was totally dedicated to sacrifice and immolation.

Sister Saint-Joseph (Denis) did not have an easy task in these miserable shelters. In the attics, she could be seen amid a large number of little children. She cared for them with a great spirit of faith deeming this not too great a price to pay for the cross of her religious profession which she was soon to receive.

Sisters Montgolfier, Dalpé, Primeau, Chèvrefils, Limoges, and Labrèche also showed a courage which never weakened. They were ever ready to relieve the older Sisters and to devote themselves to the most humble and distasteful tasks.

Several weeks spent at the field-hospitals sufficed for the priests and Sisters to establish order and regularity. The shelters were divided into departments for men, women, and children. One of the "sheds" was reserved for new arrivals. It is here that

Sister Collins worked, a young novice full of zeal and the spirit of sacrifice. She could be seen among the many immigrants, remaining unruffled, listening with kindnesses and deference to their lamentations, giving them hope of better days to come. She kept all those who could not gain access to other quarters and she increased her solicitude in order to alleviate their sufferings. How often she was moved to tears over the lot of these poor dying people! The shed where she worked was low, small and without beds. She had to lie alongside the patients to help them to drink; but her courage did not flinch. If she could give their bodies no relief, she knew at least how to give them courage by showing them a glimpse of eternity. How pathetic she was with the dying! She had a way of touching hearts and she turned many away from heresy.

Another distress saddened the Sisters: the heart-rending farewells of these poor immigrants. One day Sister Montgolfier in making her rounds met a little eleven year-old girl who was looking for her mother. She took her lovingly by the hand and led her from bed to bed. Anxiously, the little one looked to the left and to the right, her heart beating with fear and hope. Suddenly, she exclaimed, "Oh, Mother!" But as she embraced her dear mother, her little arms clasped a dying patient who drew her last breath as her child kissed her.

Another day, as Sister Montgolfier made her usual rounds, she noticed some small children calling and caressing their father. Worried that the children might be inconveniencing the dying man, the vigilant Sister went to remove them. Alas! The father was dead! The nurse then had to take away the children whose cries were heart-rending. She led them to the children's "sheds" and a few days later had them placed in a good family. In the following autumn, Sister Montgolfier was still at the "sheds" when an Irish lady convalescing from typhus came to inquire about her husband and children. After several questions, Sister recognized the unfortunate mother of the orphans she had placed. She gave all the details requested. The woman ex-

claimed: "How glad I am that my children are alive and I can have them back! Praise God!"

Before closing this first part of the story of the typhus epidemic, we would like to recall the memory of the good Dr. Schmidt, who for sixteen years was the highly regarded doctor of the Grey Nuns' Community. Still a young man, he devoted himself with untiring zeal to the care of the plague-stricken. Small children were the special object of his solicitude. God blessed and generously rewarded him and his family. The community's annals have recorded with care some biographical details of this beloved doctor. Here are a few extracts:

Dr. S.B. Schmidt was born in Montreal on July 4, 1826. He studied medicine at McGill College and graduated at age 21. He followed the belief of his Protestant father or rather did not profess any faith. He thought only of becoming famous in his career. The terrible epidemic had just appeared in our country. Dr. Schmidt hastened to the "sheds" where he contracted the infection, but Providence took care of him.

Bishop Bourget, the bishop of Montreal who had noticed the young doctor's diligence, came to visit him. Seeing his pious Catholic mother practically alone at his bedside because of the contagion that reigned in the city, His Grace condescended to share her solicitude. Each day, the humble *bishop came to the patient's bedside, washed and changed him, and rendered all the services he could. The doctor was puzzled by this unselfish dedication. One day as the bishop was washing his feet, the doctor thought that the bishop must be out of his mind. As delirium caused him to express his thoughts frankly, he said to the bishop: "They say I am crazy, but you are crazier than I to do what you are doing." Nevertheless, Bishop Bourget continued to perform with zeal and devotedness his services as orderly and sanctifying his material care by his union to God, he prayed all the while. The patient, annoyed at hearing him, interrupted him with these words: "You tire me!" The peaceful prelate continued his incessant prayer silently.*

After several days of diligent care, His Grace obtained permission to place at the foot of his bed a small crucifix for which at first, he showed only indifference. Gradually, he grew familiar with the image of our Redeemer and began to look at it lovingly. The looks of the Divine Savior responded to his with merciful tenderness. The young doctor pronounced his abjuration. The bishop administered the last rites as he seemed to be nearing his end. But suddenly, his condition improved. He gradually gained strength and eventually, he was healed and became a good Christian. He remained a subject of edification for all who knew him.

SECOND PART

The Martyrs of Charity

Several weeks had gone by in these field-hospitals where hundreds of human beings succumbed to the typhus. The priests and Sisters, nevertheless were still standing, but their gait was becoming unsteady. Only courage kept them on duty. In a matter of days they would have to lay down their arms.

Our good Mother McMullen who went each day to encourage and help her daughters, noticed the alteration of their features. Worried, she wished to provide additional help... Alas! for almost a month nearly all of her community had been going to the "sheds". At the beginning she urged them to use discretion. She obliged the Sisters to go for their meals to the farm house near the sheds where they would have all they needed. But in their zeal these true daughters of charity took their meals at irregular times because of the difficulty they had in leaving their patients. Many did not even make it to the farm. They were satisfied with dipping a small bowl into the common kettle of broth and drawing out a little portion of meat which they ate and returned on duty. It would take the pestilential illness to quell this untiring activity.

It happened one night that several went to bed never to rise again. Soon the infirmary of the General Hospital became too small for the increasing number of patients. The assembly room of the novitiate was transformed into a dormitory for the dear novices afflicted with the contagion.

Our Sulpician priests vainly guarded themselves against the early attacks of the fever. Father Morgan was brought to Hôtel-Dieu as well as good Father Caroff. In the early days of July, the Grey Nuns had difficulty replacing each other at the field-hospitals and they could no longer manage by themselves to care for the plague victims. The untiring Mother McMullen became more and more perplexed. She confided her fears to Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary, who in turn informed Bishop Bourget of the situation. His Grace, with paternal solicitude, hastened to offer this good Mother the assistance of the Sisters of Providence. This help was urgently needed. On June 26, they were welcomed at the hospital and each morning, these new nurses went with the Grey Nuns to start their work. Mother McMullen, nevertheless, wanted the work to be shared with discretion. Part of them would spend the morning at the farm and would replace the others in the afternoon. Thus this alternating of work and rest would allow the workers to continue longer.

The situation became more and more alarming. The number of patients kept increasing. The bishop allowed the cloister to be opened and the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu went to exercise on the outside the zeal they had shown on the arrival of the ships when they had opened their halls to the immigrants. Bishop Bourget followed with great intensity the service in the field-hospitals, and seeing the Sulpician priests stricken with the epidemic, he went to the sheds. On July 3, he spent the night there with Bishop Phelan of Kingston. The two bishops practised their ministry with much fatigue. The following day, they went to our farm at Pointe Saint-Charles to rest.

Illness progressed at the Grey Nuns' home. On July 5, say our memoirs, twenty-three Sisters were in bed. Seventeen were stricken with the plague and those who remained standing were

exhausted with fatigue incurred at the service of their Sisters. On July 6, Mother McMullen succumbed to exhaustion. This complete draining caused great concern among her daughters. On July 7, fifteen Sisters received the last rites.

On the following day news was circulated that Father Patrick Morgan, P.S.S. had died at Hôtel-Dieu at the age of 32. He had been one of the first to exercise his ministry at the sheds. His charity and his zeal had been remarkable. He had often been seen stretched out alongside two moribund patients, hearing their confession.

Sister Limoges followed him closely. She succumbed on the tenth after excruciating suffering. Almost continually delirious, she was unable to make her religious vows, but was not her holocaust complete? This young novice, hardly twenty years old, had a strong and robust constitution. Her tender compassion for the unfortunate was manifested at the arrival of the poor Irish people infected with typhus. She would have wanted to be among the first to go to the sheds. To her companions in the novitiate she said: "You are lucky to go and take care of the members of Our Lord's body. I am eager to follow you! Will that day ever come?" When she was finally assigned to share the fate of her Sisters, she went to the chapel to thank Our Lord and she attended Mass in thanksgiving.

Father Lawrence McEnery died the same day. This zealous priest also succumbed to the same illness as his unfortunate compatriots.

On July 11, Father Gottefrey, P.S.S., came to the convent after his ministry at the sheds. Having met some of our Sisters, he said to them: "Courage, Sisters, suffering lasts only a short time, but the reward is eternal." Having said good-night to Mother McMullen whom he found very worried and preoccupied, he recommended that she not "kill herself..." It was 6:30 P.M. Father then went to the church of Notre Dame de Bon-Secours to get the Blessed Sacrament which he was to bring to a dying patient. He went up to the third storey of the sacristy. There he tried to open a door which used to open on a porch. Forget-

ting, or perhaps oblivious to the fact that the porch was no longer there, he stepped out into a thirty-foot void. He was taken to Hôtel-Dieu where he soon died and went to receive the reward of faithful servants ever ready to sacrifice themselves in the service of the Divine Master.

This death, in such tragic circumstances, broke the heart of the poor Superior of the Sulpicians. At first, none of his priests wanted to break the news to him. Reverend Father Duranquet, a Jesuit, a former student and spiritual son of Father Billaudèle in Clermont, communicated the sad message. Seeing the Superior's distress, he said to him: "Father, it is not a day of battle which is sad for a soldier; on the contrary, he is never prouder or happier. We are with you in battle and we are all happy." "You are right," replied Father Billaudèle, revived by these energetic words. He admitted that this was the only way that he could sustain such a painful blow.

On July 13, the beloved Superior received with the same submission the last breath of Father Caroff, P.S.S., a priest of admirable simplicity and kindness and whose dedication at the field-hospitals had been remarkable.

Sister Angélique Chèvrefils-Primeau also succumbed. The name of Angélique was very becoming to this novice. It was with a smile on her lips that she had accepted her assignment to the sheds. This mission had lasted only a short time. Having gone soon after her vesturing on June 25, the young novice had the consolation of pronouncing her vows on July 12, two days before her death.

On July 15, consternation was great both at the Hospital and at the Seminary when it was learned that the dear Father P. Richards, P.S.S., had died. A life more angelic than human characterized this priest who was only thirty years old. His thoughts were always of things heavenly. If someone brought to his attention the vermin on his clothing, he would say smilingly, "Oh, they are all so many pearls for heaven." Each morning, on his arrival at the field-hospital, he greeted the nurses with these words. "Sister, is today the day we shall go to see the

Eternal Father?" Extremely dedicated to the service of the sick as would have been a good orderly, he asked Sister Dalpé, the courageous novice he saw harassed by fatigue as he was himself: "Do you not think that we have earned a few boards for our coffin?"

On July 16, it was Sister Jeannette Collins, a twenty year old novice who answered the call of the Divine Spouse. Her lamp was ready; it was filled with the oil of heroic charity. She had bought this oil with fatigue, sweat, and sacrifices of all sorts but especially by her zeal in securing the priest's aid in the patients' dying moments. Her religious knowledge was a great help to her in answering the unadvised questions of the Protestants. One day when she had been away for a few moments, a minister took advantage of her absence to exercise propaganda in favor of the so-called reform. Sister Collins having returned suddenly, the patients exclaimed: "Here is our heavenly Sister, here is our heavenly Sister! Come quickly. This minister is telling us horrible things about the Blessed Virgin." One can easily imagine the astonishment of the minister. In her delirium, she expressed her joy in this way: "I see the Child Jesus; He is so beautiful! I want to go to Him... let me go with my Jesus." Someone asked her if she wanted to be healed. "Oh no!" she replied, "I want to die in order to love Jesus in heaven!"

Our good Mother McMullen withstood these painful losses with holy resignation. The chalice had not yet been drained. Now, she stood at the bedside of Sister Marie Barbeau, a professed sister for twenty-two years, a model of regularity and fervor. This good Sister would die a victim of her devotedness. Everyone testified to the fact that she had always preferred the most destitute. Who could forget her charity? Placed in charge of the food stores of the house, she had obtained permission to feed as many of the poor from outside as she could with the left overs properly utilized... These seemed to increase to the great joy of this true Sister of charity.

Sister Alodie Bruyère, a postulant, died on July 23. She had no sooner appeared at the sheds than she was struck down. Her

illness was ruthless and her body fell into decomposition. In her delirium she sang with earnestness: "O Jesus, lead Thou me!"

In speaking of the novices, our memoirs say, "All these young people gave promise of a long life. They were as young vivacious plants in which one places great hopes. It has pleased the Lord to transplant them into eternity. May He be forever exalted and blessed!" Mother McMullen wrote to the Sisters of St. Boniface, "Thank God that He has given us submission to His adorable will! Not a word of complaint or of regret is being heard!"

The losses at the Seminary seemed to alternate with those of the Grey Nun Community. The death of Father John Jackson Richards, P.S.S., would now bring sorrow to both houses. He succumbed at age 68 by his admirable self-devotion to our unfortunate brothers from Ireland. It was he who had received them on the first night of their arrival. It was he also who had persuaded the Commissioner of Immigration to ask the Sisters of Charity to care for the sick. It was he again who had shown such kind interest towards the orphans from the sheds. He had secured a shelter for them, had clothing given them, and had even prepared their beds. He loved to be with them; he recited his breviary with them. In his last illness, he was concerned about this work which he had so much at heart. He recommended it earnestly to the Sisters when they visited him at Hôtel-Dieu.

Rev. John Richards was from the United States. Born into a Protestant family, he came to Montreal in 1807 — with the intention of preaching and converting to this faith the clergy of Montreal whom he knew to be the main support of the Catholic faith in Canada. To reach his goal more surely, he went directly to the Superior of the Seminary, Father Auguste Roux; but that was where God awaited him to enlighten his well-intentioned mind and his heart full of integrity and good faith. Instructed, convinced, and penetrated by the wise and knowledgeable instructions received from Father Roux, he saw the truth, renounced his error, and through the same zealous

motion which had brought him to Canada, requested admission to the priesthood. By his knowledge, his piety, his admirable good nature, the exquisite courtesy of his manners, he became an example for the clergy in our country and one of the most distinguished members of the Community of Sulpicians. He was so attached to Father Roux that he wished to accompany the latter on a trip to Europe in 1826. Having returned to Canada in 1828, Father Richards continued to lavish the most kind and affectionate care on the old priest until his death on April 7, 1831.

Mother McMullen's chalice had not yet been drained. Her dear secretary, Sister Ste-Croix, an exemplary religious, so worthy of her trust, would be taken from her. The good Superior exclaimed, "Alas, My God! She too, my secretary!" Poor Mother! Sisters such as this one have a right to your motherly tears.

Along with the qualities just mentioned, Sister Ste-Croix-Pomainville possessed a very fine education. Though her mother was a Protestant, our dear Sister overcame all unfavorable prejudice and especially the inclination to vanity. She chose for her lot the community of the Grey Nuns which she said appeared the most austere and the most modest of those she knew. The spirit of recollection was alive in this fervent religious. The memory of it has remained as an edifying fragrance among all those who knew her. In the midst of the most distracting occupations, she did not appear to lose the presence of God. To a modest and reserved demeanor she joined great alacrity. Her relationships were marked by gentleness and courtesy.

Like all the Sisters who along with her, dedicated themselves to the plague-stricken, she had a great and holy compassion toward misfortune, so she was always ready to visit the afflicted and the sick. She found solace in spending nights in the poorest hovels. When the first immigrants arrived, she urged Mother McMullen to consider this beautiful work offering herself wholeheartedly to help them. She was one of the first to go to

the sheds and was one of the last to return home, ill with the deadly disease. One of the Sisters alarmed at seeing the epidemic taking such grave proportions expressed her fear of almost inevitable death. "Ah dear Sister," she replied, "why should we fear? Shouldn't we be happy to die serving our neighbor and giving our life for Him who sacrificed His own for us?"

The story is told that one day at the sheds, Sister Ste-Croix noticing the pensive look of Father P. Richards, inquired about his health. The good Father quietly pointed to a pile of coffins outside. "There are a lot of coffins out there," he said. "I wonder if ours are made." — "They aren't made yet," replied Sister Ste-Croix, "but it is certain that the boards are already cut." Father Richards preceded her into the eternity for which he had so longed. The dear Sister followed him without much delay.

Our good Mother McMullen had obliged her daughter to request her healing through the intercession of the glorious St. Joseph. The latter did so through obedience and with perfect abandonment to the divine will even though she had a great desire to see Jesus. July 31, was to be the day of her departure for the heavenly kingdom.

We were told of a fact that deserves our attention. Miss McDonnell, a young lady from this city, had known and greatly loved the dear Sister whom the community was now mourning. She had often accompanied her on her visits to the poor and the sick and she had tried to follow her example. Her mortification led her to put peas in her shoes so that she would have more to suffer on her errands of charity. This young lady had obtained from her mother the permission to accompany her friend to the sheds where she contracted the disease. On July 31, being very ill she called her mother suddenly. "Oh, Mother" she said, "look at Sister Ste-Croix; She is going to heaven!" This pious woman took note of the time and sent a messenger to the Grey Nuns immediately to inquire about the dear Sister. She was told that Sister Ste-Croix had just died. The time of each of these events having been compared, a perfect coincidence was indicated between the death of the Sister and the vision of the

sick girl. This at least is what tradition claims. Miss McDonnell also died shortly afterward, undoubtedly following in the footsteps of her beloved friend.

The cup of bitterness was not yet drained... Let us listen to the lamentations of a senior Sister!

Sister Nobless, who because of her advanced age was unable to dedicate herself to the care of the plague-stricken, volunteered to replace Sister Marie in the men's ward. The care she gave to some of the men who had gone to work at the field-hospitals, made her contract the infectious disease herself. She died on August 4, rich in the virtues and merits of forty-six years of religious life. This Sister's kindness was admirable. She gave her preference to the care of the most disabled. Her compliance with the rule only increased with age. She never sought any of the alleviations which could have been permitted because of her advanced age. Sister Nobless was the very symbol of courtesy. Whenever the young Sisters offered to render her any service, she would thank them graciously, adding that she was not only the servant of the poor but her own servant as well. She continued in this fashion until the age of seventy-two.

Sister Nobless' tomb had just been sealed. She was the last typhus victim among the Grey Nuns. The community was like a large field in which the grain had been mowed down by the harvester. There were still heads standing here and there, but they were bent toward the earth. The assembly room and the novitiate retained traces of the destructive plague. These rooms converted into infirmaries had been the scene of the final battles of the dear victims.

The service of the poor continued as it had been previously because the former hospitaliers had resumed their duties. Several postulants took the habit; besides, several young girls belonging to eminent families, inspired by what they had seen and heard during the period of adversity, wished also to follow the example of the heroines and requested their admission to the novitiate. They were Sisters Kolmyer, Devins, Maréchal, Sauvé, Dunn, Gadbois and Christin (Soeur Marie).

Bishop Bourget and Father Billaudèle, Superior at the Seminary, felt keenly the community's devastation. They came from time to time to bring words of solace and consolation.

On June 30, the chronicles recorded the Governor-General's visit of condolence to the Community. His Excellency was accompanied by Lady Elgin, by His Grace Bishop Phelan, bishop of Kingston, by Father Billaudèle, etc. Lord Elgin appeared deeply touched on learning that many Sisters had fallen victims of their devotedness.

We insert here a letter which Mother McMullen wrote to Lady Elgin, daughter of Lord Durham, at the end of December.

Lady Elgin,

The year which is coming to a close has been intermingled with joys and sorrows. There is a day which we shall never forget. It is the day on which you came with your worthy husband to sympathize with us over our ordeal.

Our poor and orphans have forgotten their pain with the memory of your touching kindness and they pray earnestly for the illustrious lady who was so kind to them.

At this year-end especially, the wishes of the whole community rise heavenward beseeching God to grant you a long and happy life for the benefit of humanity and for the consolation of those whom you have gratified.

Deign to accept these wishes dear Lady, especially those of the one who has the honor of being

Your Humble Servant,
Sister McMullen, superior⁽¹⁾

Divine Providence was to bring to an end this time of trial. It was from above that the community had awaited help. Consequently, on June 12, in order to obtain an end to the scourge, Mother McMullen along with the Sisters, the elderly, and the

⁽¹⁾ Until her departure for England in 1854, Lady Elgin continued to give our community special marks of esteem.

children began a novena to St. Roch whose statue remained exposed on the altar in the chapel of the Eternal Father.

Most of the Sisters, ill at this time, began to convalesce. It was suggested that some nearby place be sought where the poor Sisters could enjoy a more wholesome atmosphere. The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame offered their St. Paul Island; but their employees having heard of this project and fearing they would be contaminated wanted to abandon the farming operations and to leave the island. The good Sisters would have consented to the loss of their crop but our Community would not hear of it. How dear to the Grey Nuns has the memory of this esteem and affection remained!

The Sulpician Fathers in turn, offered their farm of St. Gabriel. Bishop Bourget authorized acceptance of it. It was therefore to "Gregory House" that the convalescing group went. They found a large house surrounded by gardens, orchards, and a pond; a wonderful solitude where they could breathe fresh air. Eighteen or twenty beds and complete furnishing rendered this dwelling comfortable. All had been prepared by the good Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame at their own expense.

On the following day, June 27, Father Larré, P.S.S., hastened to the Gregorian solitude to visit his spiritual daughters and to give them his blessing. On the 28th, Father Connolly, P.S.S., offered the Holy Sacrifice in this new sanctuary where the Blessed Sacrament would henceforth remain.

Our untiring Mother McMullen visited her unfortunate daughters nearly every day and Mother Deschamps, the generous bursar, supplied an abundance of food and provided for every need. A horse and carriage were put at the disposal of the patients.

Gradually they regained their strength. They inquired eagerly about the events of the day and about their companions whom they missed... On learning of the painful losses the community had just suffered, they were distressed. To comfort them it was necessary to remind them that "these willing victims had taken

their place in the army of martyrs and were now triumphant in heaven."

During the epidemic, measures of prudence had been used with the sick. Bells did not toll, the burial took place with a minimum of delay, a deep silence was observed in the infirmaries. On August 12, and the days that followed, the services of our departed Sisters were held in the chapel of the General Hospital. There were prayers and tears, but there was also hope and blessings for our Institute. The choir of Notre-Dame Church provided the singing for these services.

As to what was going on in "the shelters" through July and August, "Les Mélanges religieux" will inform us.

"In the midst of the public disasters, our Catholic clergy is continuing its career of self-devotion and sacrifice. Their ranks are thinning out as through great battles, but without scaring off the survivors. Like brave soldiers, they tighten the ranks to keep the enemy at bay.

The old and venerable community of the Sulpicians has remained faithful to its family traditions and to its glorious past. In the early times of our city the blood of its members was shed under the weapons of the Iroquois. They were martyrs of their zeal. Their brothers today, heirs of their virtues, add to their glorious heritage the title no less honorable of martyrs of charity. Five of them have already received their reward. Others are still struggling between life and death."

The gaps in the ranks of this battalion did not alter its courage. Under stress of painful losses, however, it was compelled to relinquish the "sheds". Bishop Bourget then took over the direct administration of them. The beloved prelate had already appeared on the scene many times, spending his strength in the battle. The general became a soldier and fought on the front lines. Sorrow and adversity always had a claim on the apostle's heart. The bishop soon organized two buildings where more than two hundred and sixty orphans were taken in.

His Grace was admirably assisted in this life of dedication and sacrifice by Monsignor Prince, the vicar general, Father Hudon, Canon Trudeau, Father A. Roy and Father T.P. Colgan, pastor of Saint-André d'Argenteuil, who died on August 16.

To the names already mentioned, the following must be added: Reverend Fathers Dumerle, Du Ranquet, Férard, Tchikiansky, Mignard, Driscoll, Jesuits; Reverend Fathers A. Thibaudier et T. Lahaye, clerics de Saint-Viateur; Reverend Father J. McMahon, E. Picard, H. Prévost, Sulpicians; Reverend Fathers H.L. Bienvenu, J.E. Lasnier, Z. Resther, C.J. Bardy, J.B. Campeau, L.D. Charland, J. Crevier, J. Dallaire, J. Desaulniers, L.H. Girouard, E. Hicks, J. Hughes, J.B. Leclaire, P. Lafrance, Limmel, E. Marsolais, A.J. Martineau, F.X.R. Mercier, O. Monette, F. Morin, O. Pelletier, L.H. Pominville, T.C. Saint-Aubin and J.B. Saint-Germain.

On August 13, Bishop Bourget addressed a circular letter to the people of his diocese. In it he expressed the deep sorrow he had experienced at the numerous deaths of the faithful, of priests and of religious.

His Grace recalled to this people the intensity of feeling stirred up by the early pilgrimages to Bon-Secours. He evoked also the memory of the miraculous statue of Our Lady brought from France by Marguerite Bourgeois, which had mysteriously disappeared from the sanctuary of Bon-Secours. Then, addressing the Holy Virgin, his Grace made three promises in these terms:

"1. I pledge by vow to make every effort to re-establish the pious pilgrimage to Our Lady of Bon-Secours. 2. In place of the holy image which our forefathers venerated with such respect and which disappeared from this temple in punishment for our lack of fervor, deign to accept the gilded bronze statue which I had made in Paris and which was solemnly blessed at the altar of the Confraternity in the church dedicated to you under the title of Our Lady of Victory; 3. I promise to place as a votive offering in this sanctuary where you have established your dwelling, a painting representing the typhus epidemic attempting to

enter this town but stopped at the gates by your powerful protection".⁽¹⁾

This loving Shepherd implores anew the Blessed Virgin again and ends his prayer with this touching supplication: "O Mary, if the God who strikes us must have more victims, entreat him to accept the offering I make of myself, but for mercy's sake, spare my people!"

On the day he published this letter Bishop Bourget became ill with typhus. News of this spread immediately casting deep alarm over the whole population. How fervently they prayed for the recovery of the heroic shepherd! On September 2, Bishop Bourget resumed his occupations, but his vicar-general, Father Hyacinthe Hudon, dean of the chapter of the Cathedral of Montreal, likewise fell victim to the typhus. By his wisdom, his knowledge, and his competency, Father Hudon had rendered important services to the Canadian Church. Deeply attached to his bishop, he gave him one last proof of his zeal by serving as intermediary with the civic authorities. He obtained supplementary help in favor of the diseased immigrants on whom he also lavished the consolation of his ministry.

Several other priests were stricken with typhus. Among them was Father Driscoll, a Jesuit priest from New York, who had come to assist our Canadian clergy during his holidays. He was able, however, to return toward the end of August and resume his classes.

The typhus did not work havoc only in Montreal and Quebec. Ottawa and Toronto were also under its malicious influence. The August newspapers said: "We are deeply alarmed by the fatigue and the sickly state of the Toronto priests. Bishop Powers remains alone to sustain the ministerial load in his Episcopal See where seven or eight hundred patients claim his ministry." He was to succumb to this admirable self-devotion at the age of 43.

⁽¹⁾ This painting is the one seen in the Chapel of Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours. It depicts Sisters attending to the poor immigrants, sprawled on the ground. To the right, one notices the Holy Virgin interceding for Ville-Marie.

Our Sisters of Ottawa received 460 typhus patients. The former were few in number, but, strengthened by the Spirit of God, they gave themselves totally without counting costs.

At the old manor at Châteauguay, the convalescents rested well. On September 13, they returned to the Community at the General Hospital. The generous daughters of Mother d'Youville, lovers of the cross as she had been, "had gone out suffering and weeping as they carried the seed; now they returned bringing in the harvest." (Ps. 126)

With outpouring of joy brought on by this sisterly reunion came a song of thanksgiving. After the MISERERE, Mother McMullen intoned the TE DEUM to thank God for the cessation of the plague in the Hospital. A novena was fervently made to implore God's protection. The typhus was still raging at the quarantine sheds and even in the town. There were still 800 patients at the field-hospitals.

The Sisters of Providence who had replaced the Grey Nuns, were beginning to weaken under the burden. Thirty-two were stricken with typhus and three had fallen under its attack. They were Sisters Angélique Bélouin, Catherine Brady, and Olympe Guy.

The Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu had themselves suffered losses in their dear Sisters Gertrude Poirier, Sophie Darche, and M. Joséphine Portelance.

The Grey Nuns were still available... a little rest had given them renewed strength. They were eager to go back to the place where the flame of Christian Charity had been ignited. The voice of the chief pastor had been heard and they returned to the sheds after an absence of two and one half months because of the illness and death of several among them. Though feeble, they came with joy to care for the poor patients. Mother Deschamps led the little band and applied herself with zeal to the work that appealed to her faith and her charity. Sister Blondin assisted her with all the strength she could muster, along with

the courageous novices, Sisters Dalpé and Montgolfier, who zealously resumed their activities in these shelters.

Their first care was to carry out the plan which the Sisters of Providence had of setting up a chapel in the enclosure for the solace of convalescents and of the nurses caring for the sick. During this second period, the illness struck a great number of priests and Sisters but all of them overcame it. God had taken enough victims, nine priests and thirteen Sisters. The sword was placed in its sheath, the Lord was satisfied. He had accepted the holocaust.

It was estimated that more than 13,850 immigrants had been swept away by the epidemic of 1847. 5,293 had died at sea, 3,389 at Grosse-Ile, 1,137 in Quebec, 3,682 in Montreal, 130 in Lachine and 39 in St-Jean.

The immigrants who died at Pointe Saint-Charles are buried a short distance from where the field-hospitals had stood during the epidemic. A huge stone monument indicates their place of interment.

At the first word of the calamity in Montreal, Father de Courson, Superior General of the Sulpicians in Paris, had hastened to write special letters to those of his priests who were ministering to the typhus victims. These letters, filled with sentiments inspired by faith and charity brought great comfort to the pain of all.

When the beloved superior was informed of the death of his confrères, he wished he had been able to cross the ocean to come to comfort his spiritual sons, but compelling circumstances retained him at home. He resolved to be represented by Father Faillon, so well known, so esteemed, loved by all.

The Superior General's kind sympathy included also the Grey Nuns.

He wrote to Mother McMullen: "I do not want to miss the occasion of telling you that I share in your sorrow and in your victories. To die for Jesus Christ is to conquer and to triumph. This thought was our comfort when we learned of the generous death

of our dear priests. It is also yours. Our losses did not render us insensitive to those which you suffered. I recommended your dead and your sick to the prayers and the Holy Sacrifices of all the priests of our company at the same time as I recommended our dead and our sick. It is the same battle; there is no need to separate the combatants.

In God's plan over our houses, there are great blessings of which we shall experience the effects. Let us continue to sacrifice ourselves in the service of our adorable Master. I am trying to fill the gaps created at the Seminary by the plague, and I trust that God will give me the means. It will be the same for you. God will send you numerous and generous vocations. You will be able to cope with the admirable task God has entrusted to you..."

Despite the trials to which the community was subjected in this time of deep distress, it celebrated with solemnity the 100th anniversary of our beloved Mother d'Youville's entry into the General Hospital. "On the eve of the feast, the bells chimed" say the chronicles. There was cause for rejoicing. On this anniversary, the Hospital must have appeared close to heaven as it offered its victims in thanksgiving, causing a pure incense to rise toward the Eternal Father.

His Grace, Bishop Bourget, celebrated a High Mass before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. In a vibrant address, the beloved Pastor was happy to go back in time to Mother d'Youville, recalling the marvels of self-immolation and of generosity accomplished by her daughters in this episode of typhus. Bishop Prince came to close this beautiful day by giving the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Father Larré also encouraged the community to give heartfelt thanks for the graces and blessings received through the century which was drawing to a close.

The presence of delegates from St-Hyacinthe and from Ottawa added to the joy of the centennial by tightening the bonds of friendship which united them to the dear Mother House. Our beloved Foundress must have looked with joy on her jubilant daughters! What unexpected glory this memorable day must have brought her! Deep within her soul each one repeated her

TE DEUM the only hymn capable of expressing adequately the sentiments of grateful hearts.

In 1848 Bishop Bourget fulfilled an obligation which he had contracted at the time of the typhus. By a proclamation dated May 1, he recalled it in these terms:

"By this vow to deploy every effort to re-establish the pious pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Bon-Secours we sought to put a barrier between us and the fearful epidemic." The Bishop then spoke of the pious pilgrimages of former times a custom which had fallen into disuse. "Unlike in the times of our forefathers, companies of pilgrims were no longer seen going toward this beloved sanctuary to thank Our Lady for graces obtained through her intercession and to request new favors. Without wishing to fathom the secret judgments of God, it appeared to us that such indifference would sooner or later draw some woe upon us." Here, the Bishop listed the great calamities which afflicted Montreal after the fire which destroyed the church of Bon-Secours in 1734. He then recalled the protection due to the Blessed Virgin. "In granting our requests, Mary expresses to us her wish to be especially honored in this sanctuary. She wishes this sanctuary to be for us a place of refuge in times of great calamity as it had been for our forefathers. Come then, and visit it with trust. It rises over the market place. Never pass by this holy place without dropping in to greet Mary. It is as an invitation to us that we shall have written in letters of gold over the doorway these words which can be read on the peristyle of the Cathedral Notre-Dame de Chartres:

"If the love of Mary
In your heart is engraved,
In passing don't forget
To greet her with an Ave."

The publication of this proclamation was followed by pious manifestations. His Grace solemnly crowned the statue destined to replace the previous Madonna which had disappeared.⁽¹⁾

On May 21, the votive statue of gilded bronze was placed on an altar in the sanctuary of the parish church. On the following day, Bishop Bourget blessed the crown which had been placed on a cushion covered with a precious material. He celebrated a pontifical mass attended by Bishop Prince, Bishop Gaulin, many priests, and a large number of religious and faithful. After the Mass, while the Regina Coeli Laetare was being sung, Bishop Bourget placed the beautiful crown on the head of the Madonna. Then His Grace intoned the TE DEUM. In the evening, after Vespers, the statue was solemnly transferred to the chapel of Bon-Secours passing through the streets of the town.

On May 22, Bishop Bourget, Bishop Prince, Bishop Gaulin, the clergy, the religious and the people went from the Bishop's residence to the chapel of Bon-Secours reciting the rosary. This was the inauguration of fervent pilgrimages canonically re-established by Bishop Bourget and which would continue to our day. It is in this ancient and revered sanctuary that our Mothers so often went to invoke Mary, to expose their needs to her, to commit to her their cares, and to receive her comforting favors. The tradition has been faithfully maintained.

On August 11, 1848, God recalled to Himself our dear Mother Beaubien who had been Superior General from 1833 to 1843.

(1) This small statue of brown wood, about eight inches in height, had been given to Mother Bourgeois on one of her voyages to France by the Seigneurs de Fleury, the le Prêtre family, in whose château the statue had been honoured with special veneration for more than a century. They had given it to the Foundress of the Congregation in view of promoting devotion to the Mother of God in the town which was dedicated to her. In 1734, after the building had been entirely destroyed by fire, the statue was found intact in the ruins. The preservation considered miraculous added to the veneration of which it was the object. In 1831, it disappeared... undoubtedly stolen by sacrilegious hands.

In the course of this account we were able to appreciate her virtues and talents. When she was stricken with paralysis on January 11, 1845, she was the Assistant and had just received her nomination as foundress of Bytown. Divine Providence's new plan found her submissive to God's divine will. Her illness became her Bytown. During these years of immobility, she prepared herself with patience, resignation, and childlike simplicity to meet the One she had served so well in the poor.

Let us include a few words of edification on the brief existences of our Sisters Marie Odile Philomène Simard-Saint Joseph, Apolline Ducharme and Sophie Goulet.

Sister Odile Simard-Saint-Joseph, appears to us as a privileged child. Her inclination to prayer and her love for the Holy Eucharist were remarkable. As a small child, as soon as her work was done, she would run to the church. If her mother sometimes refused her permission to attend Mass on a week day, Philomène would beg her on her knees to allow her to go. There, she appeared absorbed in the Divine Mystery.

At seventeen, she experienced the call of the Master and responded to it with love. Everything in her transpired frankness, simplicity, and kindness. Happy in God's house, she was working earnestly at her sanctification when while serving a patient, she contracted a tenacious fever which robbed her from the community on March 16, 1847 at the age of 22.

Mother McMullen wrote after her death: "We have lost an angel of peace, a Sister whose obedience was perfect and whose charity was amiable."

A pious author has written: "The most beautiful pages about the life of a soul are those which cannot be written." Such is the case for our dear Sister Apolline Ducharme who left this earth on June 7, 1840 at the age of 22.

Living in God's presence, she used to go in silence and recollection wherever duty called her, and she always co-operated with amiable simplicity. She appeared to soar above the

created. As if she sensed that her life would be brief, she lived in advance on the shores of eternity.

Sister Ducharme excelled in the virtue of recollection. The chronicles report that "strangers were struck with admiration at the sight of this young sister so modest and so grave."

Holy simplicity, sweet reflection of the life of Nazareth, how you have adorned the life of our Sister!

After Sister Ducharme's death, the community chaplain gave a beautiful eulogy of her virtue ending with these words: "I believe her to be already in paradise!"

On December 15, 1837, Sister Sophie Goulet died in the 26th year of her age and the 6th of her religious life.

Sister Goulet was noted for her attraction to mortification. Always ready to take on that which was most difficult, she was exceedingly hard on herself but very kind and charitable to others.

Jesus granted her heart's desire allowing her to experience interior afflictions described by Saint John of the Cross. As ever, the trial, this hard trial of the dark night of the soul, contained one of these special blessings which flow from the cross of Calvary and transform a person. Could we ever measure the rapid ascent of this Sister, so solidly established in the deepest humility? Her silence of word and action and her gratitude toward God reveal it to us.

The divine will! This was her ideal, her joy, the word which came naturally to her lips. Though ill, she accomplished her daily task with her eyes on Him who constantly watches over us. She wanted to love Him better, to resemble Him, to die without complaining. "Yes, my God and Father, I will it since such is your will!"

The five years of Mother McMullen's administration ended with the cross. Does the author of the Imitation of Christ not say: "In the cross is salvation; in the cross is life, strength of soul, joy of the spirit, the accomplishment of virtue and the perfection of holiness."

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL
UNDER
MOTHER ROSE COUTLEE
SEVENTH SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE INSTITUTE

CHAPTER XVIII
1848-1849

With a lively interest let us gather more of the main events of a past replete with the mercies of the Eternal Father and interwoven with the favors of his Divine Providence.

On the feast of the Holy Angels, October 2, 1848, our Capitular Mothers were meeting for the quinquennial elections presided by Father Billaudèle, Superior at the Sulpician Seminary, assisted by Fathers Larré and Bonnissant, both Sulpicians. Mother Rose Coutlée was elected Superior General. Mother McMullen became her assistant, and Sister Forbes was reelected Mistress of novices.

The new superior was to find the program for her government in that carried out by her predecessors, among others her dear aunt, our beloved Mother Thérèse Geneviève Coutlée. "The superior among superiors" as she was called by Father Roux, former Superior of the Seminary.

The good Mother resolved to set her heart to the task realizing the difficulties of the office and the need she had of wisdom and prudence as she said in a letter to Sister Valade:

“Would you believe it Sister? I am under the yoke of authority since October 2. This is the greatest punishment that could have happened to me in this world. If at least the Lord, in his great mercy, had spared our dear community, which will certainly be harmed by having at its head a person so incapable in all respects of governing a house that is expanding daily, and by that very fact, requires so much prudence and wisdom! I call for your charity, begging you not to forget in your prayers, one who is a Sister, a fellow-companion of novitiate days...”

As we can see, her humility gave rise to fear at this election; but strengthened by the virtue of obedience, Mother Coullée set to work. Let us recall in a few lines the early years of this true Sister of Charity.

Of French origin through her paternal grandfather, Louis Coullée, a former soldier in the colony of Saint-Germain Vitry, (Paris, France), Rose was born at the Cèdres, Comté de Soulanges on November 16, 1814.

“An autumn rose is more exquisite than any other,” a poet had said. When this rose is born on the bank of the St. Lawrence, in a picturesque spot like the Cèdres, her soul must yearn for the Infinite.

Consequently, at gay sunrise or at the golden dawn of a summer day, Rose was often engrossed in meditation before the Divine Majesty, bursting forth with the joy of living and of singing the glory of the Creator like an early morning bird.

Her parents, Louis Coullée and Rose Watier, were among the most respectable and the most Christian of the parish by reason of their patriarchal life. Despite their numerous family of fourteen children, they delighted in practising hospitality. This was one of their distinctive virtues. Rose practised it from an early age. Nothing was sweeter than to see her run out to meet

visitors, extend her little hand to them, imagining in her simplicity, that her support would be a great help to them. This courtesy amazed people and led them to say of her: "What will this child become?" She would become a Sister of Charity, mother of a great many unfortunate people.

Little Rose was gifted not only with a kind and sensitive heart, but also with a sharp mind and a strong will. Her family training would develop these beautiful qualities. As an adolescent she would add a note of harmony to this happy home where all was in order and rested on lofty principles which were basically Christian. There is no doubt that in her visits to her beloved aunt, our former Mother Thérèse Geneviève Coutlée, Superior General (1792-1821), the child took a liking to the punctual life which she would embrace at the age of sixteen. This precocious desire for the religious life was studied by Mother Lemaire who with a marked interest, followed the intellectual and spiritual development of her young candidate. The kind mother did not spare her advice. She tested and moderated her zeal and portrayed for her the life of a religious in the manner of former teachers of spiritual life.... One day, she was given an envelope. It was the favorable reply she had awaited so long. Without delay, Rose entered the novitiate on August 7, 1830.

Six years later, her sister Gertrude followed her example and became one of the foundresses of our house in St. Boniface, under the name of Sister Saint-Joseph. Fifty nine years of a fervent religious life showed us to what extent she had advanced in the way of perfection.

With a generosity that was no less edifying, Sister Rose Coutlée was gifted with remarkable energy. She knew how to utilize this strength to overcome the faults of a somewhat fiery character. The novice wished to belong to God in the full sense of the word. She knew no half-measure. On the day of her oblation to God on August 10, 1832, she was ready. From that time on, our dear Sister never ceased progressing in the gift of self, in self-abnegation, and sacrifice. The poor and the children benefited in turn by her tact and her dedication. The hospitaller

was industrious to the point that in her occupations, she invariably took on the most difficult work; the upkeep of the wards and of the dormitories, patching and mending the clothing; the whole series of big and little chores which make up the daily duties of the hospitallers and of the bursar.

The cross, in the radiance of which the young professed of sixteen years had lived, had however, only made its appearance. To direct a community, it has been said, is to embrace endless labor and anxiety. Mother Coullée humbly but generously accepted this burdensome office. Is it not with the blood of sacrifice that one must sign one's love, sacrifice which reaches the depths of the soul giving it beauty, worth, and productivity?

Her plan of government was as simple as she was herself. She intended to watch over the preservation and development of the religious spirit in the service to the poor. Accordingly, the good mother seized every opportunity to teach and impress upon all minds the necessity of obedience to even the smallest items of the rule. In her meetings and her administration she often said, "are they not the touchstone of obedience and the precious cross of every instant which must sanctify a religious person?"

Another love absorbed her thoughts: the property of the poor which must be kept intact. She dedicated to this attention all the strength of her character and her competence. "We are Sisters of Charity for the poor. It is because of them that we exist. They are the reason of our particular calling," our good Mother would say: "Therefore, let us love the poor. Let us say a kind word to them, a word of comfort. Sisters, let us accept them as they are, the poor whom the Good Lord sends us. Let us welcome them as we would welcome Jesus Himself. May this good Master never have reason to complain of the lack of care given His person..."

This beloved Mother, as we see, had a weakness, a sort of respect towards those who were disinherited. She found in her heart special tenderness to mitigate the privations akin to their

state. Her great spirit of faith inspired her also to hold up to them a situation which she succeeded in making them appreciate: "Did not Jesus love and practise poverty?" she would say to them.

Though Mother Coullée was absorbed exteriorly by the burdensome cares of her office, she nevertheless lived an intensely interior life. Having finished her meditation, she did not, however, leave God who radiated her soul. Her love made her discover Him with a penetrating eye in all her actions, and the Divine will was at the base of her simple spirituality. She seemed to have taken as her motto this thought of a foundress:⁽¹⁾ "To eat the bread of the adorable will of God, as He serves it to us at each moment; therein lies the whole secret of holiness. To do the will of God as we repeat: *Fiat!* Whether it comes to us by the interior feelings which He gives us by providential happenings, or by the voice of the Rule and of Superiors; it is this will accomplished or suffered which makes us Christ-like... just as it was the *FIAT* of the creation which brought about the Incarnation, the *FIAT* of Gethsemani and of Calvary which brought about the Redemption."

Let us follow Mother Coullée now in the numerous duties of administration and we shall see that her kindly charity, which was a consequence and a manifestation of her love of God, complied with all that was good.

Our seventh Superior General could not inaugurate her administration in a better way than to share with her Community a letter from Bishop Bourget requesting prayers for the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX.

"The capital of the Christian world is beset by bloody divisions," his Grace said. "The maimed rabble has invaded the peaceful dwelling of our Holy Father, the Pope. The innocent blood of a pious and learned prelate close to him, was shed on the Quirinal. Deadly bullets even penetrated the apartment occupied by the Holy Father. Cowardly assassins massacred with

(1) Mère Marie de Jésus.

impunity the Prime Minister of Pontifical States. Finally, the beloved and immortal Pius IX, treated as a prisoner in his own palace, was compelled to leave Rome and go into exile in a foreign land where he could freely exercise the sacred duty of the Sovereign Pontificate."

After having recounted these facts and given other details, Bishop Bourget added: "The 'evil time' has come for him, which he had predicted when, recommending Ireland to our charity, he wrote with accents of deep sorrow: This horrible and cruel tempest which has long been raging against the Universal Church is ever present before our eyes. (Encyclical letter of March 25, 1847.)

However, he had been overwhelmed by the homage and veneration of his people. At that time in Rome, there were uninterrupted ovations and magnificent displays to celebrate his glorious succession to the Pontifical Throne. At that time, the hills of the Eternal City re-echoed day and night with the clamorous applause of crowds intoxicated with joy under his free and fatherly management. The entire world re-echoed the rejoicing in the capital, and all the Catholic nations blessed Divine Providence for having given them such a kind Pastor. The name of this great Pontiff was on everyone's lips. Crowds from every part of the globe flocked to Rome to witness the wisdom of this new Solomon.

We have seen with our own eyes, dear brothers, what we describe here; but our pen cannot express our deep and thrilling emotions at the sight of the Vicar of Jesus Christ bringing so much glory to the Apostolic Chair. Alas! These days of triumph were not to last for long! They are already over!"

Let us see now in what moving terms His Grace called for the prayers of his people for the common Father of Christendom. "Let us pray then with confidence, since we shall be united with all the churches of the Catholic world. Let us ask in faith that the successor of Peter may walk without fear on this sea disquieted by intense emotional upheavals. By our fervor, let us awaken Jesus asleep in Peter's boat while a furious storm is

raging. Let us implore him to command the wind and the sea to be calm and quiet.

Zealous Pastors, pray, make use of ashes and haircloth and offer penance to the Lord in order to appease his wrath: *Ullulate Pastores... in ciliciis et in cinere* (Jer. 25, 34), for the terrible trouble which shakes the world and this disturbance of every community foretells that the great day of the Lord, the day of mourning and desolation is at hand. *Quia venit dies Domini magna et amara valde.*

Pious and innocent virgins, pray, raise your entreating hands to God and through your lamentations obtain for the Church from the Father of Mercies, every perfect gift which is needed in these troubled times. Pray also for the many communities which throng the Holy City and which day and night sing praises to the Lord. It is greatly to be feared that the godless, after striking the Pastor, may take out their wrath against the chosen portion of the flock: *Plange quasi virgo.* (Joel 1,8)

As Daughters of the Church, our Mothers replied to this urgent request with more intensive prayer and more generous sacrifices with what vehemence they asked Jesus to alleviate the Sovereign Pontiff's exile by apportioning solace to his many griefs.

As Daughters of Mother d'Youville, our Mothers were also about the same time, to respond to another call.

The author of "*Une Disciple de la Croix*" addressing Marguerite de la Jemmerais as she was leaving the Ursuline boarding school in Quebec, says:

"Dear Marguerite, before you leave, go upstairs, to the very roof of your convent, and one last time, gaze at the matchless horizons which God shall later give as a background to your work. Do you see those green hills which appear to leap toward the Laurentians and to sprawl at their feet? Take a good look. Now the picture is changing. It becomes alive. The centuries are unfolding. Buildings are rising. On their stone a name is being carved, the name of an unknown maiden... yours.

Read on: Dufrost Pavillion, La Jemmerais School, Youville Orphanage, it resembles a huge 'marguerite' which has shed its petals. Look more closely still, almost at your feet a petal has just fallen: The Marguerite d'Youville Juniorate. Allow your astonished gaze to rove about. Do you notice the cluster of houses of prayer, of charity, of works of all sorts which extend your life and your thoughts?

Flying over the St. Geneviève plateau, does your heart not beat faster? Stop here awhile and you, its founder in God's plan, call down blessings on the cradle of an important branch of your future Institute: The Mother House of the Sisters of Charity of Quebec''.

God in his fore-knowledge, blessed this branch which came to life in 1849. The old town of Quebec already tried by disastrous fires and by the typhus epidemic was at that time, being struck by another epidemic: cholera.

Such distressing circumstances hastened the realization of a project dear to the heart of Bishop P.F. Turgeon, the coadjutor to Bishop Signay, archbishop of Quebec ⁽¹⁾ whom he was to succeed a few months later. For a long time the worthy bishop had wished for his town a house which would serve as a refuge for the poor. He had even thought of requesting Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. Speaking one day with Reverend Félix Martin, S.J., His Grace made him aware of his project. "It would be very difficult to have these Sisters in Quebec," said the priest, "because according to their rule, they are to be served by the Lazarists and these religious are not even established in this country. However, the Grey Nuns of Montreal do the same works as the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul, and Your Grace will certainly not find anything better in France."

Then, the negotiations began with our community. The Bishop of Sidyme addressed to Mother Rose Coutlée the following formal request.

(1) Bishop Signay, already ill, died in January 1850. His coadjutor was acting in his name.

Archbishopric of Quebec

April 21, 1849

Reverend Sister,

For a long time I had been desiring for Quebec, a charitable establishment similar to the ones which the town of Montreal has the good fortune of possessing when, last year for this purpose, I bought a piece of land, perhaps not as large as I would have liked, but large enough nevertheless, for the project I am contemplating and especially, it is extremely well situated. This land is adjacent to that owned by "Société Charitable des Dames Catholiques" of Quebec, a society recognized by our Provincial Legislature and authorized to raise funds for the maintenance of a home for orphans and of free schools for the young girls of poor families in the town. This home has been in existence for several years. The house, destroyed by fire, has been rebuilt. About thirty young orphan girls are raised there. The free schools are held there also, but the project is not completed as it is directed by salaried lay people, and we feel we need something better. To come to the point, we must have Sisters of Charity; and I must add that it is your house which is called to this foundation in our town.

Do not be astounded by the assurance, not to say the boldness with which I make this sort of declaration to you. I am quite convinced that the thought I bring to light comes from God. Moreover, it has already undergone testing which renders it worthy of your trust. It was submitted to the opinion of your venerable bishop who has approved it and who, I am confident, will agree to anything you will do in favor of a town in which the absence of an establishment like yours leaves a void which Religion imperatively requires filled.

I must, however, not lose sight of the fact that it is a petition that I must make to you and I make it both in my name and in that of all the good people of Quebec, but with the firm hope that it will be as favorably received as were those of St. Hyacinthe, of the Red River, and of Bytown.

Without for the present, entering into minute details which can be worked out later, I must make known to you today that the wish of the citizens of Quebec is that the establishment in question be complete, that is, that there be a novitiate. Already several candidates are coming forward. Among others there are three models of piety (of which two sisters), all girls with recognized talents, skilfull and sufficiently educated to provide elementary instruction, to whom I have already given assent that if they are approved by the foundresses, they shall become the first to enter our novitiate. I must not hide from you that Divine Providence plays an important part in the realization of my project which I have entrusted entirely to it. It will first reward your house for its sacrifice in our favor. You know well what similar sacrifices have cost you in the past so I need not tell you how great will be the reward. It will then have to supplement the means of subsistence which we can offer the establishment we shall set up and about which I leave you without information today, not fearing to discourage you. I am even persuaded that on this point, your trust will at least equal mine. Let us repeat that Divine Providence will have to provide the means of building a house and a chapel large enough, and which I am already building on the existing structure.

What I must tell you is that this building, as yet unfinished and which is partly occupied by our young orphans and their guardians, shall promptly be made habitable through the attention of Les Dames de la Société Charitable. In a few months it will be able to afford the foundresses a lodging spacious enough for them to open a novitiate; thus, while teaching our poor children, they can prepare the subjects who shall live at the convent which, with the help of God, we shall build.

For more information on the contents of my present petition, I suggest that you ask the respectable Father Martin with whom I have been discussing my project for several months and who has visited the present shelter for the orphans. I am convinced that the God of all charity who inspired me to address this request to you, will himself dictate your reply. I dare even to hope that this reply will be prompt enough so that in

a few days I can go and discuss with you the details which my letter, already too long, cannot reasonably contain.

Please recommend me to the prayers of your dear Sisters, entrust my work to the charity which God has inspired in them by making them what they are and believe in the sincere respect and consideration with which I have the honor of being,

Your humble and obedient servant,

† Pierre Flavien (Turgeon)

Bishop of Sidyme

How can one resist such a request? Our Mothers Coutlée, Superior, and McMullen, her assistant, went to Quebec to see the establishment which Bishop Turgeon was offering to begin the foundation. In this visit, they discussed the improvements which were to be made. The bishop promised to do what was requested.

On her return May 18, Mother Coutlée assembled the Council of administrators and the bishop's proposals having been found advantageous, the Quebec foundation was resolutely accepted. On June 14, our Sisters Mallet, Superior, Perrin, Pilon, Clément, and Thériault received their mission as foundresses. They welcomed it wholeheartedly. A young novice, Alice Dunn, joined this group.

Mother Mallet, who had been professed for twenty-three years, had already rendered valuable services to our community as cook, hospitaller, sacristan and assistant (1845 — 1848). Gifted with a spirit of faith which allowed her to see God in all occurrences, with remarkable endurance, never complaining nor allowing anyone to suspect the suffering experienced in her occupations, she was therefore, ready to become the instrument of Divine Providence. Her companions also shared this spirit of generosity.

On the morning of August 21, 1849, Bishop Bourget offered the Holy Sacrifice at our Mother House for the intentions of the missionaries, gave them timely advice and blessed their departure.

The new foundation eighty-five years ago, appeared to each of them to be far away. The farewells were therefore touching, so much so that Father Felix Cazeau, Secretary to the Archbishop of Quebec, who had come to meet the future missionaries, tried in vain to withhold his tears. Mother Deschamps, noticing him said, "Father, do not try to conceal the kind heart God has given you." -- "Never would I have accepted this duty if I had known I would witness such a sight," the Secretary said later.

Mother Coullée, superior general, and several Sisters, accompanied the missionaries to the ship. At 7:00 P.M., the steamer operating between Montreal and Quebec took aboard these brave Sisters who were going to face the cholera epidemic. The Sisters who had not wanted to take a cabin, spent the night praying and renewing their sacrifice. At dawn, noticing in the distance the steeples of their mission field, the foundresses fell to their knees and begged the protection of the Holy Family and of the town's guardian angels.

On their arrival, they were directing their steps toward the old residence of the bishop to pay their respect to Bishops Signay and Turgeon, when these bishops had them taken to the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame at St. Roch. They received a kindly welcome, but the Sisters of Charity were eager to go to the help of the children stricken with the contagious disease. Mother Mallet argued her cause so well with the Bishop by her earnestness, that he allowed her to go with her companions to inaugurate their mission of charity. They found twenty-five orphans.⁽¹⁾

(1) "La Société charitable des Dames Catholiques of Quebec" with a zeal worthy of praise had, for twenty years, provided for all sorts of needs concerning this work of charity.

The day following their installation, Father Cazeau said Mass in the chapel and left the Sacred Presence there. "He who has Jesus, has everything", Father Olier often repeated. So, as early as the twenty-seventh, Mother Mallet could write to Mother Coutlée:

Divine Providence is admirable! I cannot stop thanking God. The Bishop of Sidyme is most charitable; the priests from the Archbishop's residence are very considerate; every day we receive abundant help.

On August 31, 1849 a message from Bishop Signay officially announced to the archdiocese the foundation of the Sisters of Charity:

Considering that it has pleased Bishop Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, to mandate Sisters Marie-Anne — Marcelle Mallet, Eulalie Perrin, called Saint-Joseph, Julie Pilon, called Sainte-Croix, Perpétue Thériault and Elmire-Thérèse Clément, Sisters from the General Hospital of Montreal, designated with Sister Alice Dunn, a novice, by the Reverend Sister Coutlée, superior, and the other administrators of the said Hospital, to found a similar hospital in our capital city.

We, knowing by experience all the good performed by the Sisters of this Institute for the teaching of youth and for the relief of suffering humanity in Montreal as in the other places where they have been called, and having at heart to procure the same advantages for our archdiocese and especially for our capital city, we have allowed and do allow our dear daughter Sister Marie-Anne-Marcelle Mallet to found in the City of Quebec, with the help of the above-mentioned Sisters, an establishment of her order, which, along with all the houses of the same order that might come to be established in the future in our archdiocese, will enjoy the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed at the Mother House in Montreal by concession of the ecclesiastical authority; we wish the said Sisters, as well as those who will join them in the future, in whatever part of our archdiocese, to remain entirely under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop and of those he will set over

them, conforming faithfully to the Rules and Constitutions of their Holy Society.

Finally, we bless wholeheartedly the new foundation and we entrust it to the special protection of the glorious Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, patron of our archdiocese, so that all the Sisters who compose it and those who will join them in the future, animated by the spirit of their holy foundress, will employ themselves zealously at the works of their Institute which benefit our faith and increase its salutary influence among the faithful of our archdiocese.

Given in Quebec, under our signature, our seal, and the counter signature of our secretary, on the twenty-first of August, eighteen hundred and forty-nine."

(Signed) †Jos. Archbishop of Quebec,
by Monsignor
C.F. Cazeau, priest secretary

On August 25, Bishop Turgeon allowed sentiments of gratitude to flow from his heart and his pen toward the Superior General of the Grey Nuns of Montreal for the foundation of her Institute in Quebec. Let us read this touching and respectful letter to our Mother:

Archbishop's Residence, Quebec

August 25, 1849

Reverend Mother,

For several days now, your good Sisters have been in our midst, occupying the humble dwelling which was prepared for them. It is time for me to perform a duty which until now, I have fulfilled insufficiently that of thanking your worthy community, as amply as possible for the beautiful gift which it has just made to the City of Quebec. I already know well enough the candidates you sent us to determine that the choice was excellent and that we could not have expected anything bet-

ter. That is the opinion of all, without exception, who with me, have had the advantage of meeting them.

Though I say I am writing to fulfill my duty toward your house, I feel that I will fall short of a limit I cannot reach. If I could only pay off our debt to Divine Providence who has directed all things! But here, especially, I feel my powerlessness and I beg the Lord to be satisfied with it. I request the same of you, worthy and respected Sisters, but I hope and firmly trust that God will soon give your house some reward for the sacrifice you have just made for us.

What grieves me is to see our good Sisters so tightly quartered, to see them in the impossibility of expanding their works according to their wishes to do good. Fortunately, and this reassures me somewhat, they remember what tradition has taught them about the early beginning of the house they just left, and they know how to turn these memories to advantage not only to console themselves, but also to stir up their zeal. You and all your holy Sisters will help us by your fervent prayers to obtain from God that our foundation, so small today, may soon grow and respond amply to its objective.

Before the end of next week, two of the candidates of whom I spoke to you, will make their entry. Others will follow them shortly; but soon, because of lack of space, we shall have to wait for help from Divine Providence before going any further. You, dear Sisters, will obtain for us this assistance and shall, therefore, have a greater right to the gratitude of the citizens of Quebec, and to mine in particular.

Please recommend me in a special way to the prayers of your community and believe in my respectful consideration,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

† P.F., Bishop of Sidyme.

People continually call on the zeal of the Sisters of Charity of Quebec. Orphanages, schools, day schools, boarding schools, hospitals, asylums, sanatoria, and shelters spring up. The children abound... Postulants also, come in great numbers, such

that "the branch transplanted from the original tree" developed rapidly on Quebec soil. Figures bear witness to this. 1320 Sisters, 140 novices and postulants presently devote themselves to the work of 64 establishments.⁽¹⁾ Here is the list of their works: 1,088 elderly patients of both sexes, 260 men and women boarders, 2,370 orphans, 850 student boarders, 7,350 day school pupils, 1,050 patients in hospital, 3,405 mental patients.

These notes concerning the humble foundations mentioned above remind us that "nothing resembles less the works of men than the works of God!" As true daughters of Mother d'Youville, the Sisters of Charity, Grey Nuns, understood early "the great importance of the social question," and like their Mother foundress, they intervened on behalf of the poor, the downtrodden, the sick, and the forsaken. Here is another circumstance in which their zeal would be manifested.

The plague which raged in Quebec did not spare Montreal. As early as June, the authorities in Montreal had to set up hospitals. One was the house of the charitable Mrs. Nolan on the east side of town. It was placed under the protection of Saint Camille-de-Lellis and entrusted to the Sisters of Providence. The other at Pointe Saint-Charles, was under the administration of the Grey Nuns. Our Sisters moved into the latter which was under the direction of Dr. P.C. Munro and they admitted patients. From July 4 to August 22, these numbered 87 of whom 38 died of cholera and 5 from other illnesses; 44 recovered and were discharged.

The total number of patients admitted to the St. Camille-de-Lellis Hospital from July 3 until the date of its closure on September 20, was 138 of whom 66 died of cholera, 3 of other illnesses, and 69 recovered and were discharged. As it may be seen, the epidemic was less severe than that of 1832.

A report published by the Health Department on October 26, 1849 says this about the dedication of the Sisters:

(1) Statistics of 1932.

“There are no words strong enough to describe adequately the zeal and the patience which these charitable Sisters demonstrated in the performance of their duties so fraught with dangers.”

The archives of heaven must have recorded many conversions and abjurations. Among others there is the following:

A Scotsman aged fifty, after observing the zeal of the Jesuit priests serving in the “sheds” and that of the Grey Nuns, often asked questions concerning the faith and the motives which had led them “to embrace such an extraordinary life.”

One of the Jesuit priests was inspired to offer him a medal of the Blessed Virgin. The patient accepted it saying: “To please you, I shall wear it, but I can’t promise I’ll pray to the one whose picture is on the medal and who you say is the Mother of the Son of God.”

Two days went by: then the patient asked to speak to the priest who had given him the medal. As the latter appeared, he said: “I don’t know why, but I am completely changed; my sentiments are no longer the same, I ardently desire to be baptized in the Holy Roman Church. I am now convinced that the Catholic faith is the only true one.” The neophyte quickly learned the truths of the faith. After the abjuration, the priest heard the confession of the dying man and administered the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Extreme Unction. Joy and thanksgiving flooded his soul. He lived another twenty-four hours during which he did not stop blessing the God of mercy for the gift of faith he had just received through the intercession of the Virgin Mary. “My God,” he exclaimed, “I am so eager to see you. You are so kind and so merciful!”

In the same year, 1849, the City of Montreal was the scene of a deplorable disturbance. The Grey Nuns had in it a motive of gratitude toward the Eternal Father for his visible protection in this circumstance.

The Indemnity Bill for 500,000\$ had been signed by Lord Elgin in favor of Canadians who had suffered losses during the

insurrection of 1837-38. This act of justice drew sentiments of revolt from certain bigots. On the night of April 25, the rioters gathered on the Champ-de-Mars, entered the Parliament Building which was then at Youville Square, threw rocks at the delegates as they fled, broke furniture, and set fire to the building. It was a total loss. The destruction of the library was deplorable. It contained twenty-two hundred volumes of the precious collection on America by Faribault. Strong winds blew the flames toward our Mother House which was close to the Parliament Building. Fire had already destroyed the fence around the enclosure. Warned of the imminent danger, the more respectable citizens of the Town hastened to the scene and worked desperately to bring the fire under control. Fathers Toupin and Barbarin, Sulpicians, succeeded in breaking through to help the firemen. The flames increased in fury, windows broke; the General Hospital was in great danger. Father Toupin removed the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacred vessels. The chronicles record that "the devotedness of these two Sulpicians has earned a new right to the community's esteem and gratitude, if these sentiments could be increased."

Mother Coutlée, seeing that short of a miracle, our house would become a prey to the flames, promised several masses in honor of St. Amable. However, despite their just fear, several of the beloved seniors would not move... saying to each other: "the Providence of the Eternal Father will take care of us; the house will not burn as Mother d'Youville has promised. A venerated old man among the poor repeated incessantly in prophetic tones: "Do not fear the house will not burn." At a point when all seemed hopeless, the flames suddenly blew in the opposite direction. The danger had passed. Everyone thanked Divine Providence, St. Amable, and our beloved Mother d'Youville for having so marvelously protected the General Hospital.

Two months after the foundation of the house in Quebec, Mother Rose Coutlée called together the superiors of the

various foundations for the General Chapter which was to be held at the Mother House on November 8.

Here is the text:

My dear Sister,

I am pleased to announce that our first general chapter will open in one of the rooms of our Hospital on November 8 and will last as long as will be required by the affairs we shall have to deal with for the greater good of all the houses of our Institute.

I believe I must inform you that the main topics we will deal with will be:

1. — To read together our holy Rules to make sure which of our houses cannot observe them and for what reason;
2. — To compare the customs in our various houses to ascertain whether they are consistent with or in opposition to the Rule, in order to establish the basis for a written book of customs which can later be completed to everyone's satisfaction;
3. — To examine the accounts of each house, not in detail, but generally. Each will present total receipts and expenses for each year since its establishment as well as active and passive debts in each of these years in order to ascertain the resources provided by Divine Providence for each of our houses;
4. — To examine for the same reason, the inventory of property and furnishings belonging to each house, with building plans showing dimensions of length, width, and height;
5. — To take note of the works that have been performed giving statistics of senior citizens helped, of patients treated, and of orphans taken in and given instruction;
6. — To examine what further works we could undertake for the glory of God and the Salvation of others;
7. — To review the rules which establish harmony between our houses and to examine the possibility of securing the bonds which already exist between the Mother House and the various foundations;

8. — To draw mutual edification and encouragement from the reading of the chronicles or historic events of our houses.

Please discuss this with your dear Sisters in order to know their opinion concerning the important matters with which we shall have to deal with and to arrive at decisions which will meet with general satisfaction.

Since we can do nothing by ourselves, we shall together have recourse to the Author of all good. For this, each day until the chapter closes, we shall offer the prayers, communions, and good works of each house in order to obtain the help of the Father of Mercies and we shall also request the protection of the Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels and of all the Saints.

Please inform your dear Sisters about the Chapter, as well as your poor and the children as soon as you receive this letter.

Affectionately yours in the Lord,
Sister Coutlée, superior

All the Superiors with their delegates answered the invitation. Bishop Bourget opened the Chapter with the celebration of Mass after the singing of the VENI CREATOR SPIRITUS. According to the desire of His Grace, the Holy Cross was exposed each day and a lamp burned at the altar of the Blessed Virgin, so that in the shadow of the Cross and in the light of our Heavenly Mother, decisions would be enlightened from above.

The elderly and children were also to pray for the same intentions. The Chapter, in a word, was covered by a mantle of prayer and a recollection which spread its folds over the whole community.

Bishop Bourget, assisted by Father Billaudèle, the Superior, presided the capitular assemblies. His Grace gave two conferences a day to the assembled community. The bishop and the Superior even attended the recitation of the rosary by the Sisters.

The questions contained in the circular letter were submitted to the administrators making up this Chapter. The minutes drawn up on this occasion reveal to what extent our Mothers were filled with respect for the holy rule, with love for poverty, with zeal for obedience, with fidelity to silence, and with dedication to the service of the poor. The following are several decisions of the Chapter of 1849:

- The profession ceremony shall hereafter take place in the chapel.
- The daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament now is a point of the rule.
- The Stations of the Cross is optional and must not interfere with one's assigned duties.
- The SURSUM CORDA at 7:30 A.M., at 1:00 P.M. and at 3:30 P.M., a practice dating from early times, is restored.
- Monthly retreat becomes a rule.
- There shall be strict silence in the refectory except for five or six great feast days through the year.
- Chronicles shall be faithfully kept in each of the houses.

The Chapter considered the question of foundations. It was clear that, to ensure the preservation of the same practices and the same spirit, the best safeguard would be a greater dependence on the Mother House in Montreal.

We read: "That the rules of foundation already in use in the Institute shall be amended and modified;

1. — The subjects who shall be sent to a foundation shall have the right to return to their houses and the latter shall, for good reasons, have the right to recall them.
2. — The superior of Montreal shall have the right to visit and suggest reform in all the houses of the Institute which she must visit each year, as much as possible."

The last clause, which had been inserted into the minutes at the request of the various foundations, could be adopted only with the authorization of the bishops in view of the fact that the houses already founded depended on the bishop of the diocese. But, according to the advice of their respective bishops, the foundations retained their independence without, however, altering their affectionate and deep attachment for the cradle of their religious roots.

Bishop Bourget approved the decisions of the first General Chapter in these terms:

“To our dear daughters, the Sisters of Charity, administrators of the General Hospital, greetings and blessings.

Your General Chapter having submitted your proceedings to our approval, we make it a pleasant duty to sanction them with all our authority, for having attended your deliberations with dear Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Sulpician Seminary, through the long and painful sessions which you held from the eighth until the fifteenth of the present month we are convinced that it was the Spirit of God which urged you on when generously inspired by rules of perfection, you worked with renewed zeal at your sanctification and at the development of your Institute. It appears to us that the Holy Spirit wished to show you in an obvious way that he was with you, by the earthquake which suddenly shook the Chapter hall while you, retaining a calm mind and great unity of spirit, were so religiously occupied with the most serious matters which concern a community, namely the perfect regularity of all your houses, gathered together, so to say, under one roof. At any rate, this occurrence struck us in an exceptional way though it is not up to us to judge whether it was of a supernatural or a natural order. Be that as it may, dear daughters, we address you this letter to give your decisions the seal of Jesus Christ, the spouse of virgins who directs us to treat you as a chosen portion of his flock and have you graze in green pastures and along the living waters which in his love he has prepared for us...”

On the day following the closure of the Chapter, his Grace came to give us the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which

was followed by the TE DEUM. When this hymn of thanksgiving had conveyed to God our gratitude, His Grace condescended to come to the community room. Mother Coutlée took advantage of the occasion to thank the beloved bishop for the recent testimony of fatherly kindness given to his religious family of which he agreed to continue being the ecclesiastical superior.

Another testimony of gratitude toward Bishop Bourget finds its place here; it is expressed by our Sisters from the Manor at Châteauguay who were so happy at having obtained in 1849 through the mediation of their kind pastor, Father Lecours, the favor of having the Blessed Sacrament in their chapel.⁽¹⁾

Your Grace and dear Father,

It is impossible to express the joy we experienced on receiving permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament in our house. How can we thank Your Grace for such a precious favor?

We would not have dared to request this privilege, but the Lord in his kindness has condescended to grant our desires. Since our zealous pastor, Father Lecours, requested this favor of Your Grace, we have not ceased asking the Master that his will be done.

Now to thank him, we shall try to avoid voluntary imperfections as much as our feeble nature will allow us. To this effect, each hour of the day shall be employed by one of us to request for the others one of the perfections of the adorable Heart of Jesus. We shall end it by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

We hope that the Divine Master will be pleased with this little practice and with our efforts to please Him.

With deepest respect, I remain

Your Grace's humble daughter,
Sister Deschamps

⁽¹⁾ On August 9, 1847, when seven of our Sisters convalescing from the typhus epidemic went to the Manor on Ile Saint-Bernard to recover, Bishop Bourget allowed them to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the small oratory as a temporary privilege.

Pleased with the pious joy of his grateful daughters, Bishop Bourget replied to them in these terms.

I received your letter in which you express your great joy and that of your Sisters in finally possessing Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament which you had desired for so long and with such earnestness. I do not doubt that you will treasure it and delight in it as the Father of your house. He having condescended to accept a small room among your own, you shall have but to open a door to be with Him. Thus it will be easy for you to keep him company or at least always to be in his presence. I hope that the great kindness of the Divine Spouse will impel you to be totally His as He is totally yours.

Pray for me, who am only the agent of the favors lavished upon you by the good Master who is so worthy of possessing all hearts.

† Ignace, Bishop of Montreal

CHAPTER XIX

1849

Seventy-eight years had elapsed since the death of our beloved Foundress, when the plan conceived by our Mothers of disinterring the body of this servant of God was executed.⁽¹⁾

In the fall of 1849, Fathers Faillon and Gutter from the Sulpician Seminary in Paris, arrived at the Seminary in Montreal. The name of Father Faillon will remain forever blessed in the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Montreal because of the important, invaluable services he rendered to our house. The purpose of his trip was for the benefit of the Sulpician Communities where he was to make the canonical visitation.

The General Hospital for which he had a special mission, as we shall see, was the object of his paternal solicitude. From the moment of his second visit to the community, this distinguished visitor revealed himself to be keenly interested in our works. To this effect, our Mothers brought to his attention the documents of our archives among which were the handwritten letters of our beloved Mother d'Youville.

The spirit of faith which urged the foundress on, her trust in the Eternal Father, her charity toward the poor, her perfect abandonment to the holy will of God struck Father Faillon in a singular way. He developed true admiration for this beautiful

⁽¹⁾ In 1847, our Mothers had obtained from Bishop Bourget the permission to disinter the body of our Foundress, but the information on old manuscripts was not understood and this attempt was not successful.

woman whom the Eternal Father had endowed with such precious gifts.

Mother Coutlée took advantage of the happy occasion to manifest her desire: that of removing from the vault of the General Hospital the tomb of our beloved Mother. Father Failon highly approved this project. No time was lost.

On December 6, the Bishop of Montreal having previously authorized the Sisters to exhume the body of their worthy Foundress, and His Honor Judge Holland, Chief Justice in Montreal, having approved this resolution, Father Faillon and Father Bonnissant, priests from the Sulpician Seminary, commissioners designated by the Bishop, went down to the crypt of the General Hospital. They easily found the body in the place which written and oral tradition of the community had designated as being the precise place of burial of Mother d'Youville.

Let us extract from the minutes a few interesting details:

"The casket, perfectly whole, is equipped with iron brackets destined to consolidate it and to allow it to be transported easily.

Upon opening it, the garments were found to have fallen into ruin with the exception of the scapular which was fairly well preserved. It was easy to recognize a few parts of the headdress, one of which still had two pins with which the Sisters fastened the pleat they wore on the forehead. The flesh had almost entirely wasted away. On the skull were several small tufts of grey and white hair.

The body was in a position as of a person who had died stricken with paralysis of the left side. The head was inclined to the left, the left arm was bent as if by a sort of nervous contraction as would be that of a living person with the left arm paralyzed. The feet were also toward the left. In short, the spine and the whole right side of the body were curved toward the left from the head to the feet."

The doctor at the General Hospital, without knowing the details of the life and death of Mother d'Youville, said that, judg-

ing by the position of the bones, there was no doubt that she had been paralyzed on the left at the time of death. We know for a fact that our Mother had a stroke which affected the left side of her body of which she gradually lost the use.

Mother Coullée, aided by her assistant, Mother McMullen, and another Sister, respectfully washed the bones of this precious body and removed the flesh which remained on some parts. After carefully collecting all the parts, they laid them out in their natural position, mounted them together, covered them with a layer of wax, and dressed the body with the habit of the Sisters of Charity. The anterior part of the head was covered with a mask fashioned in wax by the devoted Father Faillon, to reproduce the features of the deceased on her death bed. On her chest was placed the same silver cross she had worn during her life. In her hands was placed the handwritten document of the original commitment which she had contracted and signed when in 1745, she dedicated herself, along with her companions, to relieving the poor.

The Sisters had to work diligently to finish their work on time. The beloved Father Faillon urged the workmen on so that they would finish the reliquary which he had designed with great care and had ordered built.

On the appointed day, December 23, a Sunday, all the Sisters, candle in hand, gathered about five-thirty in the morning, in the room where the deceased was laid out. One of the chaplains, Father Barbarin, p.s.s. in a cope and preceded by the cross and the altar boys, said the final prayers; then the group filed toward the chapel singing the Miserere. The remains were carried by Mother Rose Coullée, Superior General, Sister McMullen, assistant, Sister Forbes, Mistress of novices and Sister Valade, superior of our house in St. Boniface. The retinue stopped in the nave where a bed of state had been set. It measured fifteen feet in height, was exquisitely decorated, topped with a finely-draped canopy, and studded with flowers. The body of our beloved Mother was respectfully placed upon it. Around the bed of honor, sixteen lights burned in memory

of the sixteen professed Sisters present during the final days of our foundress. Inscriptions recalled the words she had addressed to them in her final hour. At the foot of this magnificent bed of state, clouds of incense rose as an emblem of the fragrance of the virtues practised by Mother d'Youville. Until the time of the office, the Sisters, the elderly, and the orphans prayed before it.

At nine o'clock, Bishop Bourget sang a REQUIEM Mass assisted by Father Billaudèle, the Superior. In the sanctuary were the following: Fathers Faillon and Guitter, from the Seminary in Paris, Fathers Bonnissant, Toupin, Barbarin and Chalbos, p.s.s.; Father Pinsonneault, the future bishop of London, Ontario; the Reverend Fathers Harvoquez and Larcher, Jesuits; several priests from the Major Seminary, and Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The Sisters took their places in the nave around our Mother Foundress. The elderly and the orphans formed a double row.

After Mass, the Bishop commented Ps. 102 for the congregation: "He fills my life with good things so that I stay young and strong like an eagle". After the allocution, the final prayer was sung as indicated in the Liturgy Manual. The congregation began to file out in procession. Preceded by the cross, the orphan girls, then the Sisters walked ahead of the body which was carried by the above-named dignitaries of the Community. Sisters Hardy, Séguin, Cherrier and Chénier, the Sisters of prime seniority, held the bands. The elderly, the orphan boys, and the clergy followed after the body. The procession went to the Community room singing the BENEDICTUS. The body was laid in the reliquary with the same pomp as if it had been laid in a grave.

Mother Coullée then recited aloud the litany to the Eternal Father formerly composed because of our beloved Mother's great devotion towards God the Father. The clergy and all present responded. In the same order the congregation returned to the chapel singing the psalm "In exitu Israel." This

moving ceremony ended with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The reliquary in which the body of our beloved Mother d'Youville was henceforth to lie was placed in an opening made in the party wall separating the community room from the Superior's room. Strangely enough, this opening made at the time when our first Mother House was built, had exactly the measurements required both in length and width to contain the reliquary!

Thus, our Mother would be within view of her Sisters. The charity and dedication of the latter would each day be inspired by the memory of their Foundress' great works. Oh Community, "your youth shall be renewed like that of the eagle."

Great was the joy at the General Hospital! Bishop Bourget and Father Faillon shared it as they both spent the day there.

Bishop Bourget allowed the faithful to visit the shrine throughout the week. They came in great numbers before the precious remains of this noted benefactor of Ville Marie, giving testimony of the most religious veneration.

— 1871 —

Anticipating the facts, let us continue here the story concerning the mortal remains of our Mother foundress.

October 7, 1871, was the hundred and twentieth anniversary of Mother d'Youville and her companions' taking possession of the Charon Brothers' Hospital. Mother Slocombe wished that, on this same day, the precious remains of our beloved foundress be transferred to our new Mother House which had just been built at Mount Sainte-Croix, so that she might be the first to take possession of it as she had done in the former hospital on October 7, 1747.

"The body of our beloved Mother was respectfully taken out of its shrine and placed on a table. At one o'clock in the after-

noon," our chronicles state, "we witnessed the final departure from the place of origin of our religious family of the one who had founded our Institute, and who had protected it by her prudence, her energy, and her heroic courage."

We felt that along the way the soul of our beloved Mother accompanied her remains. No doubt, the souls of our deceased sisters escorted her.

On arrival at Mount Sainte-Croix, the body, carried by Mother Slocombe, Superior General, Mother McMullen, Assistant, Sisters Dupuis, Fréchette, Brault, and Lapointe, was respectfully placed in the mortuary room. Besides this precious relic, Mother Slocombe immediately placed on a table with the book of Constitutions, the statue of the Virgin Mary before which our Beloved Foundress had made her original commitment.

At this gesture of filial affection, so majestic in its simplicity, Mother d'Youville must have looked kindly upon her sisters who had continued her work.

The Sisters then went to the chapel to sing a MAGNIFICAT of thanksgiving.

— 1884 —

"Since 1849", writes the annalist of the time, "we had the good fortune of enjoying the possession of the remains of our beloved Mother d'Youville.

It was a great comfort for us to be able to gaze on them, to kneel by the shrine which enclosed them, and in a secret prayer from the heart to ask for the spirit, the virtues, the zeal which characterized this beloved Mother. There, we seemed to hear her maternal voice reminding us of our duties and encouraging us to fulfill them faithfully; and always, we came away filled with new zeal to live out the pledge of our beautiful calling. But the proceedings which we were undertaking to introduce the

Cause of our beloved Mother, necessitated the sacrifice of its disappearance.

Father Minetti, advocate in the Cause of the Reverend Mother Bourgeois in Rome, had written to Father T. Harel, Chancellor at the bishopric: "As to the body of the Reverend Mother d'Youville, I am of the opinion that it should be kept in a vault built for this purpose. This would be more suitable as proceedings will be undertaken for the introduction of the Cause."

We were obliged to conform to this notice, when the preparations were completed, the transfer and deposition were set for January 17, 1884.

On the 16th, the shrine was opened, the venerable remains of our Mother were clothed with new garments. The cross of her profession was traded for one of the twelve having belonged to our first Mothers. A copy of our approved Constitutions replaced that of the earlier ones.

Our beloved Mother was then exposed in the mortuary room and from that day until the time of transfer, all, children, elderly, Sisters and Priests were free to respond to their inclination. Many touched her with their rosaries and other religious objects. It was truly edifying to see the intensity of feeling of everyone.

Sister Youville hurriedly reproduced her features on a wax bust. She succeeded in giving it perfect conformity to the mask so artistically made by Father Faillon and which covered the bones of our Mother.

Mr. Desmarais came to take a photograph of our beloved Mother in her casket. She was then taken out and placed again in her shrine. The Sisters formed a guard of honor until about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Father Deguire, p.s.s., our ecclesiastical superior, and Father T. Harel, chancellor at the bishopric, accompanied by Father Bonnissant and others proceeded with the transfer and deposition as described in the official report which we shall read here:

“The year of the birth of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, one thousand eight hundred eighty-four, twelfth of the Roman Indiction, the seventeenth day of January, and the sixth of the Pontificate of Our Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII, gloriously reigning.

We, the undersigned, Pierre Deguire, priest of the Sulpician Seminary, Director of the minor seminary and the Superior of the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Montreal; and Télesphore Harel, priest, Chancellor of the Bishopric of Montreal, delegated by His Grace Bishop Edouard Charles Fabre, Bishop of Montreal, to proceed with the transfer of the body of Reverend Mother Marie-Marguerite Dufrost de Lajemmerais, widow d'Youville, Founder and first Superior of the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Montreal and its deposition in a vault recently made in the crypt of the chapel of the said Hospital, according to the request made by the Superior General of the said Sisters of Charity to His Grace Bishop of Montreal and the permission granted by him. We went to the said Hospital about four o'clock in the afternoon accompanied by Fathers C. Bonnissant and J. Guihot, priests of the Sulpician Seminary and chaplain of the Community of Sisters of Charity and of their Hospital as well as the Superior General, her assistants and several senior Sisters of the same community. We continued to the private room adjacent to the mortuary room in which the remains of the said servant of God had been respectfully kept for many years. There, after kneeling with the congregation for the recitation of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* and the *Ave Maria*, by the testimonies given us in a clear and positive manner by Reverend Father C. Bonnissant, the chaplain of the said community, and one of the Commissionners named in the year 1849 by Bishop Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, to proceed with the disinterment of the Servant of God, as well as by the Reverend Mother Superior General, her Assistants and the other Sisters present who, for the most part, have not ceased living in the community since the disinterment effected in 1849, we have established in an undeniable way that the body which we found in the said apartment under a covering of wax and vested with the habit of the Sisters of Charity, and lying on a

bed of state in a closed shrine, was indeed the same body that was disinterred on December 6, 1849 from the basement cemetery of the chapel of the old General Hospital, which was at that time authentically recognized by His Grace Bishop Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, as being the true body of the said Foundress of the Sisters of Charity, which was carried in 1871 to the new General Hospital and then placed in the present room.

We had the said body described above, placed in a casket of black walnut lined with sheets of zinc. After the casket had been closed and sealed at the four corners, we applied the seal of His Grace the Bishop of Montreal, both on the inside and the outside.

After this, we had it transferred, in our presence and that of the witnesses and of the Reverend Sisters undersigned, to the crypt of the chapel of the said General Hospital and had it placed in a vault made of brick under the chapel of St. Joseph, ordering that the opening of the said vault be firmly closed by a brick wall. Having recited with the attendance, the DE PROFUNDIS for the purpose of all the deceased buried in this cemetery, we withdrew.

In testimony whereof, we have signed this official report on the same day and year as mentioned above and all the persons present have signed with us:

Signed : P. Deguire, Sulpician priest
T. Harel, Priest chancellor
C. Bonnissant, Sulpician priest
Jul. Guihot, P.S.S.
Sister M. J. Deschamps, Superior General
Sister Charlebois, Assistant General
Sister M.H. Robin, Assistant General
Sister M.P. Filiatrault, Assistant General
Sister M.V. Stubinger, Mistress of Novices

Sister Beaudry
Sister Guyon
Sister M.H. Pinsonneault
Sister Thibodeau
Sister Brault
Sister M. Normant
Sister M. Youville
Sister M.J. Chèvrefils
Sister M. Pagnuelo
Sister M.M. Pagnuelo-Dalpe
Sister Christin-Marie
Sister M.A. Devins
Sister Dufrost

We have placed in the said chapel a tombstone bearing her name and titles as follows

Here lie
The remains of the Servant of God
M. Marguerite Dufrost de Lajemmerais
widow d'Youville
Foundress and First Superior
of
The Sisters of Charity
Administrator of this Hospital
Born October 15, 1701
Deceased December 23, 1771
She greatly loved Jesus Christ and the poor

This monument is for us, not only the most loved of souvenirs, but a call to the eternal rendez-vous which our beloved Foundress pointed out to us in her final moments: "How happy I would be to find myself in heaven with all my Sisters!"

— 1904 —

On December 28, 1904, Bishop Racicot, assisted by Father Perrier, notary for the Cause, had the tomb opened and recognized the authenticity of the remains.

Here are the words in which the annalist records this event:

"At eleven o'clock, the rule bell notified us of a solemn moment. Silent and moved as if something from the beyond were to appear to us, we directed our steps to the desired place. On entering the crypt, we notice in the distance before the altar, lighted by four gas lamps, a large table covered with a white cloth. On this table was the coffin of our beloved foundress.

As the first sisters appeared, they noticed Bishop Racicot, assisted by Father Perrier, Dr. Mignault and Fathers Many, Duchain, Lepoupon, Portier, Labrosse, Porcher, Bouhier, Lajoie, Legrand, Clément, Carrée and Jauntre, Sulpicians who had come to share our happiness. The bishop announced that it was strictly forbidden to remove anything whatsoever from the casket or from the clothes of our beloved Mother. "But," said Sister Youville, "can I at least kiss her?" — "That may be permitted." And, raising the hands of our Mother, he laid them on each side of the casket. In this position, Mother appeared to be inviting us to approach her with confidence as she kindly received our respects and filial affection. All the Sisters filed past and Bishop Racicot said with emotion as he viewed this sight: "When a person has deserved a process of Canonization, she has well deserved the demonstration we see today."

Those of our Sisters present on January 17, 1884, when the beloved remains were placed behind the brick wall, see no

change except that the wax covering the forehead has become a pale yellow color and there is a slight opening. The cross and the ring are thin but the headdress and clothing are in good condition.

After our departure from the crypt, Father Perrier placed in the casket a tin cylinder containing the following words written on parchment:

His jacent

ossa et cineres

Venerabilis Servae Dei

Mariae Margaritae Dufrost de Lajemmerais

Viduae d'Youville

Natae die 15 octobris 1701

Mortuae die 23 decembris 1771

Recognitio canonica facta pro processu super virtutibus et miraculis in specie, die vigesima octava mensis decembris anni millesimi noningentesimi quarti.

Then the casket was again sealed and placed behind the brick wall. It is there that our beloved Mother will continue to rest while awaiting for the Church to proclaim her Blessed."

It will not be without interest for our readers to find here a brief sketch of the dates marking the progress of the Cause through the years namely 1883-1931.

On December 23, 1883, encouraged and urged by the clergy, our Mothers in the name of the entire Institute, initiated the Cause of canonization of our Mother Foundress, Marguerite Lajemmerais, widow d'Youville.

Father J.A. Captier, purveyor general of the Sulpicians in Rome, was made postulator of the Cause of Mother d'Youville and Father C.M. Bonnissant, p.s.s., the vice-postulator.

February 15, 1884 — opening of the proceedings of the canonization of Mother d'Youville.

Venerability — Information trial by the Bishop in Montreal.

“Is the servant of God entitled to a trial for canonization?”

Montreal 1884-1885, passes a favorable sentence.

She deserves...

Second phase of the trial, in Rome.

Rome, 1885-1890, the Sacred Congregation of rites accepts the sentence; it gives the decree of Introduction of the Cause on March 27, 1890 and His Holiness Leo XIII approves it on April 28, 1890.

DECREE

OF BEATIFICATION AND OF CANONIZATION
OF THE VENERABLE SERVANT OF GOD
MARIE MARGUERITE DUFROST DE LAJEMMERAIS
WIDOW D'YOUVILLE
FOUNDRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR
OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF VILLE-MARIE

ON THE DOUBT

Must the Committee for the Introduction of the Cause, in the present case and for the purpose in question, guarantee the genuineness?

In the various states of life through which Divine Providence had her pass, she gave an admirable example of every virtue. She founded an institute of women whose goal was to assist assiduously the poor and the forsaken and to provide for them the benefit of merciful charity. This Institute, God helping, has not ceased to produce abundant fruit.

Provided with every spiritual benefit, the servant of God breathed her last on December 23, 1771, leaving a remarkable reputation of holiness.

Now, this reputation of holiness, supported by marvels which are said to be divinely brought about by the intercession of this Servant of God through an entire century, far from declining, has only increased with time. Consequently, the Reverend Archbishop of Montreal decided to introduce the usual process of inquiry into the reputation of holiness, the virtues and the miracles of the servant of God.

The inquiry completed according to rule, has been reported to the Sacred Congregation of Rites and our Holy Father Leo XIII has kindly granted that doubt concerning the signature of the Introduction of the Cause of the said Servant of God be discussed at a regular meeting of the Sacred Congregation, without the intervention and the vote of consultants, and before the required ten years have elapsed since the process of Inquiry was lodged with the secretariat of the Sacred Congregation.

It is for this reason that the undersigned Cardinal, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Rites and "Ponent" of the Cause, on the insistence of Reverend Father Arthur Jules Captier, Attorney-General of the Sulpician Seminary, Postulator of this Cause, with regard to the postulatory letters of several of the Reverend bishops and other illustrious men, clad with ecclesiastical as well as civic dignity, suggested that there be discussion

at the regular assembly of the Sacred Congregation of Rites held at the Vatican on the appointed day concerning the following doubt: Must the Committee for the Introduction of the Cause, in the present case and for the purpose in question, guarantee the genuineness?

The Sacred Congregation having duly examined all things, and having accepted verbally and in writing the opinion of the Reverend Father Augustin Caprara, Promoter for the Holy Faith, has decided to answer "Affirmatively," that is, that the Committee must sign on March 27, 1890 if this is agreeable to His Holiness.

An accurate report having been made to our Most Holy Father, Pope Leo XIII by the undersigned secretary of all that precedes, His Holiness has ratified and confirmed the Decree of the Sacred Congregation and, in his own handwriting, has signed the document of Introduction of the Cause of the Venerable Servant of God Marie-Marguerite Dufrost de Lajemerai, widow d'Youville, April 28 of the same year.

C. Card. Aloisi Masella,
Pref. de la S.C. of Rites

Vincentius Nussi, Secretary de la S.C. of Rites.

Beatification. Second trial including four inquiries.

First inquiry, imposed by Urban VIII in 1894 re: NON CULT

"Has the Servant of God received public worship?"

Montreal, 1891-1892 gave a favorable negative reply.

Rome 1892-1894, the Sacred Congregation of Rites accepted this report and on July 10, 1894 issued the decree of Non Cult which received Papal Sanction on July 23, 1894.

Second inquiry, "Does the Servant of God have a reputation of Holiness?"

Montreal 1895-1898 delivered a favorable report.

Rome 1898-1901, the Sacred Congregation of Rites accepted the report and on June 18, 1901 issued the Decree of Fama which received Papal Sanction on July 8, 1901.

Third inquiry, Heroicity of Virtues

"Were the virtues of the Servant of God heroic in nature?"

Montreal, 1902-1904 testimonies on the virtues and identification of the remains of the Venerable Servant of God.

Rome, the Sacred Congregation began a series of four sessions preparatory to the final vote on the Heroicity of Virtues.

First Session on January 18, 1927: favorable

Second session on June 16, 1931: inconclusive because of lack of sufficient documentation.

Monsignor Hertzog, p.s.s. postulator of the Cause of our beloved Mother Foundress since 1896 wrote on June 24, 1931: "Reverend Father D. Quentin, Benedictine, president of the Historic Commission to which the Cause was entrusted, explained to me in detail what the Sacred Congregation is requesting: A deeper study of the documents on which are based all the facts and all the heroic virtues of the life of the venerable Servant of God.

The Holy Father who, by all the studies of her life, is favorable to this research, of which moreover, he understands the importance, especially in our day, has instituted this Historic Commission whose role is precisely to do the research and the analysis of the documents and to find in them, what concerns the persons we wish to declare holy..."

At the request of Monsignor Hertzog, a list of the documents of our archives concerning the life and the virtues of our beloved Mother d'Youville was prepared. Photographic reproductions in black and white of the biographies in manuscript by Fathers Dufrost and Sattin were sent.

On December 14, 1931, Monsignor Hertzog replied concerning the sending of this material:

"I can give you news which will comfort you concerning your dear Cause. The documents which were sent to me from your archives have fully satisfied Father Quentin. He marvelled at the beautiful photographic work on the two biographies as well as at the beautifully detailed dossier of your archives. I am waiting for him to let me know if he will need to have one or the other of these documents copied. I trust that this delay, far from hindering the Cause, will serve it and bring out the holiness of your beloved Mother Foundress. It is thus that the Good Lord conducts all things with wisdom. Truly, I have every reason to believe that we are now on the path which will lead us to the desired results."

That is the point which the dear Cause has reached. It requires the intercessory prayer of all the 5000 Daughters of Mother d'Youville so that soon may dawn the happy day which has been so long desired.

CHAPTER XX

1850 — 1851

The year 1850, still in its beginning, struck a blow to the Company of the Sulpicians by the unexpected death of the Pastor of Notre-Dame, Father Claude Fay. Along with the priests of the Seminary, the Grey Nuns deplored the sudden passing of this beloved Sulpician whose qualities and worth they had appreciated. It pleased their filial piety to make a generous offering of intercessory prayers.

No sooner had Father Claude Fay entered into relationship with the citizens of Montreal than he won their esteem and affection by his charming and courteous manner. His gracious and affectionate charity overflowed toward the afflicted and the needy. Accordingly, the poor flocked to him as to a father. He made himself the servant of all, distributing help whenever possible either in money or in goods. Exhausted by the strenuous labor of parochial ministry, to which zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls constantly subjected him, he soon reached his end and died on January 7, 1850.

Father Claude Fay was born at Rive-de-Giers, in the diocese of Lyons October 21, 1792. He joined the Sulpicians November 1, 1818 in Paris. Arriving in Montreal December 24, 1823, he became the Pastor at Notre-Dame in 1830, an office which he held until his death.

After the FIAT came the ALLELUIA... The Sisters at the farm of Pointe Saint-Charles, so dear to the Grey Nuns because of the memory of our beloved foundress, were rejoicing on the

morning of January 17, 1850. Father Faillon was celebrating Mass there, accompanied by Father Billaudèle, the Superior, Father Bonnissant,⁽¹⁾ confessor of the community and Father Barbarin, the chaplain of the poor.

At the time, Pointe Saint Charles was almost uninhabited and offered the advantage of a restful solitude. There was space, a beautiful sky with a vast horizon, proximity to the river, and in the distance beyond the St. Lawrence, a graceful scenery stretched out along the other bank. At this season of the year, all trace of greenery had disappeared under the snow, but the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass which, for the first time, was being offered in this humble little house, brought deep joy to the assembled Community. The fifty years of Father Faillon, whose anniversary was being celebrated on this day, added joy to the gathering. How fervent must have been the thanksgiving which this pious priest uttered aloud! It was reechoed by our Sisters, asking Jesus to bestow joys and blessings on the beloved priest so devoted to their spiritual interests.

This happiness was extended until the profession ceremony of our dear Sister Léocadie Gadbois, the first which took place publicly in the church on January 23, 1850. Father Faillon was the Bishop's delegate to receive Sister Gadbois' vows. The good Father rejoiced at offering this little Grey Nun to the Divine Majesty. He asked her to be ever God's consolation, His masterpiece. He promised he would be her intercessor with God so that she would mortify her will and judgment by blind and holy obedience.

"Be child-like all your life. Jesus, your Spouse is the King of children, and that is why in the Gospel He so urgently recommends that child-like spirit which alone renders us like unto Him."

On the morning of March 18, 1850, Father E.M. Faillon, p.s.s. was again at the altar, offering the Holy Sacrifice for the repose

(1) Father Claire Mathurin Bonnissant replaced Father Larré, p.s.s. as chaplain of the Community on November 1, 1849.

of the soul of our dear Sister Angélique Leblanc, deceased on the 16th.

Orphaned at thirteen, Angélique had remained under the guardianship of her sister who supported her by the product of her labor. They associated with several other young ladies of acknowledged piety. All of them wished to dedicate themselves to God in religious life. Angélique, though she was the youngest among them, was the first to carry out her pious intention. Having entered December 20, 1842, she made her vows December 27, 1844.

Henceforth, her life was to fulfill generously the word uttered by the priest when, at baptism, he dedicated her as a member of Jesus Christ: "May she serve you joyfully in your Church." Experiencing happiness by living in an atmosphere of peace, charity, regularity, and especially of maternal tenderness, Sister Leblanc often expressed her gratitude.

We could not distinguish which was the characteristic virtue of this Sister. Was it this constant mirth, this cheerful disposition which she maintained all her life, even through long months spent in the infirmary? Was it her affection for the superiors in whom she always saw God? Was it her love of work in her occupation as housemother to the abandoned children entrusted to her care? Was it her entire submission to the Holy Will of God, which made her desire neither life nor death, but only the Will of God? We cannot specify; but according to the memoirs, she possessed all these virtues.

Alas! due to the ailment contracted at the time of the typhus, the young Sister wasted away rapidly. "I have been struck," she said, "but I want all that God wants." The secret of the Divine Friend was clearly etched on her features. Everyone could read there a resplendent joy. "*Lord, who gazes upon you becomes radiant.*"

Joy, therefore, exceeded pain, even when she received the Viaticum. On the eve of her death, she said to Mother Coullée: "Mother, I fear to die in the night, which would deprive me of

the company of the Sisters I love so much." Jesus granted her desire. The community was present at the final moments of the one who was "entering into the joy of her Master."

A very painful loss also afflicted at this time, our Sisters of Saint-Hyacinthe in the death of their foundress. Our Mothers shared in a fraternal way their regrets and their sorrow. They realized the immense void created in the ranks of the little community by the disappearance of the one who had served it with truly remarkable dedication. Mother Thuot left to all, the memory of her eminent virtues, of her beautiful qualities of mind and heart, as well as of the works which had so fully filled her life.

The patron saint of a happy death bent lovingly over her bed of agony, as once upon a time he had bent smilingly over the cradle of Marie Michel Archange baptized March 16, 1787.

Brought up in the home of her paternal grandfather, the child was happy, playful, even mischievous. If it was sometimes delightful to hear her witty retorts, often also, her sulkiness frustrated her virtuous and kind parents. They were astonished when the young girl declared to them her desire to become a Sister. They did not take her decision seriously. It was only after repeated requests that she obtained permission to enter the convent.

On October 13, 1803, Marie Michel Archange brought to the Lord the freshness of a fifteen-year-old heart. She presented to him also a strong will which later, directed by grace, would be a powerful help in the work of her perfection, but it was almost disastrous to her at this time. God, who directs events with admirable wisdom, did not allow this, so that later the triumph of his grace would be more evident.

The character of our fifteen-year-old postulant placed before the summits to attain and the difficulties of the ascension, gave way to fears, and she experienced the irresistible desire to give up her vocation. She asked her father to come for her. Mr. Thuot, warned by our Mothers that his child possessed excel-

lent dispositions for religious life, saw in this request only a temptation of the enemy and he eluded the question with these words: "I'll come later, my daughter!"

In the expectation of this "later", our young postulant became exasperated and displayed her ill-will by slamming doors, and committing all the imperfections which human nature suggests in like circumstances.

These early vexations which were understandable however, soon disappeared. Grace triumphed, and eventually the mind of our young Sister changed. Surprised at her own disposition, she thanked God and her superiors for paying no attention to her faltering and whims.

Sister Thuot set herself to the work of her perfection with such heartiness that she became a changed person. The novice began her ascension on this path of silence, recollection, and sacrifice of which she would become a model in our community. Let us observe the professed Sister of October 24, 1805 in the field of this supernatural activity.

Laundress for several years, Sister Thuot revealed herself to be strong and generous at her task. Mechanical driers and elevators were non-existent in days of yore. Our Sisters went to the river to do the laundry. They carried the wet clothes up to the attic. How many trips they made up and down and what merits they accumulated!

Then, Sister Thuot became the health care giver. Possessing a true understanding of the needs of her Sisters, she quickly found ways of relieving their problems. Her charity, her sympathy, her good advice were not lacking for anyone. She always had time to listen patiently to all who came to her.

Through her duties during the space of nine years, she relieved suffering. Now, without disregarding the body, she would help souls to scale the paths of perfection. Sister Thuot was named Mistress of novices on October 15, 1829. With earnestness, she undertook the work entrusted to her by obedience. Jesus filled her heart with the virtues required for

this office by our Constitutions. To discover the good in all human beings, to appreciate sincerely others, was one of her secrets for doing good. The dear Mistress did much more by her religious attitude, her kindness, her charity, her solicitude for everyone.

Souls and the works of God are a costly deal. Sister Thuot knew this; consequently, she spared no sacrifice in order to give solid religious teaching to the novices, instilling in them the love of our Community and that of the poor. With the knowledge that one must cultivate one's mind in order to direct one's will toward good, she organized in cooperation with Father Sattin, p.s.s., courses in French for the novices. The worthy Mistress trained her novices in exquisite manners, and good behavior, which constitute religious decorum. She trained them also to accept the knocks of community life. No matter how piously populated, how well-ordered a monastery is, said Msgr. Gay, it is a painful school of perfection; it is not a place filled with angels; it is not yet heaven. Mother Thuot, in other words, taught her daughters that sacrifice was the only way of practising the unity recommended by our beloved Mother: sacrifice of one's emotions, feelings, ideas and will.

Becoming Assistant in 1838, she remained a person of duty: respectful and loyal to her superior, loving all her Sisters, without having any preferences; she enjoyed the title which allowed her to promote joy and happiness in the Community.

Foundress of our house in Saint-Hyacinthe in 1840, as we have read in this account, Sister Thuot was obliged to extend her efforts in order to deal with the many duties which befell her, and she was certainly not the last comer when there was question of hard work. Her equanimity, her faultless patience characterized this person whose life was Christ.

Then came the day when Jesus, carrying his Cross, invited his faithful spouse to follow him by the painful path of sickness and inactivity.

“Adversity is the characteristic of saints; it makes us grow toward heaven.” In that case, what summits must the dear foundress have attained in the last five years of her life during which God demanded so many painful sacrifices! Paralyzed, she accepted the self-abnegation imposed by her illness, always with a smile on her lips and abandonment to the Will of God. In the darkest hour of her solitude, Mother Thuot found great comfort in reading, in frequent conversations with the Lord, and in the kind consideration of her Sisters.

On March 3, the condition of the dear patient was aggravated by a stroke. The confessor gave her Holy Viaticum and the last rites. On the following day, surrounded by the little community praying at her bedside, she left this land of exile for the eternal homeland.

Such persons experience a survival. Mother Thuot lived in our community where she had spent thirty-six years. She lived on in the hearts of her beloved daughters at Hôtel-Dieu in Saint-Hyacinthe.

A trial again struck the Sulpicians. Their beloved Superior General, Father de Courson who, by his wisdom and kindness, had won the esteem and trust of his confrères, died April 10, 1850. This death plunged all the Sulpicians into mourning. In a filial return, the Grey Nuns shared their justifiable regrets. Our Mothers having received from the beloved Superior many expressions of kindness, gratitude made it a duty to remember him especially in prayer.

This painful event forced Father Faillon to change his plans, by obliging him to return to France for the general meeting which was to elect a successor to Father de Courson. Despite the wish of his confrères in Montreal and of the Sulpician Communities who, with sadness, saw this visit end so abruptly, the distinguished visitor hastened to put in order the most urgent business, and to leave. He came to the community with Father Gutter, his travel companion, for his farewell visit on June third. Our Mothers, in thanking him for his paternal solicitude, expressed their ardent desire to see him again soon in Ville-Marie.

Another departure! Our dear Sister Valade, who had come for the general chapter, was returning to Saint Boniface on June 19, 1850, happy to bring along with her Sisters Fiset from the Saint-Hyacinthe foundation, Laurent from the Mother House, two postulants: Sisters L'Espérance and Ford, two girls as employees: Misses Marie Marchand and Emerentienne Payette, and two maintenance men: Mr. Abraham Dufort and Mr. Joseph Pigeon.

Since the foundation of our house in Saint-Boniface, our Sisters Withman, Cusson (1845), Gosselin and Ouimet (1846), had gone with generous hearts, to reinforce the ranks of the little colony, so dedicated to evangelizing the natives. The Saint-Boniface Community, now solidly established, this little shrub would produce a branch.

Father Laflèche who was serving the parish of St. Francis Xavier, wished to have Sisters to teach the children. He informed Bishop Provencher of his project. The latter spoke to Sister Valade about it. Could one refuse to help with the evangelizing of these people when our missionaries had made such great sacrifices in view of this! The project was accepted. Sisters Lagrave and Lafrance were designated to begin. Complete destitution awaited the missionaries... Fortunately, they were trained to this sort of privation. They left on November 5, 1850 to open the school. Twenty-four children came to "the women of prayer," as they were called by the natives.

On the anniversary of the transfer of the remains of our beloved Mother d'Youville, a letter from Mother Coullée conveyed to Father Faillon, an expression of gratitude of our religious family.

Very Reverend Father,

"Divine Providence is crowning our joy and increasing the happiness we enjoy today, on the anniversary of the transfer of the body of our beloved Mother d'Youville, by providing us with an occasion to write to you. It is for us, a small compensation for your absence which is keenly felt among us, espe-

cially today when all about us speaks loudly of you and recalls touching memories of this time last year.

The Bishop of Montreal came to celebrate Mass for the Community, after which His Grace went to our beloved Foundress' shrine which was decked with flowers. After having prayed with the whole Community and the priests assembled for the circumstance, he recited the DE PROFUNDIS for the Sisters and the poor who might still be in purgatory. About to leave, His Grace remarked: 'Try to get your Mother to obtain miracles, and I shall go to Rome myself to have her canonized.' In the afternoon, our good Father Bonnissant came to the community to speak to us about our Foundress and help us admire the plans of Divine Providence. God had sent you from so far away, dear Father, to be the author and instrument of such a precious find, which is for us the source of so many blessings! After this conference which lasted an hour and a half, we ended this day by a solemn benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Only your presence was lacking to complete the feast, but the day will come, we hope, when this void will be filled.

It is not necessary to request the help of your kind prayers. We are convinced that your fatherly heart does not forget us. Kneeling at your feet, we beg your blessing for the year which is about to begin. If during its course, God would only gratify our expectation by returning our beloved Father to us, how great would be our joy! This sweet hope suffices to stir up our courage and make us persevere in our request.

Such are the heartfelt sentiments of those who are happy to be your children, but particularly of

Your humble and grateful daughter in J.C.

Sister Coullée, Superior

To these words of gratitude, our beloved Father Faillon responded with a joyful accent:

Reverend Mother and very dear daughters,

A few days ago I received your kind letter of December 23 in which you gave me an account of your beautiful and touch-

ing family celebration. Needless to say that I was interested in the slightest detail of your account. Anything which concerns your dear Institute shall always inspire me with a lively interest, and I hope, with the grace of God, that I shall always share your joys and sorrows. December 23 shall always be for me a feast day until the end of my life, and though absent, if God ordered it thus, I shall always be with you in spirit to celebrate our holy and blessed Mother d'Youville, never doubting that she considers me as one of her children and knowing that you accept to count me among the members of your family.

I assure you that if my trip to Canada had only served to aid you in finding the body of your Blessed Foundress, and thus to secure for you the consolation which you experience in having her with you, I would have good reason to bless Divine Providence for associating me to your charity which I consider of great worth. What must increase my gratitude toward God is that the presence of this beloved body is for all of you, the occasion of a renewal in the early fervor of your Institute, and an urgent invitation to revive the faithful imitation of the virtues of your blessed Foundress. This is the cause of the purest and sweetest joy which I experience as a result of my trip to Canada. Though God's plans are not always known to us, we cannot doubt His goodness in giving you this blessed body. You have all understood this and feel it keenly. Moreover, knowing your disposition as I do, I have no doubt that the presence of your saintly Mother is for you a source of fruitful blessings and inspires you in the development of the virtues each one needs. As long as we shall be on this earth, we shall have to uproot from our hearts the source of our innate defects and replace them with virtues becoming to our state. This is what you do, with the grace of God, and what you propose to do until the end of your life.

To facilitate this task, and to assist you in developing these virtues with greater eagerness, God placed among you your saintly foundress. She is like an abundant fountain which must provide water for everyone in the house causing all to produce fruit for eternal life. Let everyone, then, imitate in her personal life, that virtue of this saintly mother of which she stands in

greatest need. Let each invoke her with filial and child-like confidence. This loving Mother, who has no other ambition than that of your perfection, will respond to your desires with promptness and joy. If she were still living on earth and saw you in trouble and anxiety, could her maternal heart not take a keen interest in the needs of her children? And now that, having reached the highest degree of charity, she has no other occupation but that of interceding for her dear daughters, how could you have recourse to her without being helped, relieved, strengthened? Go then, to this good Mother with entire simplicity of heart. Do not fear to go toward her too freely and openly. Speak to her heart to heart. This is what she has a right to expect and what she desires from her children. I assure you that, in doing this, you will be doing the Will of God, and that you will draw upon yourselves and all your charges a great abundance of graces and blessings.

But, I am forgetting that, what I am recommending here, you already do willingly. Continue then, dear Sisters, to go to your beloved Mother. Enjoy your happiness and request for me from this powerful and loving protector, an entire conformity to the holy Will of God. I am not exhorting you to request my return to Canada. I leave that to the Will of God. But if your prayers are answered, I assure you that I shall place no obstacle in the way of its complete accomplishment. You have no doubt about that, I am sure.

In the meantime, I beg you to accept, all together and each in particular, the homage of my respect, my sincere esteem and entire devotedness with which I shall always remain,

Entirely yours,
Faillon, priest

Since 1827, the duties of the ecclesiastical superior of the Grey Nuns rested with the bishop of Montreal. From the early days of 1851, Bishop Bourget, engrossed by many undertakings, decided to transfer the direction of the community to Father Granet, then director of the Major Seminary in Montreal. On

this occasion, His Grace highly praised the one to whom he was entrusting the dearest interests of the Institute. "I give you, Sisters, in the person of your Superior, a man of God, filled with wisdom and prudence. Go to him with faith and with the same trust as to me. You are free to go to him in all your needs. Be entirely submitted to your Superior. He will be your guardian angel. Do not hesitate to expose to him your difficulties and your worries. He will be to you a devoted father."

The dear bishop wished to close, by a canonical visit, his twenty-three years as our ecclesiastical superior. It began on January 23 in the same order as that of 1835. At three o'clock in the afternoon, the Sisters assembled and awaited the bishop in the chapel. Soon, His Excellency in pontifical garb, made his entry, attended by Fathers Granet, Superior of the Community, Bonnissant and Moreau, Canon. His Excellency intoned the VENI CREATOR which was continued by the Sisters as they wended their way toward the community room. After the hymns, the Bishop and his retinue venerated the remains of our beloved Mother d'Youville in her shrine.

The devoted prelate had decided that the annual retreat would take place at the same time as the canonical visit, and His Grace wished to preach it himself. In the course of the day, he remained at the disposal of those who wished to have recourse to his advice. Thus, nothing was spared to give everyone the means of sanctification.

It was not enough for Bishop Bourget to show supernatural zeal to the professed; he extended it also to the novices by giving them religious conferences. Throughout an entire week he went to them twice a day to exhort them, to encourage them to fervor and, in order to reach souls, he received them for direction. These holy exercises developed in the novices a pure and noble enthusiasm for good.

"Concentrate your efforts on forming a good novitiate," His grace frequently repeated to the Sister administrators. "By causing silence to reign within," form your novices to the interior life, which alone, nourishes generosity.

The employees at the hospital also had their part of this spiritual agape. Each evening, after their day's work, the word of the good shepherd came, sweet and gracious, in the form of pious exhortations to these persons who were deeply grateful for this privilege.

On the day prior to the closing of the second retreat, the bishop accompanied by Fathers Granet and Bonnissant, Mother Coullée and the department heads, visited the entire house. In each ward for the poor, the good shepherd stopped and took the time to speak words of comfort. His bearing amid these groups of children, of elderly, and of handicapped, recalled the most touching scenes of the Gospel. Some asked for his blessing, others enlivened by a strong faith, tried to approach him and, begged him on their knees to heal their infirmities.

On February 10, the day of the closing of the episcopal visitation, the Bishop spoke to the Sisters assembled. With kindness he said: "I give you no admonitions, dear daughters, I do not deem them necessary, I shall limit myself to a few spiritual considerations and with all the good will which I know you to possess, I am sure you will receive them gladly and that you will follow them with joy. Then the bishop read these recommendations:

Love your Community, it is your mother. Sacrifice yourselves entirely for love of it. Be careful not to do anything which may draw upon it the contempt of the world.

Serve the poor as you would Jesus Christ. Love the Superior as your mother. Honor your Sisters as spouses of Jesus. Therein lies the happiness in religious life.

Go to your Ecclesiastical Superiors with faith; they represent Jesus Christ. You are free to go to them in times of need. They are your visible guardian angels.

Diffuse through the whole house, the sweet fragrance of holiness by the loving observance of religious silence. For fear of breaking it and of losing precious time in useless conversation, do not go into the departments of others except for absolute

necessity, and remain there only as long as required for your business.

You shall accept wholeheartedly the curtailment of breakfast in the community room.⁽¹⁾ Instead, the Bishop shall take it upon himself to serve you a spiritual breakfast when he comes. This will save you precious time which you must spend in recollection. Work at extricating from your mind any useless thought.

For the same reason, you shall receive lay people as visitors in the Community room, only at New Year's. To entertain them, the Superior shall designate a certain number of Sisters who alone shall receive the guests. The others shall pray that the spirit of the world may not enter the Community, but that instead, the religious spirit may spread into the world.

When you are about to perform some spiritual exercise, be faithful to keep silence as soon as the clock chimes its warning stroke. These few minutes of reflection taken from your recreation will yield greater fervor in prayer.

Delight in conversing with God when you are walking on the street or travelling. We have many things to say to our guardian angel and we would have to be very ungrateful for his kind care if we had nothing to say to Him along the way.

Let no fiery serpent, that is no grumbling, enter this house.

Give to your Sisters of the foundations, the example of all the virtues and especially great respect for your superior, your department heads, and of a delicate fondness for one another. When they come to see you, edify them so that they may always go back praising the Lord that the Mother Community is so edifying.

Love and respect your Sisters, Councillors and administrators. Lighten their burden by the trust you show them.

I have ruled that they would be among you as not belonging to the Council, that is to say, they shall follow ranks of seniority.

⁽¹⁾ In former times all the Sisters had attended breakfast served to visiting priests who came to celebrate Mass.

By thus acting contrary to the prescription of my predecessor, whose memory shall never fade from your community because of the esteem he always had for it, I condescended to the wish which the Councillors expressed of not ranking before their senior Sisters. As to the latter, I am sure they have enough virtue not to be offended by this. Thus, may this equality make you all one of heart and soul."

After drawing up guidelines for the Councillors and superiors, the bishop ruled further:

"That without acting contrary to the rules of foundations approved by the General Chapter of 1849, houses established in the future would come under the title of simple missions entirely dependent on the Mother House.

That the rule be printed so that each Sister may have a copy and may study and meditate it at leisure.

The same would hold true for the book of customs which had for several years been in the editing stage."

The Bishop had the Sisters adopt the use of the prayers before and after meals according to the Roman Breviary.

He authorized the use of the prayer: "O Holy Mary, My Queen," at the end of examen and, to close the meditation, this other prayer so dear to Father Olier: "O Jesus, living in Mary." This prayer was also the delight of Father Faillon, says a senior Sister. With the hope that we would adopt it, he came during his 1849 visit, to give a touching commentary. He captivated our attention for three quarters of an hour only on the words "O Jesus, living in Mary".

On March 8, 1851, His Grace, Bishop Bourget, accompanied by Father Granet, Superior, assembled the Councillors to discuss the means to take in establishing the new houses, and also to decide the fundamental points which should serve as a rule in such new establishments. These points drawn up as a rule, are found in the Archives.

While by the retreat and the canonical visit, the Sisters were trying to consolidate the spiritual structure, a considerable amount of work was also necessary in order to enlarge and improve the material building. Ever since the days of heroic sacrifices in 1847, the attention of Divine Providence toward our family was evident: vocations were more numerous, the works were expanding, and the house itself required an extension. In fact, the gable of the community wing and of the novitiate was being demolished in order to prepare the way for a 50-foot extension to the hospital.

"Here we are building," wrote Mother Coullée to Mother Mallet. "With the new extension, the Community, the novitiate and the dining room will measure eighty-five feet instead of the previous thirty. Several other repairs and improvements are being done at the same time around our house. I shall omit the details, since you will soon give me the pleasure of coming, ... as I invite you to do".

It is worthy of note that in 1751, at a time when the future of her work seemed to be severely threatened, Mother d'Youville, along with Father Normant, had not thought it rash to open a regular novitiate and thus, she had assured the existence of her society. A century later, in 1851, it was again on the novitiate that the superiors focused their attention, so true was it that nothing could contribute more to the welfare of the Institute than the proper formation of the novices who were destined to perpetuate the religious spirit.

On April 29, 1851, Sister Slocombe, recalled from Châteauguay where she had been the bursar for several years, was transferred to the novitiate. Father Granet, the ecclesiastical superior outlined the program for her new form of life. No one could be happier about this nomination, so well received by all, than the beloved Father Faillon who had been its instigator. From France, he followed with the interest of a father, the events of the Community.

He wrote to Mother Coullée, "I learned with great happiness about Sister Slocombe's transfer to the novitiate as sub-mistress.

I have no doubt that the Lord will give her all that will be necessary to carry out her duties in a useful and holy way. It was He who laid it on her and this thought must inspire her with entire confidence. I am pleased with the choice of Sister Slocombe, as it is in complete conformity with my own views, and if I had been in charge, I would not have chosen otherwise. I am convinced that the Lord has chosen her for the purpose of providing all that will be necessary to make your dear novices love the principles of perfection, and to transmit to them the spirit which is characteristic of the Institute. The sincere interest and love I have for your house compel me to beseech the Lord in a special manner to bless this novitiate which is the hope for its future. Therefore, I unite wholeheartedly with you to request that your novices be filled with the spirit of our saintly Mother d'Youville and that by their obedience, simplicity, and humility, they may perpetuate in the Institute, the examples which this holy Foundress bequeathed to them. This is the richest and most precious heritage she could have left to her children.

The memory of Mother d'Youville was again recalled on August 5 with the inauguration of an altar in the community room. This altar, made at her request in 1760 to honor the Eternal Father, had probably been given to a poor chapel. During Father Faillon's stay in Montreal, Father Roupe, p.s.s., informed his confrère that he had recognized in one of the shelters of Mercy, the altar dedicated to the Eternal Father which had belonged to the General Hospital. Father Villeneuve, chaplain of this shelter, willingly returned the altar. A monument of faith and love, it still stands today before our eyes in the community room. Turning our thoughts back to the dismal times in which it was built, one cannot read without pious emotion the following invocation engraved at its base: PATER AETERNE, DEUS, MISERERE NOBIS! PATER AETERNUS BENEDICAT NOBIS! (Eternal Father, have pity on us! Eternal Father, bless us!) The same breath of faith which prompted them still inspires those who approach it. It is our dear Mother who, by these earnest supplications, continues to call upon us the blessings and mercy

of our heavenly Father. It is she who invites us to trust in His Providence for the necessities of this life.

On August 15, under the auspices of Our Lady of the Assumption the sessions of the first Provincial Council of bishops opened in Quebec. Present were Their Graces Turgeon, Archbishop of Quebec; Gaulin, Bishop of Kingston; I. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal; J. Guigues, Bishop of Bytown; de Charbonnel, Bishop of Toronto, Phelan, Bishop of Carrha and Administrator of the Diocese of Kingston; J.C. Prince, Bishop of Martyropolis and co-adjutor of Montreal; Baillargeon, Bishop of Tloa and co-adjutor of Quebec.

During this great event, of interest to the whole Canadian Church, the feast of St. Louis, the patron of our founder, Father Louis Normant, was purposely chosen to bring together all the professed Sisters of the Institute for a family celebration during which copies of the Constitutions would be distributed. These had been recently revised and printed through the devoted attention of Father Bonnissant, p.s.s. This was a natural development which had become necessary for several fundamental articles relating to the primitive rule. These Constitutions had been reduced to a simple and concise form so that each Sister might easily carry a copy with her.

As a successor of Father Normant, Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary, accepted to distribute these. Fathers Granet and Bonnissant also wished to share the joy of our Mothers, and everyone listened with respect and careful attention to the words of the dear Superior. It was indeed the spirit of Father Normant which inspired his representative. It was also the breath of the foundress which passed over all these persons gathered in the same movement of love and faith. Kneeling, the Sisters received from the hand of Father Superior, the precious book which they respectfully kissed, then a fervent TE DEUM ended the pious ceremony.

On August 28, a collective letter from the bishops announced the closure of the Council. Their decisions were to be approved by the Pope before being made public. They had awarded, to

the Diocese of Montreal, the honor of delegating one of its members to submit their decrees to the sanction of the Holy See in Rome. Bishop Bourget entrusted this important duty to his worthy co-adjutor, Bishop Prince. The delegate of the first Provincial Council of Bishops left Montreal for Rome on October 14. As early as the end of November, Bishop Prince reached the Eternal City.

First, he fulfilled his official mission; then he visited numerous Institutions in other Italian cities. Everywhere he studied the structure of educational and charitable organizations.

His Grace was still in Rome when on June 8, 1852, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX transferred him to the See of St. Hyacinthe, erected the same day. A month later, on July 6, the Holy See sanctioned the appointment of canon Joseph Larocque⁽¹⁾ as Bishop of Cyndia and co-adjutor to Bishop Bourget.

Let us now retrace as faithfully as possible, the edifying memories of the two Sisters who, during the year 1851, exchanged the land of exile for the Homeland. First it was Sister Angélique Brazeau, known as Sister Alphonse, whom the Lord recalled into eternity on the night of January 30 in order to give her the reward for work so faithfully done in His vineyard.

Rigaud was the place of her birth. She was baptized there September 12, 1806. Her parents, J. Baptiste Brazeau and Archange Campeau, were filled with the deep faith which is reflected in language and actions throughout life. They brought up Angélique in accordance with their religious principles. At the age of her first communion, she was placed in a convent of the Sisters of Notre-Dame at Pointe Claire. Her teachers found it easy to mold Angélique's soul, already carefully cultivated. These years spent at the boarding school allowed her to catch a glimpse of the happiness experienced in religious life. Desir-

(1) Bishop Larocque was consecrated on October 28, 1852, in the church at Chambly, his native parish, by Bishop Bourget; attended by Bishop P. Phelan, Bishop of Carrha; and Bishop T. Cook, Bishop of Trois-Rivières, who had himself been consecrated ten days earlier.

ing this happiness for herself, and wishing to serve the poor, the young lady requested her admission with the Sisters of Charity.

The candidate of May 5, 1824, revealed herself zealous for her sanctification. When she took the vows of religion, she was fully convinced that she had committed herself to endeavor to attain with divine help, an ever greater degree of perfection.

Immediately after her profession, her health failed. Then began for her the ascension to Calvary, for the Sister of Charity would not be able to work with the poor as had been her zealous ideal. Lifting her soul above her physical discomforts, she succeeded in working skillfully at works of art for the benefit of the poor. The smile which came from the goodness of her heart never left her lips; silence shrouded her pain; she requested nothing and received gratefully every service greatly edifying the Community.

Jesus had strengthened his little spouse in divine love. Now he would respond to her desire. As noted in Chapter XIII, Saint Alphonse Rodriguez had for several years been popularly venerated in Montreal.

Already several miraculous cures had been obtained following novenas made in his honor. This had especially attracted the attention of Sister Brazeau. "Perhaps God will grant his servant the favor of restoring my health", she said. Encouraged by this thought, and always contemplating serving the poor, she requested and obtained permission to make a novena to the saint. The novena was not yet finished when our Sister was suddenly healed, able to resume community exercises and to follow all points of community life. With her health restored, she would henceforth be known as Sister Alphonse in gratitude toward her benefactor. The superiors did not delay in employing her at various occupations in the house. She was put in charge successively of the Sisters' Vestry, of the women's department, of the clothing depot for the poor of the town, and of the ward for abandoned children. Sister Alphonse fulfilled these duties with a spirit of faith, and with great tact to the satisfaction of her superiors.

Her days continued fully occupied until 1851, when she was admitted to the infirmary, this time, to die. Jesus would again have her pass through the crucible of interior afflictions described by Saint John of the Cross. Sister Alphonse possessed knowledge of this sublime secret: and so the Will of God, always dear to her, would become the food of her soul.

She desired the sacrament of the sick as the thrust which would send her forth into eternity. She yearned for it, having now recovered her trust in the mercy of God.

Before dying, she said to Mother Coullée, "Mother, I have more trust than ever in the God of mercies... I am slipping away..." and she quietly yielded her soul to her Father in heaven.

On October 5, the brief career of Sister Henriette Moreau, a young Sister of nineteen, ended in a peaceful death.

Daughter of Edward Moreau, a doctor, from Saint-Laurent near Montreal, and of Henriette Dumouchel, this child was not to experience for long the joys of family life for she was orphaned at five along with a young brother. Henriette was first placed in the care of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame whom she loved dearly. She then became a boarder with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart where again she was sympathetic to her teachers.

When she was sixteen, her guardian withdrew her in the hope of establishing her advantageously in the world. To his great surprise, Henriette, to whom the mystery of divine love had been revealed, replied firmly that "she felt only repugnance for the world and its false pleasures." Grieved at seeing her in this disposition, the guardian attempted to change her mind by offering her all the good and fascinating things he could, — but all in vain! Nothing could shake her determination. In order to put an end to the obstacles in her path, Henriette went to the General Hospital to request her admission. Alas! Mother McMullen, seeing her so young and so fragile made a few objections, among which, "that the life of a Sister of Charity was too

difficult for her." "Yes, that is true," she said, "but it is Jesus who gives the strength and it is He who is calling me to this life." Subdued, the good Mother granted her admission for August 26, 1848.

As a novice, Sister Moreau went about the work of her perfection with such zeal that after several months, her companions did not recognize the former postulant. "To live for Jesus only, to become a great saint, to live in view of eternity, such was her life ambition."

August 26, 1850 was the day of her total oblation. The newly professed Sister continued to struggle with the minor defects inherent to human frailty. But her health was becoming impaired. Tuberculosis, which would lead her to her grave, did not however, impede the dear Sister, in her ascension. Mortification, her beloved companion, did not allow her to accept any sweets. "All that satisfies the taste-buds," she said, "but it is not of any use." "One must not detract from the spirit of poverty, by making useless expenses for me," she would say.

On the day of her death, she got up and dragged herself to the door near the hallway. Her strength failed and she fell. The nurse who came to her aid asked where she wanted to go. "I wanted to go and pay my respects to our beloved Mother d'Youville," she said, "I so want to see her!..." She was carried to the shrine of our beloved Mother. She remained there for a few minutes. When she returned to the infirmary, Mother Coutlée inquired if she was satisfied. "Oh! yes, Mother", replied the dying Sister. "Yes, I am happy now that I have seen her. I have always had a filial love for this kind Mother, but I cannot tell you what I have experienced these last three days. I have been thinking of her constantly. I believe I can hear her calling me." ... and she repeated earnestly, "I love this kind Mother, Oh! yes, how I love her!" These words pronounced only a few hours before her death were like an echo of her life.

CHAPTER XXI

1851 — 1852

Like all other works blessed by God, St. Patrick's Orphanage began painfully. In order to learn the first page of its history, one must go back to December 9, 1846.

Several days after a meeting of the Ladies of Charity in 1846, Sister Hurley home visitor helped by Mrs. Thomas McGrath found a shelter for Irish orphans in one of the houses of Mr. T. McGrath, at Murray Street, in the district of St. Anne.

Two Sisters went there each morning and returned in the evening exhausted but happy to prepare this place for God's poor.

This house took in widows and children. By means of canvassing and the help they received from the Ladies of Charity, especially from Mrs. McGrath, the Sisters provided for the essential needs of the orphans. The good they endeavoured to do did not escape the attention of the citizens.⁽¹⁾

But this institution was temporary; eager to provide a permanent shelter for the children taken in, the citizens planned to build close to St. Patrick's Church then under construction. This generous inspiration, however, could not be immediately realized: The building of the church absorbed all the funds.

(1) This is how on February 4, 1847 the publication TRUE WITNESS presented this work to the sympathy of its readers: St. Patrick Asylum. — "We direct attention to this charitable institution, and hope it will receive an increase of public support. Those who first suggested the undertaking and then generously devoted a commodious building for the institution, are rewarded in its daily benefits".

In the meantime, the six months agreed upon for the loan of the McGrath house were coming to an end. Another place had to be found. Aware of this new worry, Mrs. McDonnell offered her house. As early as May, the small group moved there and stayed through June and July. From there they moved to a house on Bleury Street where they remained four months; they then moved to the Rocheblave house.⁽¹⁾

Believing this work to be consolidated, Mother McMullen sent three Sisters in October, 1847. They were Sisters Hughes, Denis (St. Joseph), and Blondin. To the orphans of this dwelling were added 119 children from the field hospitals who had not been claimed by their parents at the time of the typhus epidemic.

The priests from the Seminary helped effectively with the sustenance of this house, and spiritual direction was entrusted to Father Pinsonnault, p.s.s., who was later named Bishop of London. However, the little colony did not long enjoy this new home. The priests who served St. Patrick's Church had no rectory; hence it became urgent to turn the house over to them. As early as May 21, 1848, twelve of the children from the Rocheblave house were received at our Mother House. The others were entrusted to the care of Father Dowd, a Sulpician who had arrived in Montreal on June 21, 1847 and was appointed chaplain to the Irish.

Four months earlier, on March 9, 1847, Bishop Bourget had launched an urgent appeal to his people on behalf of the children who had remained at the "sheds". It has been reported that, of the 229 children, 92 had found place in good French Canadian families, forty-eight found refuge at our Mother House, and others had been taken in by the Sisters of Providence.

It was not long before the project was again undertaken to open a shelter for these children. In the interval, our Sisters had continued to visit Irish families in their homes. They had found a considerable number of these poor people sheltered in sheds

⁽¹⁾ Name of the family who had lived in this house.

or coach-houses without fire, without bread, and without means of subsistence. Hardly anywhere could they be received, because still recovering from typhus fever, they inspired fear of contamination.

Touched by the fate of so many unfortunate people, Sister Reid proposed to Fathers Dowd and Pinsonnault that a large house on Colborne Street near the Lachine Canal, be rented. This house, occupied by Mr. V. Franklin, guardian of the bridge at Côte-Saint-Paul, already sheltered some ten orphans taken in by him from the sheds. When these good people realized they were overtaken by these turbulent youths, concerned about their care, they were about to consult Father Dowd, but the latter anticipated their move. "You are really the people I am looking for," he said. "Your house will receive my poor and it is you who will be their guardians." Soon penniless widows came with their children, men and even entire families found refuge there.

It did not suffice to provide shelter for these penniless outcasts. Their subsistence also had to be provided for. The alms of charitable people covered only part of the expense. Sister Reid then conceived the idea of going to Ste. Anne's marketplace to solicit help for the poor. Well received, she resolved to go there daily. As soon as she appeared, followed by her wheel-barrow, which one of her protégés pushed along, butchers and merchants did not wait to be asked; they went toward her, and her vehicle was soon filled with supplies.

In order to help the other unfortunates in the town, the Sulpician priests opened, at the Grey Nuns' Mother House, a depot which was supplied largely at the expense of the Seminary. Bread, meat, and soup were served from there. The sick received in addition, small portions of tea, sugar, rice, and butter. According to the stewards, ninety gallons of soup was hardly enough for each day's servings.

About the same time, Sister Hughes succeeded in interesting the zealous Father Dowd in the work of protecting widows and jobless girls. Through his intervention, she obtained from Mr.

Augustin Perreault,⁽¹⁾ a rich citizen of Montreal, the loan of one of his houses on a corner of Craig and Côté Streets on the sole condition that the poor who might be received there would attend his funeral. This condition was faithfully fulfilled on August 27, 1859, at the death of this benefactor in his 80's. Not only did the elderly and the orphans attend his funeral, but the Grey Nuns also were present in large numbers.

It was necessary to furnish this dwelling. It was completely empty. When the preparations had been made, Sister Hughes expected to receive the widows and jobless girls on November 17. What a surprise it was to her when that morning, fifty children from the Franklin residence were sent by Father Dowd on Sister Reid's suggestion. She knew not what to think of this change...

As stated earlier, the Franklin house had been receiving widows and entire families. This mixture of children with various categories of adults resulted in many problems for Sister Reid who was responsible for maintaining order. With these fears in mind, she had followed the preparations being effected at the Perreault residence rented to Sister Hughes, her competitor in the practice of charity.

On the day set for the opening of this shelter, Sister Reid spoke to Father Dowd about the problems she was experiencing at the Franklin residence. Father agreed and gave orders to bring the orphans to the Perreault house until they could be received at Saint Patrick's Orphanage.

After Sister Hughes had recovered from her surprise, she welcomed these poor children with great kindness. It is impossible to describe the difficulties of these early days. There were no beds, no tables or chairs for them in the house. There was only a small stove. The Sisters were greatly distressed at having only bread to serve. Divine Providence did not delay in directing the alms of charitable persons towards the new orphanage. Mr. Perreault gave straw with which cotton sacs were filled. These were

(1) Uncle of Sister Gaudry.

the first beds. The fifty children still needed to be properly dressed. Sewing machines were as yet unknown. The days were not long enough for the job. Many long nights were also required. Seeing the housemothers about to be overcome with exhaustion, Mother Coullée sent them Sister Le Pailleur, a young Sister full of zeal and enthusiasm. Not only did she help her Sisters with the sewing, but wishing to provide assistance for their piety, she succeeded in setting up a small chapel for them. This was the realization of earnest wishes! "From this moment," wrote Sister Christin, "there was never anything difficult. Fifteen minutes of intimacy with the Good Lord made one quickly forget the worries of the day."

One day however, they almost lost this enjoyment through a fire which devastated Craig Street; but the devoted Father Dowd, while helping to carry things to safety, had the inmost conviction that this orphanage, founded on such sacrifices, such charity, and such trust in Divine Providence would be spared from the flames.

In God's design, this trial was to have the double advantage of making known both the good work carried on in this orphanage and the great poverty which hindered its development. Two more years went by during which Father Dowd was actively involved in the construction of St. Patrick's Orphanage begun on Dorchester Street a short distance from the Church bearing the same name.⁽¹⁾ Without waiting for the work to be completed and perhaps to accelerate it, Father Dowd resolved to have the orphanage blessed in the fall of 1851.

It was therefore on November 21, 1851, under the auspices of Mary on the feast of her Presentation in the Temple, that St. Patrick's was blessed and opened to the Irish orphans entrusted, over several months already, to Sister Reid recently named superior. Sister Marie Christin whom we have already admired at work, would be permanently assigned along with Sisters Adèle Robin (Sainte-Croix), and Elisabeth Dupuis, both newly

(1) This house served until 1910 at which time it was demolished.

professed. The young foundresses, inaugurated their mission in appropriate circumstances. Poverty and privations together would render their dedication fruitful and liven their faith in the Divine Providence of the Eternal Father.

Despite their ingenuity, despite the contributions of a Committee of women formed to assist the budding enterprises; one day, distress appeared to be complete. The hour for mealtime had struck and there was not a single piece of bread in the house. Without being disconcerted, Sister Reid went to the wards and asked the children to pray. All fell to their knees and begged the Father in heaven to send bread. Their confident appeal quickly reached the heart of God. At the second "Our Father", the Superior was called to the parlor by a child who gave her a five-dollar bill. "My Father sends you this for your orphans," he said and withdrew hurriedly without divulging his name. What a windfall! It seemed, says the narrator, that the supplies bought with this money, would last forever!

However, the inmates increased in number each day. As early as January 12, the orphanage numbered almost a hundred children. A few crippled adults had also requested admission, and the kind Superior had not deemed it presumptuous to receive these dependents of Divine Providence. Her trust, often tested, was never deceived. God gives to those who ask in faith. Sister Reid had the kind of faith which obtains miracles.

One Friday, the Sister cook, out of supplies, was perplexed and went to the Superior. "It is already nine o'clock," she said, "and dinner is not on." "Well, since it is nine o'clock," answered Sister Reid, "we shall do our reading and then we shall see about dinner." With this, she began with the customary invocations to Divine Providence. The prayer was not yet finished when a wagon loaded with vegetables and fish stopped before the door. "Sister, here are some supplies," said the driver, a generous farmer, "I was inspired to bring them for your orphans."

The matter was immediately reported to Father Dowd who, while praising the kind attention of Divine Providence towards

his dear orphanage, could not help but express regrets to the superior for her having to grapple with such poverty. On the spot he gave her the contents of his wallet, and the following Sunday, he launched an urgent appeal to the Irish people in favor of the poor institution. Abundant help soon came, and since then, St. Patrick's Orphanage has always received proof of generous dedication from the Pastor and the parishioners.

Sister Reid, who had deployed such zeal in order to set this home aflame with the love characteristic of our beloved Foundress, was not to remain there long. At the elections of 1853, she became the bursar at our Mother House. The direction of St. Patrick's Orphanage fell to Sister Forbes, the ex-Mistress of Novices, who held the position for more than twenty years.

In 1907, the personnel of St. Patrick's Orphanage settled at Côte-des-Neiges, on Chemin Sainte-Catherine, in a large building of grey-stone extracted from that very land. The house was surrounded by four lovely gardens with fruit trees. The orphanage housed 200 children. It had been provided with improvements recommended by hygiene and modern comfort with both classrooms and bright spacious playrooms: a dwelling most favorable for the intellectual and moral growth of young people! The Grey Nuns prepared these children to become useful citizens by giving them an education in keeping with their condition.

The feast of St. Clement of Rome, in this year 1851, was remarkable for an event of great importance to the Church of St. Boniface: the episcopal ordination of Bishop Alexandre Taché.

"Having continued the work of the early missionaries who were an honor to Canada," as Senator L.D. David stated, "the virtues and good works of Father Taché had rendered him as popular on the shores of the St. Lawrence as on the banks of the Red River and his superiors had soon noticed it. Moreover, when Bishop Lafèche, because of his infirmities, declined the call to become the coadjutor of Bishop Provencher in 1850, the

beloved Bishop of St. Boniface appealed to Father Taché." The latter was only twenty-six and he had not thought he could be called to the episcopate. But when he arrived at the Red River, he understood that the business was indeed serious. He found a letter from the founder of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Bishop de Mazenod himself, who was calling him to Marseille. He obeyed his Superior's order without believing however, what was expected of him. Despite his hesitation, despite his objections, he was consecrated in the cathedral of Viviers on November 23, 1851 by Bishop de Mazenod, attended by Bishop Guibert, then Archbishop of Paris.

After his consecration, Bishop Taché went to Rome. In his visits to the Holy Father and to the tombs of the martyrs, he found the strength he needed to fulfill his difficult mission. He left Rome in February, 1852 for his far-away episcopal see and stopped for some time in Lower Canada where deep sympathy was lavished upon him. No one could have enough of seeing and hearing the young and popular Bishop of the Red River. He was the object of admiration and of national pride. Many would have wished to retain him in their midst. He had to make an effort in order to break the bonds which linked him to his native land. Having left in May, he spent several days in St. Boniface with Bishop Provencher, as we shall see later.

The year 1851 ended with the inauguration of bust figures of Father Normant and of our beloved Foundress. Let us allow Mother Coullée's nimble and grateful pen to record the event. She wrote to Father Faillon, the generous donor:

Reverend and kind Father,

Still under the effect of the unspeakable joy and pleasant surprise you caused us by sending the bust figures of Father Normant and of our Mother d'Youville, I feel the need and the duty to thank you. I shall not attempt to express the degree of our gratitude for this new favor you have just bestowed upon our community, for my feeble words would only diminish the depth of our sentiments.

The fatherly kindness, better still, using Father Billaudèle's expression, "the Motherly kindness" with which you constantly take our interests to heart since your return to France, touches us deeply, and bewilders us. Oh! That we could pay you back for what you do for us!

I have not, for a long time, had the joy of conferring with you, Reverend Father, and therefore, I fear I shall break the rules of discretion. But you will pardon me for I must tell you in detail the circumstances which accompanied the reception of the two precious bust figures.

First of all, on the evening prior to the twenty-third, I was called to the parlor by our Superior who told me: "I have the bust figures of Father Normant and of Mother d'Youville, sent by Father Faillon for your community. He desires that their inauguration take place tomorrow, which is an important day because of the dear memories it recalls. This secret must be kept until the time of inauguration.

This was not an easy thing in a community... of women. Nevertheless, I found the means of doing so. In the silence of the night, with the help of two young Sisters, I began to adorn the console table on which the bust figures were to be placed, near the shrine of Mother d'Youville, and to make what would appear to be "a simple and beautiful decoration."

The dear Sisters who were helping me suddenly broke the silence and asked, "Mother, what is this mystery? What saints will come to this place? Finally, the great moment arrived... the figures were unveiled and the secret was revealed... Unanimously, these young Sisters exclaimed: "Ah! This is undoubtedly another of the beloved Father Faillon's delicacies! If he only knew how happy he has made us!..."

On the following morning after Holy Mass, Fathers Billaudèle, Granet, and Bonnissant vested in surplices, came to the community. The Sisters were instructed to follow them... They wondered for what ceremony! What a solemn moment for our little community! The lighting reflected on the figures and a feeling of admiration swept over the Sisters. Some smiled

at the two distinctive characters, others greeted them tearfully. Joy prevailed over the whole assembly.

Father Billaudèle, not remaining aloof from these sentiments of filial love said: "You know well, Sisters, and your heart tells who it is who has given you this precious gift. You recognize in this work the skilfull hand which has succeeded so well in giving this expression of holiness which may be noticed in the features of your beloved Mother d'Youville. Yes, it is Father Faillon who, with the tender care of a mother, is ever concerned with providing further joys for you. He himself directed the procedure to follow in bringing you this great surprise... "It would be too long to recall here all that Father Billaudèle said on this subject. The elderly and the children then came in turn to share the joy of this feast to which nothing was lacking save the honor of your presence, Reverend Father.

The carpenters are now busy making a pedestal for each of the figures which will be covered with a globe.

Seeing ourselves thus favored, we thought of our Sisters in the various houses in the Institute who are deprived of this advantage. Would it be possible, Reverend Father, to send us from France the molds which served to make these figures which we are favored to possess? If it were possible, I would dare to request of your kindness the favor of forwarding them at our expense, of course. Otherwise, we would be embarrassed.

What a joy it would be for me to offer these to each of our houses! The Sisters would be very grateful to you but not more so than the one who is

Your humble and grateful daughter in Christ,

Sister Coullée.

We insert here, part of the kind reply of Father Faillon, although he addressed it to Mother Coullée in 1852.

My dear reverend Mother,

The letter you so kindly wrote caused me as much joy as the reception of the figures caused you. They had left Paris in October; yet I had received no news of their arrival and I was not sure if they had arrived safely, nor even if they had arrived at all at their destination before December 23.

Imagine, then, in my anxiety about them, what joy your letter with its interesting contents caused me. Moreover, the description you gave me of the inauguration and of the various sentiments elicited at the appearance of these unexpected figures, is so natural and chatty that truly, in reading this description, I felt as though I too were present at the celebration, sharing the same emotions.

I must then thank you in turn for your narrative as well as for all the other interesting news contained in your letter. I thank you also for asking me to send you, if possible, other figures for your houses. I am not in a position to obey you, on this point, as I would wish to. No molds were made for these figures though they appear to have been molded. However, your request caused me great pleasure. It is a certain testimony of the trust you have in us and of the assurance you have of our sincere and entire dedication. So, I urge you, Reverend Mother, to continue in the future to come to us in perfect freedom..."

Our Mothers had just exchanged greetings when, for Sister Marie-Thérèse Clément, these were already granted as she entered into permanent happiness on January 2.

Marie-Thérèse, the daughter of Cyriaque Clément, was from Terrebonne. Her mother, née Catherine Duchaine, brought up this delicate child with care, sensitive to the beauties of nature and of grace.

Not finding in the world, anything which her pure heart dreamed of, captivated by the love of God, she looked forward only to giving herself to Him in the Institute of the Sisters of Charity where her sister had already preceded her. She entered on November 14, 1846 at the age of seventeen.

Seeing the zeal which the young postulant displayed in the work of her perfection, one would have believed that her perseverance was assured. Alas! The time of trial soon came for her. Her health wavered. Each day she was noticed gradually wasting away. It became obvious that she would have to return to her family. Her father was notified to come and get her. In the meantime, typhus broke out in the community and in a few days, most of the Sisters were afflicted with the epidemic. Sister Clément was among those Divine Providence had spared till this point. Without displaying any fear, she cared for the sick Sisters with admirable charity.

When her father came to fetch her, he found her in full dedicated activity. The circumstance was providential, it was thought. The separation would be less painful since our house now had a sepulchral aspect. "Mother," replied Sister Clément when she was asked to leave, "let me at least care for your sick until the end of the epidemic." — "But you are exposed to the contagion and you could well become a victim of it," answered Mother Coullée. — "Oh, I would only be too happy if such were the will of God, and the sacrifice of my life would not be hard to make if I had the joy of dying in this house." This is God's answer to her vocation, thought Mother Coullée and she allowed the postulant to carry out her mission. The latter greatly increased her love and her charity toward the sick. The epidemic ceased and there was no further question of leaving; besides, Sister Clément's health appeared better. At the end of her first year, she received the reward of her dedication. She was admitted for vesturing. Joy and gratitude overflowed from her heart when her dream was finally realized on the beautiful day of her profession, November 6, 1848.

After this great favor, the young Sister experienced only one love: that of Jesus crucified! Our Mothers did not hesitate to name her for the foundation in Quebec. Then the time of testing began for Sister Clément... *testing by loneliness, by interior trials, by illness. Felled by consumption, in this new foundation, she considered herself a burden, a cause of fatigue and worry;*

she was mistaken for she alone was suffering, and though she didn't realize it, she was hastening the work of her sanctification.

Having requested of her superiors the permission to return to the place of her infancy in the Institute, this consolation was finally granted her. The joy of seeing the Mother House again seemed for some time to cause an improvement in the state of her health. Her great love for the community and the veneration she always had for those in authority were the constant theme of her gratitude. She expressed it with loving simplicity.

Despite the fact that the dear patient struggled, reacted, tried to be joyful, and to conceal her pain, the illness was in its third stage and she was given the Sacrament of the Sick three months after her return from Quebec.

"Even to youth who enjoy life, this Sacrament makes death appear less severe, since it gives heaven."

Her final days were peaceful, so filled with love, with trust and abandonment, that they appeared to be a foretaste of the eternal reward. Attended by our Mothers and Sisters, she surrendered her soul to God in her 22nd year and the 5th of her religious life.

On February 18, the day dawned radiant in which the humble Bernadette six years later, heard the Queen of Heaven say to her: "I shall not promise to make you happy in this world but in the next." It was the day chosen by the Virgin Mary before the apparitions in Lourdes, to recall from exile our dear Sister Ursule Caron who died serenely and trustingly under the maternal gaze, comforted by the assistance of the Holy Church.

Let us cast a glance on this beautiful life. It leaves a resemblance to that lived by our beloved predecessors and will serve to encourage the young who are making their laborious climb.

It is at the Rivière-du-Loup in the home of Abraham Caron and of Geneviève Lavoie that God placed the cradle of Sister Caron. She appeared on the feast of Saint Anne, July 26, 1828 and at baptism received the names of Marie Ursule.

The days of her childhood and youth were lived happily in an atmosphere of simplicity and work where time was shared between God and family. Willingly, Ursule would have spent her entire life there if a divine call had not attracted her towards an ideal of greater perfection.

On January 13, 1846, she bade farewell to her loving parents, to this peaceful home, and came to dedicate herself to God in the Institute of the Sisters of Charity. Admitted the same day, Ursule brought with her all the zeal and the enthusiasm of her youth untainted as she was by the world. Besides flourishing health, she had trusting piety, wisdom and prudence beyond her age, a strong determination not to spare herself in God's service and in the work of her perfection. Her generosity never faltered. It was thus that she prepared herself for her profession on January 31, 1848.

At the time of the cholera epidemic in 1849, the Superiors entrusted Sister Caron, hardly 20, with the supervision of the "Sheds". Her prudence, her tact, and her virtue were admired and appreciated particularly in this circumstance, not only by the community, but likewise by government agents, doctors, employees and patients.

Stricken with the illness herself, Sister Caron tried to overcome it by taking a strong dose of the medicine prescribed for cholera patients. The illness persisted. In her state of debility, she succeeded in dragging herself to the chapel and there, prostrate before the altar, she petitioned the Lord in these terms: "My God, if you wish me to die, I accept your will wholeheartedly; but if it be for your glory, allow me to serve all these poor patients and to die the last." The prayer of the just one penetrates the heavens. Hers, from a heart filled with a lively faith and with such intense charity, could not but be heard. At that very moment, her pain disappeared. She gave thanks to God and continued with untiring devotion to lavish care on her dear patients.

On her return to the community after the epidemic, Sister Caron was entrusted with service to the poor and with home

visits. Her charity was a fire which spreads and radiates. It reached those on the outside who were in material or moral trouble. It is impossible to tell the countless benefits which this sympathetic nun sowed in the hearts of the hundreds of people who came in contact with her. How many families torn apart did she reconcile! How many persons neglectful of their duties she brought back to God by her exquisite behavior, her convincing words, her generous dedication!

This little mother of the poor abounded in joy at their service. To assist the dying, to lay out the dead, was a real comfort to her; so much so that rendering to her superior an account of her disposition, she said: "Mother, I cannot express to you the joy I experience in the service of the poor. If I were not in this service through obedience, I would sometimes fear that the interior satisfaction I feel could be the only reward I would receive for the good I am trying to do."

She wrote the following message to Bishop Bourget: "Your Grace, since my retreat, I feel inclined to give to the poor, all they request of me, fearing that the very one to whom I would refuse something could well be the Lord Himself. As I might act without prudence, although I am sure Divine Providence will always provide for the needs of the poor, I mention this to you, Your Grace, in order to obtain your advice on this matter."

The most highly regarded women considered it a duty and a joy to accompany Sister Caron on her visits to the poor, both for personal edification and for the desire to share the reward of her charity.

After two years of this demanding service, the superiors appointed her as bursar. Only obedience could make her accept willingly the sacrifice of her poor. Nevertheless, she did not show any of the pain which this change caused her, and she set about her new task as if by natural attraction.

Jesus detached his little spouse in this way only to lavish more intimate favors upon her. She had been at the bursar's office only three and a half months when she suddenly contacted

fever which obliged her to go to the infirmary... Sister Caron felt she had been mortally struck. "This illness will be my last," she said. She called for her confessor. "Now, if God allows me to become delirious," she told her superior, "have no fear, I am in perfect peace." Seeing her consumed by a burning fever, Mother Coullée prepared her to receive Holy Viaticum and the Sacrament of the Sick and ordered her to beg Jesus to heal her. To this, the patient replied: "Mother, what you ask of me is difficult. It is better to "possess God" than to say: I shall possess Him; but I must obey and I shall do so wholeheartedly, however distasteful that is to me."

Upon hearing the bell which gave notice of Jesus' arrival, she said to her nurse, "Sister, the Blessed Sacrament is approaching; go and throw flowers on his path!" — "The sentiments of your heart are the most pleasing flowers you could ever offer to this kind Master who is coming to you," replied her companion.

She received Holy Viaticum with fervor. The peace and happiness which she experienced in possessing her God was reflected on her features.

After the thanksgiving, Mother Coullée wished to know from the dear Sister if she had performed her act of obedience. "Oh yes, Mother, I did sincerely ask for my healing, if such is the will of God."

With that invincible patience this dear Sister endured great pain! At times when the pain was more violent, she could be heard exclaiming "Strike, Lord, strike! This is still not enough. Do not spare me in this world but do come to my help..." Then, setting her gaze on the crucifix, she would say with the trust which emboldens the just in times of tribulation: "*In te Domine speravi...*" She had constantly on her lips, some passage of Holy Scripture in which she had always found her delight. "The words of the Our Father flow into my soul and penetrate it as a gentle and fragrant oil," the dear patient also said.

Tortured by violent pain which allowed her no respite, she once refused medication offered her. "Our Lord knows my

good will and my impossibility of doing what he exacts of me," she said. Mother Coutlée, fearing that any delay could aggravate the illness, said to her: "Sister Caron, I believe you do not recognize the one who is speaking to you." "Yes", she answered briefly, "it is Reverend Mother." — "Well, then, do you not owe me obedience?" said Mother Coutlée. At these words, she took, with a trembling hand, the glass containing the potion, saying, "yes, Mother, I owe you obedience, and until death." Taking a mouthful of this medication, she made a great effort to swallow it, but in vain. At this sight, tears came to the eyes of the spectators.

During the night, the nursing Sister asked if she needed anything. — "I would need some food," replied the patient. "The doctor will not allow you any solid food; will you have a drink?" She listened silently to her nurse; then, setting her dying gaze on her, she said: "It is my soul which needs nourishment." — "But you know, it is Our Lord who nourishes souls," said the nurse. In a very feeble voice, the patient replied, "my soul is clothed with Jesus Christ." Then, in a whisper, she recited with faith and hope, the psalm *Beatus vir qui timet Dominum*, etc.

On the day of her death, Mother Coutlée had gone to see her in the early hours of the morning. On seeing her, the patient said, "Ah, Mother, it's all over, I must die, I feel death is close at hand..." "God is all powerful;" replied the Superior. "It is as easy for him to keep you alive as it is to bring the dead back to life. You are submitting to his holy will, are you not?" "Oh, yes Mother, I have no other desire than to see this holy and adorable will accomplished in me in all things." She bade Mother Coutlée to recite the *Te Deum* with her.

After a few hours of intense suffering, she entered into a peaceful agony. While our Mothers and Sisters were praying at her bedside, she surrendered her soul to God. Sister Caron was in her 23rd year and the 6th of her religious life.

While our Mothers were attending Sister Caron at her dying moments, another victim marked for the sacrifice was preparing for death. It was Sister Marguerite Ouimet whom they would

lay to rest a month later. St. Vincent de Paul once said: "There must be something very valuable in crosses and suffering which human understanding cannot fathom, since after one has served Him, God sends affliction and martyrdom." Such was to be the lot of our dear Sister.

As early as the second year of her novitiate, Sister Ouimet felt urged to offer herself for the Red River mission in which, at that time, there were great hardships. To this end, her profession was anticipated by three months so that she might leave with Sister Gosselin.

She would dedicate herself for souls and for them, she would accept the hardest work and the most generous sacrifice. Jesus also awaited her with his cross,... a cross of powerlessness, of suffering, of illness, of infirmity... She was forced to submit and to substitute for her dedication, acts of resignation and of conformity to God's will. Sister Ouimet was even compelled to return to the Mother House. This was a sacrifice she willingly accepted in the thought that by renewing her acceptance of God's will, she would draw blessings on the mission of St. Boniface. In the infirmary, she led the monotonous life of a patient gradually fading away. After days of partial solitude in which prayer held the greatest place, came long sleepless nights.

Father Eymard once said, "Heaven crowns the saints, but it is the Eucharist which makes them." Consumed by a burning fever, wasted away by thirst during sleepless nights, the dear patient refrained from drinking in order to receive Holy Communion. After such a heroic and beautiful preparation, Jesus came to her, but sometimes, only spiritually. At such times, satiated with pain and with faith, she would take the crucifix with a trembling hand and say: "*I thirst to be near you Jesus.*"

Physical exhaustion became greater, but grace sustained her moral strength and thus, with the trust and love of the Virgin most faithful, the patient awaited her beloved spouse. He came and called her, and our dear Sister died March 18, 1852 in her 26th year and the 8th of her religious life.

CHAPTER XXII

1852 — 1853

Amid repeated mournings in the Community, Divine Providence procured a great joy: the notice of publication of a new biography of our Foundress. After eighty years, this biography of our beloved Mother d'Youville, published by Father Faillon in 1852 remains the most documented, the most interesting, according to experts.

We shall again read the message of this good father, a message which reveals the same solicitude toward the Grey Nuns.

Paris, January 8, 1852

Reverend and dear Mother,

I am working on the biography of your blessed Mother d'Youville, or rather, I completed it on the feast of Epiphany. At any rate, I completed my first draft, which with slight corrections, shall be the last.

I shall tell you that I did not know this beautiful and admirable person, despite all I had heard in Montreal. Father Sattin's account had, in fact, given me only an incomplete idea of it. I do not know if I am mistaken, if I have been deceived because of the love I have for your Community, but personally, it appears to me that this life is likely to impress, pious and deeply religious persons. Wise and judicious persons, also after reading it, will not fail to consider Madam d'Youville as a person extraordinary in all respects in her particular calling. In France, we have several lives of saintly women, raised up

by God to initiate similar works; but I know of none in which the action of God appears more clearly and more capable of impressing everyone, than that of Madam d'Youville. I hope that this biography will contribute to making your holy Foundress known and loved, and that God will use it to develop in many, the seed of a vocation yet dormant, which may have been planted there. Privately, I rejoice at having been selected by Divine Providence for this holy work. God had kept his plan from me until I came to Canada; and I think he has sufficiently revealed it to me by all that has happened since. I even believe that he has enabled me to unravel and place in proper order, all the documents I had collected in view of composing this biography. I found it difficult to arrange them in such a manner as to obtain the proper ensemble; yet, all fell into place without difficulty. I began on December 1, and on January 6, I had finished my draft. The work shall be completed when I receive your reply to this letter.

In a subsequent letter, we read: ...

I completed my copy only on Saturday, March 20, though I had started it on February 10. Therefore, I have worked constantly at this biography from December 1 to March 20. I now have only the preface to do, but that will come by the time we are ready for printing. I figure that time spent in research and compilation will amount to six months. But I assure you, that this has been the best spent and most useful time of my life. I beg you to help me thank the Lord and his Blessed Mother for giving me what I needed for this work. Since I judge your feelings by my own, I am sure you will all be pleased when the book is published. It will be a strong and substantial nourishment for your souls as well as for those of all who will come after you, even till the end of time, for I believe your house will endure for the glory of God and for public edification."

The Life of Mother d'Youville, having been printed in France,⁽¹⁾ the Community received the first copy at the begin-

⁽¹⁾ The community paid L 287.55 1/2 for the printing of the Life of Mother d'Youville.

ning of October, 1852. Mother Coutlée hastened to express her gratitude to the author in these terms:

Reverend Father,

I could never tell you what a pleasant surprise, what spontaneous joy we experienced on receiving the book: "The Life of Mother d'Youville." We kissed it with love and respect. Then we read it, or rather, we devoured it, shedding tears of admiration and of gratitude.

How many interesting things there are concerning our dear Mother! It is from there, that we shall draw as from its source, the true spirit of our Institute. May we imitate the virtues of which she gives us such beautiful examples; her humility, her charity, her devotedness toward the poor, her abandonment to Divine Providence, her devotion to the Eternal Father!

Oh, what thanks we should render to Christ and to the author for such a favor! It was not enough that you helped us recover her remains, you also assumed long and laborious efforts, through accurate and meticulous research in order to secure for us the advantage of knowing our foundress thoroughly and of facilitating our practice of her virtues. You have omitted nothing which could have rendered her dearer and more precious to our eyes. She must indeed be thanking you in our name! She will certainly draw down upon you, the blessings of the Eternal Father!

In my inability to express sufficient gratitude to you, with the approval of my superiors and my Sisters, I promised to say publicly, after the recitation of the Litany to the Eternal Father, three times "GLORIA PATRI" for your intentions. These prayers are also said by our poor.

Deign, dear Father, to accept this partial payment towards the immense debt which your kindness has caused us to incur.

Please keep as many copies as you may wish to dispose of...

Another voice, coming from Saint Boniface, confirms that our Mothers there, lived like us in the shadow of the cross which figures on the coat of arms of our Institute:

"In April, the break-up caused damage in the low areas", wrote one of the witnesses of the flood disasters. "The water rose until the plains were flooded. People sought higher levels. We gave hospitality to three families. The bishop placed the cathedral and even his residence at the disposal of the people."

Despite the fear which came over everyone, St. Boniface Community continued its regular life so that Sister l'Espérance's profession took place on May 12, the thirtieth anniversary of Bishop Provencher's episcopal consecration. The bishop was forced to use a canoe to come to the convent. He was accompanied by Reverend Father Bermond, O.M.I. The memories of this feast remain unforgettable, for it was difficult to control feelings of fear and anxiety which arose each time roaring waves crashed against the joists. The TE DEUM was nevertheless, sung with sustained intensity.

"In the afternoon, we had to vacate the first floor;" the narrator continues, "the water was coming in from all sides. It continued to rise until May 20, covering the land to a depth of more than five feet. We had more than a foot and a half on the first floor. When the wind set this liquid body in motion, the waves broke against our solid arch with such violence that it was shaken. Our Community room was at one and the same time our assembly room, work room, and store room. We lived on pemican and biscuits which we had to break with a hammer. During the night of May 16 to 17, the wind roared with such great force that, at every minute, we feared we would be submerged. All our poles, and the wood we had worked so hard to gather, were carried away. The angry torrent washed away houses, barnyard buildings etc. The barn of one of our neighbors was so near to us, that we saw on its thatched roof, a flock of fowl cackling away as much at ease as if they had been in a coop. A small house blown along by the wind ran aground on a hill behind our buildings. In the garden and surrounding yards, we navigated by rowboat.

One would think that this state of inconvenience and suspense should have banished merriment... Never, perhaps,

had such free laughter charmed our recreations to such a degree.

On May 19, the water began to recede... By June 1, it had entirely withdrawn... We were able to cook again and to restore order."

Finally, the land began to reappear. The June sun was radiant and brought hope. Bishop Provencher rejoiced at the thought of seeing his co-adjutor again. The canoes of the Company were expected. On the 21st, notice was given that the voyageurs were coming. The old bishop wished to go down to the river's edge to greet the one he was expecting with such loving patience. Disappointment! Bishop Taché was not there. No one had even met him. What had become of him? What anxiety! Like another Tobias the beloved prelate feared the loss of his son in Christ. He repeated his fears over and over again. It was difficult to reassure him.

The Grey Nuns shared his sorrow and prayed with him. The trial, however, was not to last many days. On the 27th, cheering heard outside gave Bishop Provencher a thrill. Without a doubt, it was his co-adjutor who was arriving! He opened his arms and clasped him to his heart, and then greeted, with no less love, the two missionaries who accompanied him, Fathers Grollier and Lacombe.

The Grey Nuns, received with joy, the one who would be their pastor and father for almost half a century. He blessed them, told them interesting details of his trip, gave them news of the dear Mother House, and then answered all the questions which filial interest inspired.

To Bishop Provencher, the presence of his co-adjutor was delightful, but the Indian missions were longing for their apostle. On June 10, desirous of resuming his apostolic journeys, Bishop Taché knelt before the beloved titular bishop to receive his blessing. The latter gave it to him along with a prophetic word which was soon to be realized: "It is not customary for one bishop to bless another, but since I shall soon die and shall not

see you again, I shall bless you once more here below, while I wait to embrace you in heaven."

With a heart full of emotion, Bishop Provencher went home and the gallant missionaries set out on their journey. Father Grollier, O.M.I., was to go to Athabasca. Father Lacombe stopped at Fort des Prairies and in the night between September 10 — 11, Bishop Taché reached the Fort at Ile à la Crosse. While this was unfolding in the west, in the east a disastrous fire was ravaging the town of Montreal. In 1852, on July 8 at about 9:00 o'clock in the morning, the fire began in the suburb of Saint-Laurent. It could have been brought under control with a few buckets of water but the well at the site of the fire was dry. The publication *LA MINERVE* reports that: "The fire, assisted by a burning sun, scorching heat, a blustering west wind, and a marked drought, extended impetuously from street to street." At three o'clock, the suburb of Saint-Laurent was like a furnace. "As the sun went down that day," said Bishop Bourget,⁽¹⁾ "it plunged into an abyss of sadness." It left within our view, thousands of families homeless, without clothing, food, and shelter. The exhausted citizens longed for a night of rest, but the night was to be more atrocious than the day which had preceded it. The fire broke out again with fury. The site this time was the Quebec suburb.

One can judge of the disaster of the town by the account which follows: More than 1100 homes were destroyed; more than 9000 persons were without shelter. Losses were evaluated at 2,000,000\$. Add to this, the loss in the fire of the previous June 6 which was estimated at 800,000\$, and you will have some idea of the calamity which struck Montreal.

While the cathedral, the two buildings of the bishopric, St. James school, and all the principal buildings were going up in flames, the head of the diocese was on a pastoral visit in Vaudreuil. On the night of July 8, Father Pierre Poulin, pastor of Saint-Hermas, who had just witnessed the fire in the Saint-

(1) Circular of September 29, 1852.

Laurent suburb stopped in Vaudreuil, at the request of Father Truteau, in order to inform His Grace of the ordeal which had befallen his people. The bishop listened calmly to the account of the terrible happening and repeated the words of the holy man, Job: "The Lord gave and Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Jb:21)

Then, he thought about the Refuge of Providence, about the Monastery of the Good Shepherd, about the Maternity Hostel etc... "And my poor?" inquired the worried prelate... "They are safe!" — "Thank you, Lord for saving your poor!" was the prayer of his fatherly heart.

On the very day of the fire, the Sulpician priests and the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu offered gracious hospitality to the priests from the Bishop's residence; but Mother Caron, of Providence, had already received at St. Joseph's, the personnel from the gutted episcopal residence.

On his return from Vaudreuil, Bishop Bourget replied first to the appeals of civic and religious authorities.

On the evening of the eighth, Mother Coullée, whose Community had been spared from the destructive calamity, hastened to send servants and carriages to help the needy. When she could herself make her way through, she left with several companions, to visit these people and bring them supplies and clothing. She even had soup served to them.

The civil authorities, having decided to house the victims temporarily in the "sheds" previously built to shelter the immigrants of the typhus epidemic of 1847, Mother Coullée accepted responsibility for the supervision of two hundred families. The Committee begged her also to manage what would be sent for them, whether in cash or in goods. She realized the efforts such a task would require; nevertheless, she did not hesitate, as this was a question of serving the poor. After having organized and set everything in order, Mother Coullée appointed Sisters to assist these unfortunate victims. One of them was to teach school and help children learn their prayers and catechism. There was

a small chapel, very poor — but neat, where Catholic families assembled every morning to attend Mass.

After the ordeal of the fire, came that of a flood. The water rose so high that these poor people had to get up on their beds and on tables to keep dry. The mayor of the town, informed of this new danger, took measures to place elsewhere these people struck by yet another trial

They were obliged to use canoes in order to get to the conveyances. Mother Coullée placed a large number of handicapped persons at our farm house where our Sisters continued to care for them.

After twelve days, the water withdrew. The “Sheds”, having been cleaned and heated, the families returned, glad to find shelter. The Sisters resumed their service until fall, at which time each family was able to find a lodging.

On September seventeenth, the Company of the Sulpicians deplored the loss of Father Vincent Quiblier, former Superior at the Seminary in Montreal (1831-1846). The Grey Nuns mingled their sympathy, their testimonies of regret and of filial love with the grief of the Sulpicians.

The countless benefits so generously granted by this beloved Father to our Mothers were not forgotten and as a fair token of gratitude, they had a solemn service held in their chapel.

To all, Father Quiblier left the memory of his edifying life. The example of his priestly virtues, and especially of his generous charity. His zeal for the faith and the education of children gave assurance that his memory would be held in constant veneration.

An encyclical letter of His Holiness Pius IX and a message from Bishop Bourget, preserved in the archives, proclaimed 1852 a year of Jubilee. The text of the message is as follows:

“Our principal intention in observing the Jubilee, will be to obtain from God that the privilege of Mary’s Immaculate Conception may soon be solemnly proclaimed through the entire world as a dogma of the Catholic faith, for the glory of the Vir-

gin Mary and the salvation of nations. In our humble opinion, the definition of this consoling truth as an article of faith shall be, for our century which is shrouded in a dark fog, like the evening rainbow which heralds a beautiful day. The Holy Virgin is our Judith. Let us say to her with joy: "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the joy of Israel, you are the honor of your people, because you have been brave in combat and your heart has been strong and generous. You have loved chastity and for that reason you shall be eternally blessed." (Judith IV,II) What a joy for our diocese if it were to contribute something to the honor which, sooner or later, the Church will award to the Glorious Mother of God by crowning her with a new honor, the dogma of her Immaculate Conception! The righteous yearn for, and the Catholic people are in the expectancy of this great and glorious event which will renew the face of the earth.

But it is up to you, Christian women, to increase in fervor as the holy time of the Jubilee approaches, in order to hasten this long-awaited decision... This Virgin of virgins has revealed the glory of womanhood by raising the standard of virginity within the Church. Zeal for the glory of your Mother obliges you to lead an even purer life, and to make even greater sacrifices. It is to facilitate it for you that we allow you to perform the same prescribed exercise in your chapel as those prescribed for public churches. We entreat you, at the same time, to become victims for the salvation of sinners. Let your sighs and groans be heard by the Heart of Mary. Thousands of souls are perishing daily... you cannot remain insensitive to such a calamity."

The jubilee of 1852 was the most remarkable of all those which had been known until then, say the chronicles. It was opened on November 20 by Father Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary, attended by Father Bonnissant, p.s.s. The exercises of this Jubilee lasted a full week. Each morning after Holy Mass, Father Bonnissant made a meditation aloud, and in the evening, there was a sermon followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The personnel displayed a truly edifying eagerness in acquitting themselves of their duties in order to gain the indulgences of the Jubilee. Bishop Bourget closed it by a sermon,

Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and the singing of the TE DEUM.

After such lavishness of heavenly favors, God appeared to hasten the reward of his faithful spouses. He called five to himself in 1853. The first was Sister Ladurantaye. At age 20, she came to knock at the door of our old Mother House. All was to please her in this new abode; first, the regularity which trains life; then the active piety which nurtures it.

The ministry of a genuine Sister of Charity is performed in humility and silence. It is not ostentatious and is unaccompanied by the applause of multitudes. It will shine only on the day of the manifestation of the Son of God. Sister Ladurantaye understood this program and tried to put it into practice.

Well gifted for all sorts of work, she excelled especially at serving. She placed her talent at the service of the poor. She put into it, her whole heart, meticulous care, and entire dedication.

Sister Ladurantaye also possessed a beautiful voice with which she sang God's praises for twenty years.

She spent herself as well, with untiring zeal, caring for small children. "Duty is an act of love," Father Olivaint once said. We know that he signed those words with his blood. By the faithful accomplishment of her daily duties, Sister Ladurantaye kept the flame of her holocaust burning. But the time of her labor declined. Much against her will, illness was to snatch from her hands, the instrument which had not ceased to work. This was the evening sacrifice. Sister was ailing; she had the painful honor of being co-redeemer with the Savior. The degree of her union with the suffering Christ made her say to a companion who was feeling sorry for her pain: "If I were suffering this pain alone, I would sometimes be tempted to despair; but our Lord, who is suffering in me, appeases it and renders it bearable."

Sister Ladurantaye kept these sentiments of faith, patience, and abandonment to the will of God until her last breath which she exhaled piously on March 10, 1853 in the 52nd year of her age and the 31st of religious life.

Let us now admire the ways of Divine Providence in the soul of our young Sister Caroline Kollmyer, who belonged to a very respectable German family from Montreal. Her father, born of another faith, had married a Catholic, granting her full freedom to perform her religious duties; but the children were to be raised as Protestants. Kind and virtuous, Mrs Kollmyer was noted for her attachment to the faith, the practice of Christian virtues, and especially her generous charity toward the needy. Her kind heart was definitely inclined toward helping needy families by distributing to them abundant alms.

Such beautiful examples made an impression on the mind and heart of little Caroline, who, on her mother's lap, had learned to respect adversity. To her examples, the virtuous Mrs. Kollmyer added wise teachings and often showed her fourteen children the happiness one finds in doing a kind act.

Caroline, the youngest child, more attentive than the others to her mother's teaching, wished to turn it to advantage. If beggars came to the door at the Kollmyers, quickly, Caroline went to meet them, asked her mother's permission to give alms, and if they asked for food, she served them herself. It sometimes happened that she would admit them into the living room, chat with them, overwhelm them with courtesy and dismiss them only after she had invited them to come again. Her two older sisters took her up on this and intimated that she was to stop admitting such beggars into their living room. Little Caroline sought her mother's protection. The only correction she received was a smile of approval. The child then resolved to receive the poor and to be more gracious to them than ever while abstaining from admitting them to the living room.

On the corner of a street neighboring the house of her parents, there was a woman peddler who was Caroline's favourite guest. Every day the old woman went to beg for her meal and Caroline served her lovingly. One day, the old lady did not appear at noon. Worried, Caroline went in search of her. Having arrived half way up the street, she saw her seated at the corner, surrounded with wares. Addressing her, she said sweetly, "My

friend, you did not come to eat today?" "No, mademoiselle," replied the old lady, "I cannot leave my baskets and I haven't the strength to carry them elsewhere; besides, there are many passers-by and I don't want to miss any opportunities to sell." "If that is the reason," said Caroline, "give me your place, I shall take care of your baskets and I shall do my best to sell for you." The good woman accepted the invitation and soon, the new peddler was seated among cabbages, carrots, fruit and candies. Her elegant dress, her interesting features soon attracted a large number of customers and her face beamed with joy as her little bag filled with money.

Alas, two priests from the Seminary, who were passing by that way, recognized the child. They stopped at the Kollmyers, who were their friends, and informed them about this. Caroline was sent for immediately. On her arrival at the house, she was severely reprimanded by her sisters who proudly told her that she did not know how to keep her own rank in life, etc... Again, the little girl went to her mother seeking comfort. The mother did not disapprove of her behavior. Pleased, the child continued to go toward the needy, thus preparing the beautiful vocation which she was later to embrace.

Mr. Kollmyer was successful in his dealings. This prosperity seemed to assure his children's future, but a time of tribulation came. His wife became gravely ill... Attended by a Sulpician priest, she prepared piously for death. Mr. Kollmyer was so painfully affected by this loss that he could not find the courage to attend to his affairs. Ease gradually disappeared from this house once so prosperous. A fire, which reduced Mr. Kollmyer's store to ashes, completed his ruin. He then left town.

His eldest daughter rented a small house where she settled with her two sisters. Energetic and skillful, they soon succeeded in securing an honest livelihood. Before long, a wealthy man came forth for the eldest daughter. She accepted and took with her her two younger sisters for whom her husband was a real father.

Caroline, adorned with charm and gifted with beautiful qualities of mind, in turn drew the admiration of sympathetic guests. Her sisters begged her to take advantage of the offers she received, but she disregarded them, despising the vanities of the world.

The young girl had just reached sixteen at the time of the typhus epidemic. She perceived the general consternation. Possessed of an irresistible compassion for the sick, she visited the field hospitals. There, she noted the dedication of the Catholic clergy and the Sisters whose heroic courage she admired.

From that time, the thought of becoming a Sister of Charity haunted her. But how could she fulfill her plan?

The night of November 12, heeding only the interior voice which urged her, she left the house surreptitiously and went to our old Mother House. Mother McMullen, who was called to deal with the young stranger, eyed her inquisitively. Without losing countenance, the young girl said: "I wish to become a Grey Nun and I beg you to admit me into your Community." Astonished, our Mother asked her name. "My name is Caroline Kollmyer." — "Are you related to Mr. Kollmyer of Montreal?" "Yes, Madam, he is my father." "Are you not a Protestant?" "Yes, I am a Protestant." "And you wish to be a Grey Nun? Do you not know that you must first be a Catholic?" "If I must be a Catholic," was Caroline's vivacious retort, "why wouldn't I be? I do wish to be a Grey Nun." Mother McMullen, further astounded at noting the determination of the young lady, understood that there was something supernatural in her firmness. As she did not judge it prudent to send her back home at this late hour; she offered to keep her for the night. The young lady accepted with delight and was led to the ward of the orphan girls where she experienced joy. On the following day, she renewed her request to remain with us. Relatives searching for her, learning that the young lady was at the General Hospital, arrived forthwith to get her. "We did not draw her here," said Mother Superior, "we shall not hold her against her will; it is up to her to decide." Caroline tearfully entreated to be left; her tears and

entreaties were to no avail. She was made to return to her family. At home, she was sad and dreamy. For her, there was no more joy, no more delight. She had only one ambition... to become a Grey Nun. Her relatives tried vainly to distract her, and dispel her melancholy attitude. This will wear off, they thought. The child lost her appetite and sleep; her health became affected. Worried about her, and giving up hope of quenching her resolve, they ended by saying: "Go and join your Grey Nuns!" Caroline left immediately and radiant with joy she came back to our Mother. "Oh, this time," she said, "it is not on my own that I come. I have been sent and I'll remain here forever."

This happened on January 27. From that time, Miss Kollmyer had her place in the ward of the orphan girls. Desirous of becoming a Catholic, she applied her mind to learning the truths of the faith and yearned for baptism. On March 19, 1848 she made her solemn renunciation. The baptismal water flowing over her forehead on the feast of St. Joseph, inspired in her a great devotion toward the protector of virgins. On the following day, she had the joy of being admitted to the novitiate. Her relatives, hearing she was determined to become a Sister, resumed their attempts to have her leave the convent. Her father wrote her a very stern and severe letter. She replied with amazing courage, allowing her pen to spill out her thoughts.

My dear Dad, you reproach me for becoming a Catholic, for wishing to become a Sister; but it is you who have been the first cause. Did you not say to me: Read the Bible, read the Bible? I read it and saw that at the end of the world, Jesus will separate people into two classes. To those on his right, He will say: 'Come you blessed of my Father, I was poor and you helped me.' To those on his left, He will say: 'Go, you cursed, to the eternal fire, for you did not help me, you did not visit me, etc...' Daddy, I do not wish to be cursed by God on that great day; I wish to be on His right. I therefore believe that to work out my salvation, more surely, I must dedicate my life to charity as He requests. With the Protestants, there are no Sisters who take care of the poor, so I had to turn to the Catholics. Besides, you want only one thing for your

Caroline: "that she be happy.". I have never been more so than since I am in this house of charity. The happiness that is experienced here is sweet and uninterrupted. Let me then remain in peace with the Sisters of Charity.

Her relatives, who wanted only her happiness, finally conceded to her unshakable firmness and let her alone.

On March 19, 1850 Sister Kollmyer pronounced her vows with all the fervor of a soul generously faithful to God's action.

After her profession, she was assigned to help the Sister who managed the affairs of the seigniorie. The latter rejoiced at receiving the services of this young Sister who was so well balanced. Always ready to sacrifice her own likings and inclinations, Sister Kollmyer would have accepted any sacrifice in order to be of assistance to others. At the novitiate had she not been seen to suffer silently, undeserved reprimands, rather than utter a word, which in vindicating her, might have denounced the guilty person? Possessing a warm-hearted simplicity, and being exquisitely obliging, she was delighted when she could find an occasion to do a favor. Effusive in character, she laughed readily at recreation, but in times of silence, she was mute and recollected.

The young Sister had just reached the age of 22 when death laid a hold on her. Far from fearing it, Sister Kollmyer, whose thoughts and affections were no longer for earthly things, longed for the moment in which she would be united forever to her Beloved.

As she was approaching the end of her pilgrimage, her confessor informed her that he would administer the sacrament of the sick. She received the news with unspeakable joy, and during the anointing, abundant tears streamed from her eyes. To a companion who asked the cause, she replied: "I found myself immersed in an ocean of blessings and flooded by an extraordinary light; then I saw clearly, God's infinite mercy toward me, the preferential blessings he had lavished on me, the daily benefits he bestowed on me, and all that, despite my unworthiness; so I could not but shed tears of thanksgiving!"

On the eve of her death, while she was experiencing acute pain, a companion told her that soon she would be in heaven. "Yes," she exclaimed vivaciously, "I'm so eager to see my God! After my last breath, I shall cast myself into his fatherly heart and there, I shall rest!" Seeing her filled with such filial trust, a Sister asked if she had any fear of God's judgment. "None whatsoever! despite all the reasons I should have of fearing. I see only mercy in God. If ever I stop to consider him as judge, he immediately reveals himself to me as a loving Father who awaits from me, only love and trust."

April 1, 1853 her dream became a reality. Sister Kollmyer went to the Father of mercy in the twenty-second year of her age and the fifth of her religious life. Her relatives were notified. Seeing her serene countenance they said: "Caroline is truly a heavenly angel. Everything denotes peace and rest!"

According to a pious legend, the Virgin Mary smiles at young nuns and this smile illumines their features; but she gazes more tenderly on the senior nuns whose hearts have preserved the freshness of their love for her Son; who by their prayers have obtained victories for the Church, and, by their ingenious kindness, have won souls for heaven; whose lives have been made beautiful by the works they have accomplished... If such is the case, and why shouldn't it be? The Queen of heaven must have contemplated with great love our beloved Sister Hardy whose life was stamped with the traits which have just been mentioned.

Here are the words in which Mother Rose Coultée broke the news to our Sisters at the Red River: "A third very painful bereavement in our religious family, as it robs us of our beloved oldest member, Sister Hardy! A part of our Community history is disappearing with this "old relic," as we loved to call her. She had known Mothers Lemaire and Beaubien and had profited from their fidelity to the rules and customs. We were so used to seeing her everywhere, setting things straight, warning of faults, that we cannot believe that she is gone.

Our first consideration is in order here: Sister Hardy was a living rule — punctuality personified. Her contemporaries say that she was the first to arrive for every Community exercise, beginning with the rising bell which she rang for thirty years, even to the retiring bell. On the eve of her death, she still tried to fulfill her duty.

Her devotedness knew no respite nor limits as sacristan for twenty-seven years, responsible for the surplices and altar linens of the parish, she wished everything to sparkle with cleanliness. She cultivated flowers to deck the altar. What a quantity of work she could accomplish in a day! Never did she give herself any rest! And since, in the life of a Grey Nun, work is a fruitful part of her ministry, how fruitful must hers have been since it was accompanied by acts of mortification and austerity!

On her path, Sister Hardy also found the cross. This cross, God sends for his unfathomable reason; to some, bodily pain, to others, suffering of the heart and mind; to still others, family trials... Our Sister, knowing that she was in need of humility, — and who does not have such a need? — accepted the trial of her outbursts of temper which provided excellent opportunities for sanctification because her faith knew how to transform these into precious acts of virtue.

To this Sister, who had lived so well, there remained but one thing to do, that is, to die well. But, had this last thing not been prepared by her entire life? She, therefore, had only to add the final touch.

This good servant of the poor understood that the task the Master had given her was accomplished. She pronounced her FIAT generously. Finally the hour came in which the soul, purified by suffering like gold in the crucible, left the body to find rest in a blessed eternity.

Fifty-five years of dedication are summed up in these two pages; but the obscure labor, the inner sacrifices, the secret immolations, which had been the distinctive characteristic of Sister Hardy's life, shall be revealed to us only in eternity.

On the Feast of the Assumption, the Queen of Heaven presented to Jesus, our Sister Marcelline Masse, who died happily at age nineteen.

Since her admission on March 1, 1851, all her actions both as a postulant and as a novice, converged toward a double aim: perfection in ever-increasing love and the care of the poor. Toward her superiors: charming simplicity, remarkable submission; toward her Sisters, sincerity and kindness never found wanting.

There were worries, however, concerning her health. The dear child, nevertheless, accomplished her daily task generously. She placed her entire trust in Mary toward whom she displayed a child-like tenderness.

Our Young Sister had hardly uttered her vows when her health began to inspire more serious fears. After having accomplished a few small occupations, she was forced to admit defeat. Mother Coullée had her admitted to the infirmary. The young Sister offered her body up to suffering, and her soul to sacrifice in order to be "a victim pleasing to God." By a deep interior life, she had provided herself with supernatural strength.

As a reward for her fidelity, the Lord reserved very special favors for her final days. Happy, serene, and smiling, she followed the liturgical prayers piously as the priest administered the sacrament of the sick. She requested the protection of her kind heavenly Mother...

It was August 15. Suddenly, her face beamed, her gaze appeared to follow some comforting vision... She exclaimed: "Oh! It is beautiful! It is beautiful!" and she died in this sentiment of admiration, August 15, 1853.

Another pang tore the heart of our beloved Mother Coullée. In speaking of the love which unites Sisters in a Community, it is sometimes said to be a conventional fraternity. Mother Coullée never accepted this as true.

Eye-witnesses have reported that, when her Sisters were afflicted with illness, this kind Mother would show them the most

touching solicitude, the most motherly tenderness, as she helped to prepare them for a saintly death.

After having witnessed their death, she enjoined the Sisters to pray for them and she visited their grave.

For Mother Coullée, to love was to raise to higher levels. Is this love not the only one which has dignity and loftiness?

Sister Le Pailleur felt its happy influence. However, it was first at the home of her parents, Georges Le Pailleur and Josephine Daignault of Châteauguay, that Denise Clothilde was formed to a Christian and religious life. Her family, so faithful to the beautiful traditions of the past, bore visible signs of God's blessing. It numbered among nephews and nieces, a bishop, Bishop Le Pailleur of Chittagong, an apostolic protonotary, Monsignor G. Le Pailleur, and numerous priests and religious. Reverend Mothers Devoisy of Hôtel-Dieu and Saint-Anne of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, were the sisters of Sister Le Pailleur.

Denise Clothilde received her education at the convent of the Congregation of Notre-Dame in her native parish of Châteauguay. The student, eager to improve herself, was definitely gifted in an intellectual sense. Beside these gifts, she had a pleasant appearance, a jovial disposition, combined with graceful manners and amiability in conversation. Her studies terminated, she yielded to her attraction for amusements and fine attire. She responded to the pleasures of the world. There was a time of struggle; infatuation was short-lived. Having heard a missionary preacher give an impressive description of the false glitter of worldly pleasures and of the true happiness of religious life, she resolved to dedicate herself entirely to God and his poor.

At twenty-one, suppressing the voice of nature, she understood the great honor that was bestowed on her, what an immense favor, what a rare privilege, as it was estimated that the proportion of consecrated souls was one in three thousand. Accordingly, she entered the novitiate on February 5, 1847.

The novitiate, which tends to subdue the inner person in order to assure the triumph of grace, brought a few surprises to our Sister; but the novice worked diligently and ascended courageously toward the altar of profession, with a great desire to belong totally to God. She became totally his on April 2, 1849.

God accepted the sacrifice of one who gave herself joyfully. The newly professed had understood that to give oneself to God, meant to deny oneself, to forget oneself and not to seek any other pleasure than that which is at once, sweet and bitter, a total abandonment to His will. She was to be faithful to these aspirations. Sister Le Pailleur observed the rule scrupulously. Obedience, permissions, silence, poverty, nothing was small in her eyes. One would have guessed that she had the feeling that her life would be short, for she was so eager to take advantage of every opportunity to hoard treasures for heaven. She would often say to her companions: "Let us become saints! Let us become saints!" She applied herself particularly to recollection in order to develop the habit of living in God's presence. To this end, she had even begged one of her companions to remind her of it by certain significant words through the course of recreation, fearful that she was to forget it. All this was done without contention.

She had made it a daily practice to offer to God the actions of all mankind, so that God might turn them to his greater glory.

Her main occupation on holidays and Sundays was to spend much time before the Prisoner of love, in the chapel. Following her fervent conversations with the Lord in the Eucharist, her courage was increased tenfold. With joy, she would offer her services to the Sister sacristan, in order to be closer to the One she loved!

Our young Sister was going about, fervent and faithful to all her duties, when God, undoubtedly satisfied with her good desires and generous sacrifices, stopped her in the course of the journey. Her strength began to decline, and pulmonary tuberculosis obliged her to go to the infirmary.

Henceforth, the dear young patient continually renewed the offer of herself to God as a victim of love, in union with the sacrifice of the cross, happy at being gradually consumed by God for his glory.

Her sojourn in this "vestibule of heaven" seems to be appropriately described by the words of the author of the Imitation of Christ: "If you carry the cross willingly, it will carry you and bring you to your desired end, namely, that place where there will be an end of suffering." There was never a complaint, never any impatience, never the least desire expressed; at all times, prayer, a pleasant smile, a grateful 'thank you' were on Sister Le Pailleur's lips. She spoke of death with a humble but pious trust. "The highest degree of holiness to which a person can rise," says St. Thomas, "is to desire to see God through death." Such was the incessant yearning of this person being purified by suffering.

The days went by... A few more weeks of abandonment to the divine will, and she would die peacefully at age 27, on September 27, 1853, fortified by the last rites.

Our chapel was often the scene of the impressive ceremony of an ordination. Bishop Bourget seemed to have adopted it in order to confer the priesthood on future apostles of the Gospel.

On May 21 1853, the touching celebration embodied another joy: one of ours, Mr. Olivier Forget, was honored with the priesthood.

The young man, feeling attracted to the clerical state, and being unable to fulfill his plan, decided to work as an orderly at our General Hospital. The ward Sister who received him began by giving him the care which his health required. Gradually, his health improved. He performed his duties with patience, kindness and tact which won him the affection of the poor and sick, and drew the attention of the superiors. Mother Coullée, knowing of his aspirations to the priesthood, sent him to college to pursue his studies. She had but to rejoice over this. Never had a student been more respectful toward his teachers, more

devoted to his confrères. His example and his words had a remarkable influence. Gifted with rectitude of mind, a sound judgment, and virtue beyond reproof, Olivier was able to pursue his studies, even though his talent was mediocre.

During his last year of theology, the young cleric was harassed by a persistent cough and his strength decreased considerably... The doctor whom he consulted gave little hope. "Consumption is rapidly making its way," he said. "The young man so greatly desired to be a priest, to hold in his consecrated hands the thrice Holy Victim, that he deserved his reward," thought Bishop Bourget; and he ordained him on May 21, 1853. While His Grace administered the sacred rites, the new priest experienced such intense, ardent, and sweet emotion that he was unable to control his tears. On the following day, it was with the same joy that he offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

He was equally happy to give the Community a proof of his gratitude. The Community, following the example of its foundress, was grateful to God for the joy which this priestly vocation gave as one of the more tangible of God's blessings and it addressed fervent prayers that ministers of God would be numerous among the youth entrusted to them. The Sisters welcomed the new priest, reserved a room for him, and placed a nurse at his service. "Now that God has given me all He has," Father Forget appeared to say, "I cannot, in return, give him anything other than my life..."

From then on, he forgot the earth; his soul died to the natural life considering that it was not a death but rather life increased a hundredfold! To the end the dear patient remained abandoned to the Divine Will and he took part in the prayers which were offered for him. Soon, a day came on which, with a radiant smile, the young priest completed, on the altar of suffering, the holocaust of himself to the Sovereign Priest. It was September 19, 1853.

Our Institute was again in a state of thanksgiving on June 3, 1853, the feast of the Sacred Heart, as it was celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Letters patent of Louis XV con-

firming Mother d'Youville and her companions in the administration of the property of the poor.

To commemorate this anniversary, Bishop Larocque, Bishop of Cydonia and co-adjutor of Bishop Bourget, officiated pontifically at the High Mass and at vespers, Father Billaudèle from the Seminary, gave the homily. This celebration, so rich in blessings and memories, ended with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Thus it was, before Jesus in the Sacred Host that the centennial, the year of thanksgiving, closed. Once again, the TE DEUM and the MAGNIFICAT rose heavenward to thank the Eternal Father for all he had done, for the proofs of his special Providence toward our beloved Institute.

Let us go now, to St. Boniface:

The patronal feast of Bishop Provencher, always celebrated on February 15 with great joy, nevertheless, gave the presentiment that this one of 1853, would be the last. The searching expression of the beloved old man seemed to foretell it. The celebration, however, lost nothing of its solemnity.

Without concealing the fact that his strength was diminishing, the Bishop zealously continued to exercise his episcopal functions. On the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, he even celebrated Holy Mass, though he appeared to be in great pain. On May 15, the feast of Pentecost, he was unable to officiate.

To the intense suffering which had tortured him for so long, another was added, that of a failing heart. Fervent prayers rose from every direction to obtain the prolongation of so precious a life. On the nineteenth, the bishop did not appear in the convent chapel to offer the Holy Sacrifice. The Sisters were worried. Sister Lagrave went immediately to the bishop's residence, and following the chaplain, she entered the bishop's room. He was lying unconscious on the floor. On the 24th, the beloved patient's condition caused further alarm. His confessor administered the Sacrament of the Sick. On the following day, he brought him the Holy Viaticum and the bishop generously made

the sacrifice of his life. The pious bishop raised his dying eyes heavenward, and feebly raising his head, he gave his blessing. The Grey Nuns who had cared for him throughout his illness, approached at his request. He blessed them and said: "Do not weep, Sisters, I shall leave you, but God will remain with you." Then, addressing the vicars general, Fathers Thibault and Laflèche, as well as Fathers Vègreville and Bermond, he said: "The Sisters must not be in want of anything unless all the resources of the mission have been exhausted." One can imagine with what filial admiration they received the last will of the dying bishop who had always been the Father and protector of our Community in St. Boniface.

The cruel illness ran its course rapidly with intense pain on the left side, and he felt greatly oppressed; the prelate, nevertheless, welcomed kindly all those who came to visit him, encouraging some and giving good advice to others. Taken up with God as he had been during his life, his features appeared to reflect the serenity of heaven. It was in this trusting peace that he yielded his soul to God on June 7, at 11 o'clock at night.

Bishop Provencher had welcomed his co-adjutor with great relief. He could utter his *NUNC DIMITTIS*. The episcopal see was solidly established on the shores of the distant Red River. The missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, following ever more closely the path of the Pastor, were to carry the light of the faith as far as the North Pole.

Closer to him the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns), worked equally hard to develop a Christian civilization by teaching the children, caring for the sick, and helping the poor.

Only one desire may yet have remained in the heart of the saintly bishop: training of young people by teachers belonging to a religious order. On his passage through Montreal, Bishop Taché had mentioned this project. Bishop Bourget had suggested the Clercs de Saint-Viateur and took it upon himself to obtain a few of these religious men. He did more. Knowing about the state of poverty which existed in St. Boniface, the charitable Bishop of Montreal was inspired to apply to the up-

keep of the Red River schools, the alms received during the recent jubilee.

The Bishop of Montreal invited his people to avert, by good works, the wrath of God which, by the typhus, had struck them in such a terrible fashion in recent years. Wishing to fulfill the conditions set by the Sovereign Pontiff in order to gain the blessings of the jubilee, they took up, on behalf of the Red River, a collection which amounted to 364 louis, to be employed in establishing a school.

The words of Father Billaudèle were once more realized: "Your Father Faillon is always taken up, with motherly tenderness in procuring for you some new delight." Here is another proof... Let us listen to him: "After my first trip to Canada in September 1850, I went to Avignon... Father Fabris, p.s.s. invited me to dine at his residence with his brother-in-law. While we were waiting, he showed me a miraculous statue of Our Lady of Pity, enclosed in a cupboard. In addition, in his parlor there was a painting by Pierre Parrocel representing the Eternal Father. I told him: You have there two objects which are not where they belong. The Eternal Father should be at the Grey Nuns' in Montreal who honor him in a special way, and Our Lady of Pity should be with the Sisters of the Congregation who were established in order to propagate devotion to Mary.

"Such a displacement is impossible," Father Fabris replied; "the painting of the Eternal Father is the only one I have left of a collection of paintings my father had. I must keep it in memory of him; and the statue belongs to the Parish of St. Didier; I would be stoned at Avignon if it left the country. I have refused it to several parishes which had requested it."

Father Faillon did not insist, but the suggestion, tactfully made was to have its effect.

One day, Father Faillon had the consolation of seeing Father Fabris who was arriving for his annual retreat. Having requested the life of a saint, Father Faillon eagerly gave him "The Life of Mother d'Youville." As he returned the book which he had read

with great interest, Father Fabris said: "Do you remember seeing at my home, a painting of the Eternal Father?" — "I do remember, very well." — "If you wish to send it to the good Sisters, it is at your disposal." — "I accept willingly," replied Father Faillon delighted, "and I thank you in advance on their behalf; this will be the first fruit which the Life of Mother d'Youville will have produced, and in making this gift you will contribute to having the Eternal Father honored."

This painting was received at the General Hospital June 8, 1853, with a joy difficult to describe. It was brought to the Novitiate, so that our young members would have the consolation of contemplating in a work of art, the powerful and sacred fatherhood which the Eternal Father reveals to his creatures, but particularly to those who worship him with a special love and trust.

With this shipment, Father Faillon sent the large medallions which adorn the Holy-water fonts at the entrance to the chapel, the assembly room, the dining room, etc. These also bear the likeness of the Eternal Father, in order to stir up the faith, hope, and charity of the Grey Nuns in the practice of the many works which they undertake for the glory of his name.

About August 25, news from the Bishop's residence brought a pleasant surprise to our Institute. Bishop Bourget, whose solicitude for the Grey Nuns was always on the alert, wished to bring Most Rev. Cajetan Bedini, Archbishop of Thebes, apostolic Nuncio to the emperor of Brazil, the civic governor of Bologna during the trouble at the Papal States, currently on mission to the United States, and now visiting Montreal.

The illustrious prelate was expected at our Mother House for the twenty-seventh. Diligent workers hustled about attempting to brighten the austere features of the old Mother House by giving it a joyful appearance. About two o'clock, the rhythmic step of horses gave notice of the distinguished visitor's approach. Soon the carriages were rolling along the church avenue which was decked with fluttering flags... The bells pealed joyously. The gates were opened to allow entrance to His Ex-

cellency, the Nuncio Bedini, their Graces Hughes, Archbishop of New York; Phelan, Bishop of Kingston; Larocque, co-adjutor of Montreal; and Father Billaudèle, Superior at the Seminary.

Organs and harps were set in motion and vibrated with majestic harmony. His Excellency passed through the great nave, bestowing blessings to right and left; then knelt in the sanctuary. During this time, the choir began to sing the *Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*, after which His Excellency and his retinue made their way to the Assembly Room where the Sisters gathered.

As soon as the visitors were seated, His Excellency expressed happiness at finding such numerous and prosperous communities in Canada. He was pleased to be presently amid Sisters dedicated to works of charity. "With you, I praise Divine Providence for giving you ecclesiastical Superiors filled with knowledge and wisdom, such as are the ones who are directing you," added the Nuncio. The pious bishop insisted on the necessity and the obligation each Sister has of working zealously at her sanctification, in order to collaborate to the salvation of others.

Kneeling to receive the blessing of this Prince of the Church, our Mothers gathered this precious manna with touching gratitude and from their grateful souls, expressed hearty thanks.

On leaving the Assembly Room, His Excellency visited our poor and spoke encouragingly. Finding among them an old Italian man, he spoke to him in his own language... This consideration brought tears of joy to his eyes.

Then it was the orphans who were the object of his condescension... A little three-year old, having asked him for a holiday, the prelate granted it and kissed her lovingly.

On his return, he stopped at the chapel again where the Sisters sang the *Laudate*.

The Nuncio expressed his satisfaction concerning our works and his regret at having to leave this haven of charity so soon. The carriages were awaiting the visitors.

On August 31, the Mother House had the joy of seeing His Excellency at the altar, celebrating Mass. The chapel was decked in finery. The singing, accompanied by organ and harp, rehearsed by Father Barbin, p.s.s. was zestful and impeccably harmonious. The prelate addressed the elderly and the children, inciting them to thank God for being under the same roof as the Divine Majesty and exhorting them to take advantage of this to make up for the past and to sanctify the remaining years.

After breakfast, the kind prelate sat in our Mother's office in order to comply with the wish of several Sisters who requested his signature on pictures which they desired as souvenirs. While he responded with fatherly kindness to this mark of trust, the prelate said to our Mother: "I beg you, Reverend Mother, set aright the opinion your Sisters have of me; if they knew me, they would be aware that I am only a poor sinner, worthy of contempt." "Ah! Your Excellency," replied Mother Coullée. "I so share their sentiments, that I would encourage them." This response elicited applause from the clergy present. At Mother's invitation, His Excellency conversed with our Sisters telling them some most charming stories concerning Pope Pius IX.

In requesting prayers for His Holiness, the Nuncio added: "Don't forget to pray also for the stranger who is so happy to be in your midst."

In a voice filled with emotion, His Excellency blessed the Community with these words: "I bless you, dear Sisters of Charity, in time and in eternity."

The Sisters escorted him to the vestibule. In the yard, the elderly and the children assembled along his path. One more blessing and the carriage disappeared from view, but sweet memories were left behind.

Since 1842, public education had developed to an encouraging degree. To the Sisters already mentioned, had been added the Sisters of Saint Anne in 1850, and the Sisters of the Assumption in 1853.

The Community of the Sisters of Saint Anne, dedicated to teaching, originated in Vaudreuil thanks to the zeal of a virtuous teacher, Marie-Ester Sureau-Blondin, and to the support of a saintly prelate, Bishop Ignace Bourget. In 1853, the young Institute in Vaudreuil was transferred to St. Jacques de l'Achigan. Eleven years later, the Mother House was moved to Lachine on the beautiful property of Lord Simpson, former governor of the Hudson Bay Company. When, on January 2, 1890, the foundress, Mother Marie Anne, died piously at Lachine, at eighty-nine, she experienced the joy of seeing her Community enriched by 597 members and solidly established in 43 foundations.

On September 8, 1853, the Congregation of the Assumption was founded at Saint-Grégoire-le-Grand, in the diocese of Trois-Rivières, on the birthday of the Virgin Mary. On August 17, 1856, it took its place among the educators of our country. The founder, Mère de l'Assomption, died at 27, less than five years after founding her Community.

In 1872, the General Council and the novitiate left the birthplace of the Institute and the new house at Nicolet became the Community's Mother House. Nothing would stop its progress. In 1928 the Congregation numbered 1215 Sisters and 90 establishments.

These exclusively Canadian foundation endeavours reveal the religious vitality of our country and its rich depth of ancestral virtues of dedication and zeal for souls. As to the first, it manifests also, as has been said,⁽¹⁾ the apostolic zeal of the wise Bishop Bourget who had understood the needs of his time well enough to endow his diocese with institutions most capable of supporting it through the saintly works of charity and of mercy.

We bring to an end this account of thirty-two years — "1821 — 1853" — One can recognize therein, the consoling development of our works and admire the living and solid faith of our Mothers, their firm trust in the assistance of Divine Providence,

(1) Sur les pas de Marthe et de Marie.

the untiring charity of our Sisters revealed in every page of this book.

Let us keep ever alive their beloved memory, edifying examples, and wise teachings, in order to transmit them to future generations as a heritage which must never be destroyed.

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LOVE SPANS THE CENTURIES, Volume I by Sister Albina Fauteux, S.G.M., depicted the origin and development of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal "Grey Nuns" covering a period of 79 years.

Special emphasis was placed on the life of Marguerite d'Youville, her works of charity and the founding of her Institute.

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Marguerite d'Youville
Mother of Universal Charity