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Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
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Love Spans the Centuries

Volume 3 1853-1877

by

Clémentine Drouin, SGM

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Volume III
1853-1877



Meridian Press

**LOVE SPANS
THE CENTURIES**

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Volume III

1853-1877

Origin and development of the Institute of the
Sisters of Charity of Montreal "Grey Nuns"

translated by Antoinette Bezaire, S.G.M.

Fauteux, Albina

Love Spans the centuries

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SOEURS GRISES, Montréal, 1943

PREFACE

Bishop Racine once said: "Happy the people who keep a lasting memory of the deeds of their ancestors. It will be worthy of esteem and happiness." The happiness referred to was experienced by the chronicler of the General Hospital of Montreal as she gathered facts of the past, fruits of the virtues, dedication and charity of our beloved Mothers Julie Deschamps, Jane Slocombe and Elizabeth Dupuis.

To utter the name of Mother Julie Deschamps is to recall the memory of a beloved and renowned Superior, born it seems, to govern. One cannot praise too highly the activity, the zeal, the moral fortitude, the organizational genius, the perseverance, the love of the poor and the understanding of their needs, as well as so many other gifts inherent in the person of our 8th, 11th and 13th Superior General during the twenty-five years of her administration!

Mother Jane Slocombe, who succeeded Mother Deschamps in 1863, also appears to us as a perfect Sister of Charity, radiant with kindness and exquisite tenderness both for her Sisters and for the needy. The treasures of her heart enriched the resources of her mind. Her union with God demonstrated to the Sisters the nobility of their vocation and indicated the means of succeeding fully in their apostolates. Her charity was lavished on the destitute in whom her faith revealed the face of Christ. "Mother Slocombe", said Father Flavien P. Martineau, p.s.s., "is, without a doubt, the Superior of superior quality. I have never met, in France or elsewhere,

any Sister as well qualified as was your admirable Mother Slocombe."

Mother Elizabeth Dupuis, called upon to replace Mother Jane Slocombe who died in 1872, was a person of prayer. Amid her incessant and engrossing occupations, her will remained closely united to God in order that he may accomplish in her and through her, what would glorify him most. Not only the prescriptions of the holy Rule, but also those of the book of Customs appeared to her to be the expression of the will of God. Mother Elizabeth Dupuis practised what she often said: "Since we wish to become holy, let us welcome the suffering which our Father in heaven sends us."

As we look back over their accomplishments, these women will help us to quicken our journey toward perfection. "Do people not spark each other's enthusiasm and ignite it like a torch?"

"Strength is derived from its roots", said Lacordaire. This dictum will be proven in the solicitude of our Institute, the fraternal assistance of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate to our missionaries in Indian territories, and the devotedness of our beloved Sulpician Fathers. The sons of Father Olier have been, over more than two centuries, our light and our strength. To this day, we remain gratefully attached to them as a branch is attached to the vine.

May all these benefactors accept our indefectible gratitude.

THE GENERAL HOSPITAL

UNDER

MOTHER JULIE HAINAULT-DESCHAMPS

CHAPTER I

1853

Mother Coullée has just completed five years as Superior. Father Dominique Granet, Provincial Superior of the Sulpicians in Montreal, presided at the general election which took place in our Community on October 3, 1853. Mother Julie Deschamps, until then a Councillor, accepted the responsibility of the burden she would carry as Superior General through various terms for a quarter century.

The newly elected Superior notified Father Joseph Carrières, Superior General of the Sulpicians, of her mandate which had been established by the recent chapter.

"By our elections of October 3, Divine Providence has entrusted me with the responsibility of leading a Community which is proud to belong to the Sulpicians. I am, therefore, pleased to offer you my humble respects. The burden of Superiorship which has been placed on me appears all the more overwhelming for I have always been employed at temporal affairs since my novitiate days. Fortunately, Sister McMullen, a former Superior who was reelected assistant,

will help me to carry this great responsibility. Sister Slocombe who, for seven years shared with me the concerns of the bursar, will be a precious help as Mistress of Novices. We shall all three implore the help of your prayers. We desire above all, Reverend Father, to honor the spirit of our former Mothers, which is a spirit of inner piety drawn from the teachings of our beloved Founders, the Sulpicians."

From these few lines, it is easy to conclude that the young Superior, hardly thirty-four years of age, had no illusions. On the other hand, her trust in Mother Elisabeth McMullen was fully justified. The latter had performed the most important functions in the Community, namely those of bursar and Superior General. The entire trust which she received from Mother Deschamps at that time was to continue. Although the roles had been reversed, the experience of the ex-Superior and the initiatives of the new one combined toward the same goals: the sanctification of the Community and the expansion of its works. However, before establishing the fine success of their collaboration, let us trace the genealogy of the Deschamps family preceding the birth of our Mother, grand aunt of His Excellency Bishop E. Alphonse Deschamps, bishop of Thennesis, auxiliary of Montreal and of the deceased Father Alexandre Deschamps, a Sulpician.

The year 1651 had been terrible for Ville-Marie. Watched and pursued by the Iroquois, the colonists lived under constant threat of death and even the bravest declared themselves powerless because of their small numbers in overcoming them. Mr. Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve, Governor of Montreal, embarked for France with the hope of bringing back enough reinforcements to promote his work. As soon as he arrived in Paris, with the help of Mr. de la Dauversière, the Governor launched an appeal to hardy young people trained in the use of arms, having a trade and an irreproachable character. In return, the pledge included transportation of the colonists at the expense of the Company of Montreal

which in addition assured them of five years of lodging, work tools, and a decent wage. God blessed the Governor's initiative. From Picardy, Champagne, Normandy, l'Île-de-France, Touraine, Bourgogne, Maine and Anjou, generous people came forth. "Among these numerous volunteers," wrote Father Michel Faillon, p.s.s. in his *HISTOIRE DE LA COLONIE FRANÇAISE* "was Toussaint Hunault, a native of S. Pierre-des-champs in Normandy." He inherited the name Deschamps from that of his native parish, and his descendants have since been known by that name in Canada. He was committed by a contract between himself and Mr. de la Dauversière at La Flèche on April 18, 1653.

On June 20, Mr. de Maisonneuve set out to sea with a recruitment of 113 men, "all men of courage, capable of defending Montreal." Furthermore, in addition to this unexpected reinforcement, Providence gifted Ville-Marie with a prominent personality who became part of the expedition. This distinguished young woman was Miss Marguerite Bourgeois who later became the Foundress of a Congregation. Arriving in Quebec on September 22, the voyagers however, were able to reach Montreal only at the end of October.

Until then Ville-Marie had been a military post and the Fort, the home of all its occupants. Mr. de Maisonneuve thought the time was appropriate to reaffirm the establishment. To all those who wished to settle there permanently, he offered to remit the amounts previously advanced by the Company of Montreal, and in addition, to concede one acre of land within the enclosure of the future town where they could build a home. His generosity even gratified them with a sum of money to facilitate their establishment.

Toussaint Hunault accepted these advantageous conditions. On January 23, 1654 thirty acres of land within the town were conceded to him along with a grant of \$500.00. This little domain was attractive and promising. Being only twenty-six years of age, the courageous colonist thought of founding a

home here. On November 28 of the same year he married sixteen year old Marie Lorgueil, a young lady from Cognac, France. On the records of Pointe-Aux-Trembles and of Bout-de-l'Île are inscribed the names of Toussaint Huneault's descendants. In Vaudreuil in 1785 the fifth generation will start with the marriage of Joseph Hainault-Deschamps with Angélique Lalonde from the parish at l'Île Perrot.

We are now in the era of the paternal grandparents of our future Superior and Mother. God's blessing was on their twelve children. Several sons would perpetuate their name through Christian marriage and of their three daughters, two would dedicate themselves to the service of God, — Sister Angélique Hainault, one of the most illustrious assistants of our Institute, and Jeanne, a Religious of Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal where the obituary of her Community records this account: "The death of our beloved Sister Jeanne Hainault to whom God has inspired an apostolic zeal of his glory and the salvation of humanity. Her conversation was very spiritual. It was at age thirty-three and in the eleventh year of her religious life that on January 14, 1824 she went to receive the reward she had so well deserved."

Joseph, one of the sons, married Marie Boyer at l'Île Perrot in 1818. She was the daughter of Pierre Boyer and of Joseph Leduc from the parish of Soulanges. They were fourth degree cousins.

On May 19 of the following year (1819), their first child, Marie Julie was baptized by Father Antoine Duranceau, pastor. Lachine always remained dear to Mother Deschamps. In her trips to Châteauguay, she always pointed out her paternal home to the Sisters who accompanied her saying:

"It was there that I was born." Much gratitude flowed into these simple words.

When she was still young, Mr. Deschamps brought his little daughter to her aunt at the General Hospital. The latter paid

special attention to the child and asked her brother if she may prepare the child for her First Communion. In October 1827, little Julie arrived at the Grey Nuns. The hall, the large walls, the numerous children terrified the newcomer. What a sacrifice to be separated from her mother, her little sister, her little brothers! And her tears flowed abundantly, especially at nightfall. Mother Marguerite Lemaire, Superior of the Community, learned of Julie's fretfulness and she came to comfort her before she fell asleep. One night, the Superior was surprised to find the child joyfully open her arms to embrace her. The kind mother understood that her task had been fulfilled. "From now on, she said, I shall not come any more. You will continue being a good girl, won't you?" From this moment Julie resolved to behave well and set herself earnestly to learning her catechism in the hope of making her First Communion soon. This beautiful day came in May 1829. Was it perhaps at this first visit of her God that the young girl heard the call to religious life? Shortly before her death, our beloved Mother confided to one of the Sisters: "It is during the twenty-two months spent with my aunt while living with the orphans that the Lord placed in my heart the attraction for religious life."

After her First Communion, Julie returned to her family. With a better understanding of her duty she tried to be helpful to her loving mother whose health was visibly declining and gradually she was initiated to household duties.

About this time, Mr. Deschamps gave up farming and went to live at Rigaud. His affairs prospered but there were hard trials in store for him. Soon death snatched two of his children, then on April 15, 1833 his wife passed away. These painful separations necessitated others. In order to facilitate the studies of Honoré, his youngest son, Mr. Deschamps placed both children in a respectable family of Montreal close by a convent of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Before leaving her father's house, Julie made a careful inventory of the furniture,

of the linen and of all it contained: "All these things," she told her brother, "will be entrusted to the care of servants... perhaps to a stepmother! I want to know if things will be squandered or preserved just as we left them." Does not our future bursar reveal herself in the gesture of this fourteen year old adolescent?

Admitted to Ecole Notre-Dame des Victoires, Julie studied under the direction of Mother Saint-Bernard, still a novice. This was a remarkable coincidence; both would later be called to govern a large Community. Their first relationship of respect and affection would be followed by those of mutual deference and a friendship that would be all the more profound for being based on religious motives.

On Sundays and feast days, Julie brought Honoré to services at Notre Dame Church and after Vespers both would go to the Grey Nuns to visit their good aunt, Sister Hainault. These regular visits had been noticed by a Senior Sister who one day asked: "Who are these two who come so faithfully each Sunday to visit Sister Assistant?"

On February 3, 1834, Mr. Deschamps took as his second wife, Geneviève Desève, the widow of Nicolas Lenoir dit Rollant. The marriage was blessed at Notre Dame Church in Montreal by Father Claude Fay, p.s.s. pastor of that parish. Julie and Honoré then returned home.

MISS DESCHAMPS AND THE WORLD

When the young lady returned, Lachine enjoyed a certain commercial activity. Trappers from the Canadian Northwest came to trade their furs and to lure colonists by accounts of their exciting adventures. The governors of these far away lands were based there in Lachine. From this same place, goldseekers and apostles of the faith set out for the Northwest. In 1818 Bishop Norbert Provencher, first bishop of the Red River, and Mr. Sévère Dumoulin bade farewell to family and homeland in order to go and evangelize the tribes of the

west. It was also from Lachine that, in 1844, our first missionaries to the Red River had set out to face the same perils because of their love for the people of God.

This sojourn in Lachine was providential for Miss Deschamps. She who would later send to the Northwest a large number of Grey Nun missionaries, needed to taste this atmosphere of devotedness and to witness these scenes of heroic self-sacrificing of which her village was an early model.

At home, she accepted gracefully her new position, was submissive, respectful and deferent toward Mrs. Deschamps who soon appreciated her, loved her not only as her own daughter but as a companion and a friend. She introduced her lovingly into her social circle, lavished attention upon her, sparing nothing to satisfy and even to anticipate her desires. The world also welcomed this young lady who at seventeen was slender, shrewd and kind. With her brown, bright sparkling eyes, her wide, open forehead, her sympathetic and sometimes teasing smile, she was very attractive. Beneath her exhilaration one could recognize a strong, generous and sincere heart. Miss Deschamps would please the world but the world did not attract her. Her Christian convictions did not allow her to be caught up in its snares. We would not suggest however, that her sensitive nature remained indifferent to marks of esteem. A providential incident was required in order to cut her off from purely human inclinations. One day as she was attending a wedding as Maid of Honor, mundane rejoicing suddenly appeared insipid to her. Her memory took her back to the serene joy formerly experienced when she was with the Sisters. Her vocation was confirmed; she also, would dedicate herself to God.

Informed of this decision, her father was delighted; then a few days later he was puzzled when his daughter accepted another wordly invitation. Could she already have given up her plan? Not exactly, but Julie was aware that the sacrifice

would be difficult, and she hesitated. There she was among her friends; the evening promised to be splendid, but amid the joyous conversations, she heard the sound of a bell. The home of her host was near the General Hospital where the bell was calling the Grey Nuns to evening prayer. Each ringing sound seemed to summon the young lady who, this time, promised irrevocably to surrender. A week later, fearing the pain of separation, she left without taking leave of her step-mother and she went directly to our beloved Mother Marguerite Beaubien who admitted her to the novitiate. It was Friday, September 9, 1836.

HER NOVITIATE, PROFESSION AND FIRST EMPLOYMENT

From the very beginning of her religious life, Sister Julie Deschamps understood that one must practice self-abnegation and maintain fervor. She loved all occupations, but the service to the poor appears to have been her preference. With great faith she made their beds and served them at table. She went diligently toward the most handicapped and lavished her attention on them. In the novitiate, she showed interest in all things and provided animation and warmth. Her fiery spirit, her roguish character and her jovial humor welcomed holidays with equal eagerness. Her plans were prepared in advance, and woe to those who were to be her targets! Despite her success, she was tricked more than once but her joviality took this in stride and sometimes she was even allowed to get away with it.

It is a known fact that even the sweetest characters have imperfections. The young postulant would learn spiritual combat from a vigilant Mistress, Mother Michel Archange Thuot. To name Mother Thuot was to set into vibration the most sensitive fibre of Mother Deschamps' heart. She spoke of her with respect and love, admiring in her a model religious. This considerate appreciation was shared by all the novices of this era. The latter seeing their Mistress constantly united to God,

were convinced that she must receive great insights for their direction, and they gave her their entire trust. Endowed with a well-informed piety, she inspired them with a great love for the Liturgy of Advent, Lent, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. These became the theme of her impressive teachings.

The Mother Mistress did not have in mind only the spiritual formation of her novices. For the greatest benefit of the Community, she also wished to perfect their knowledge. Under the guidance of Father Antoine Sattin, p.s.s., then confessor at the Mother House, a regular class had been organized at the novitiate and it soon became evident with what solicitude the devoted priest pursued this initiative. Nothing could better respond to Sister Julie Deschamps' wishes. Her schooling with the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame having ended prematurely, she eagerly took to her books again. The entry of a new postulant by the name of Charlotte Pomminville, who knew English and French well, promoted this enthusiasm. For the zealous novice, it was an opportunity to acquire useful knowledge which she would continue to develop in the future.

Her first year of probation completed, the postulant was eager to don the Holy Habit. (At this time, religious training in our Community comprised one year of postulancy and one year of novitiate.) Satisfied with her good dispositions, Mother Dorothée Trottier de Beaubien granted her request. The vesturing ceremony took place on September 9, 1837 with Father Vincent Quiblier, superior at the Seminary, presiding, and assisted by Father Romain Larré, p.s.s., the Community's confessor.

A second year of novitiate would immediately prepare Sister Julie Deschamps for the taking of her vows. The superiors would witness her fidelity to the obligations she wished to assume. With firm determination she walked in the path of perfection. She experienced how sweet was the yoke of the Lord and light the burden of religious life. Her great ambition

was to resemble Mother Thuot. "I found her so perfect," she would say later, "that I tried to imitate her." As her profession day approached however, a period of uncertainty, a moment of perplexity caused the young candidate to hesitate. Reviewing in her mind the various departments in the house she said to herself: "There are many handicapped persons, poor elderly people and a large number of orphans!... but will that be all? Couldn't we multiply these works and found missions?" Her Mother Mistress smiled as she received this disclosure. "Is that all you are worrying about?" she asked, "then take heart, you shall have missions." She could have added: "You shall open a great many yourself — twenty-five, in fact. You shall extend the Institute beyond Canadian boundaries." Reassured, Sister Julie Deschamps thought only of preparing herself well for her religious profession set for September 10, 1838. Bishop Ignace Bourget would preside at the ceremony and receive her vows.

The newly professed Sister was only nineteen, but her judgment was mature beyond her age. The orphan girls were entrusted to her. Six months later, presuming she had aptitudes for administering finances, she was placed as manager of business affairs under the guidance of Sister Marie-Louise Valade. In the meantime an event was to bring about sooner than expected Mother Thuot's prediction. Father Edmond Crevier, Bishop Bourget's vicar-general and pastor at Saint-Hyacinthe, had decided to establish a Hôtel-Dieu in his young town. Its construction was hardly finished when he offered the administration of it to the Grey Nuns of Montreal. Remaining united to the Mother House by fidelity to the same Constitutions and customs, the founders would nevertheless have to open a novitiate and recruit candidates. Mother d'Youville's daughters could not refuse this work. Four of them accepted to devote themselves to it. They were Sisters Michel-Archange Thuot, Tharsile Guyon, Honorine Pinsonnault and Emilie Jauron. The Sisters were surprised that the young Sister Julie Deschamps did not follow her be-

loved Mistress. It was never proven that she had even expressed the desire to do so.

Four years later (1844) the apostle of the Red River, Bishop Norbert Provencher, concerned about the education of his poor natives also came to request the services of the Grey Nuns. The Council acquiesced to this second request and the prospect of a distant foundation elicited great enthusiasm in the Community. The zealous Sister Julie Deschamps will undoubtedly offer to go, thought her companions, and her wishes will be realized! Such was not to be the case. Her name was not even slipped in with those of the fourteen volunteers. Bound by obedience and by discretion toward her director, Sister Deschamps said nothing about her generous proceedings. She simply increased her kindness and her services to the future missionaries whom she would so dearly have liked to follow. They were very dear companions: Sister Marie-Louise Valade who had been her supervisor the last five years, Sister Eulalie Lagrave, a beloved senior, Sister Gertrude Coullée-Saint-Joseph, a companion of her novitiate and Sister Hedwige Lafrance, not any less loved.

THE BURSAR (1844-1853)

The post of purveyor having become vacant by the departure of Sister Marie-Louise Valade, Sister Julie Deschamps was assigned to the position. At this time the number of Sisters employed as bursar was limited. This person resided at the manor in Châteauguay, along with a companion who assisted her with the bookkeeping. Another Sister replaced her at the Mother House as bursar. Often, the Purveyor had to go to her Superior for advice or to keep in touch with current business.

In all her proceedings, Sister Julie Deschamps attempted to follow in the steps of her predecessors, maintaining order and thrift in all things. As our former Mothers had, she coupled an exquisite courtesy with an obliging simplicity.

Strangers as well as the landlords were always pleased with her friendly welcome. She was particularly respectful toward members of the clergy and ecclesiastical dignitaries. This scrupulous civility extended to the poor whom she treated obligingly and with great kindness. She was lenient but firm toward servants and the latter held her in high regard, ever maintaining a sincere and respectful trust.

The little hamlet was equally the object of her consideration. Each family benefited from her generosity, and all know how she had at heart the maintenance of the catechism class for the children of the vicinity. One day on which the little ones had come to the Manor, Sister Deschamps would not allow them to return until she had served them a lunch. An elderly man who was present, said to her: Sister, I saw Madame d'Youville do what you are doing.

— What are you saying grandpa; that you knew our Mother d'Youville?

— Yes, at the time, I was as one of these children and I too came to the island. I remember well having eaten good bread soaked in milk and also the fruit which the saintly woman gave us.

— Then tell me how tall was Mother d'Youville?

— She was tall; tall as Mother McMullen.

— What color were her eyes?

— Ah well, Sister, I don't know. I remember only that she had a glowing complexion. Her cheeks were ruddy.

Mother Julie Deschamps would always remember this elderly gentleman.

As we can see, traditions of charity were being perpetuated at the Manor. One of the Purveyor's great joys was to send to the residents of the Mother House the best products of the

farm. On important holidays, she would go and prepare a good dinner for them.

In 1844, the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame accepted to open a boarding school which the parish had agreed to build. On this occasion, the Grey Nuns offered \$400.00 and promised in addition to give twenty bushels of wheat per year. This commitment was honored until 1860 at which time both parties annulled it amicably.

The Purveyor did not restrict herself to this contribution. She anticipated the needs of these good Sisters, tactfully sending them what she thought they might need.

Her benevolence toward her Sisters was no less exquisite. Those who shared her work were comfortable with her and were fond of their manager. Mother Jane Slocombe in particular always kept an excellent remembrance of her. They spent long winter evenings together doing needlework and listening to spiritual readings.

The work of purveyor never appeared burdensome to Sister Deschamps. She accepted it with entire freedom of mind. The good she could do in her surroundings comforted her. However, God would require a cruel sacrifice from this generous Sister. On March 11, 1845, her father, Mr. Deschamps, went to Laprairie on business. Having finished his business, he returned although attempts were made to retain him as the day was declining. He boldly went into the night. On the river, the ice gave way and the horse slipped into the depths drawing along the carriage and the driver.

The victim's body was found only on May 4th on the shore of Longue-Pointe. On learning of this tragic death, Sister Deschamps exclaimed: "Oh my God, your holy will be done!" But a torrent of tears flowed from her eyes. What anxiety, what pain she experienced! wondering in what state her father had appeared before God. However, she found the strength to add: "My God, let your infinite justice be accom-

plished on my father's soul." From then on, resignation and trusting peace comforted her pain. On the day the funeral service was held for Mr. Deschamps, Sister Hainault, his blood sister, ex-assistant in our Community, yielded her soul to God. We know that this beloved aunt had protected Sister Deschamps as would have a mother. She was deeply grieved by this double mourning.

In June 1847, Montreal received the Irish immigrants infected with typhus. This period has left heart-rending and unforgettable memories recorded in the second volume of our history. What heroic charity was practised by religious communities and by the citizens of Montreal! Of thirty-seven professed Sisters and eighteen novices who comprised our personnel, twenty-three hastened from the very beginning to care for the plague-stricken victims assembled at Pointe Saint-Charles. Stricken themselves one after another, seven died of the plague. The Sisters of Providence and even those of Hôtel-Dieu then offered their assistance; but even so our Sisters returned to the bedside of the dying and remained there until the end of the epidemic.

Sister Julie Deschamps, then taken up with works of construction, could go to town only on Saturdays but each Sunday she could be found at the field hospital helping Sister Pomminville-Ste-Croix to record admissions, discharges and deaths. Alas! The one she was helping fell victim of her charity and Sister Deschamps was keenly sensitive to this loss. Stricken in turn, she overcame the terrible illness and hastened to return to the Manor in order to welcome the Sisters Mother Elisabeth McMullen would send to convalesce.

This trial over, great works characterized the years which Sister Julie Deschamps would spend at Châteauguay. Among others were extensions of the Mother House, the construction of a bridge for the use of the mill at Châteauguay, etc...

Then because of her talents and her virtue as well as her perfect knowledge of business and her untiring devotedness, she was designated to the upper rank of administration. On August 6, 1847, the Purveyor was called to replace Sister Ann Nobless on the Council of "the twelve administrators." The beloved Sister had died on the 4th of that month while caring for those of her ward who had been stricken with typhus.

CHAPTER II

1853 — 1854

The instrument was ready. Fashioned over a long period, it would perform beautifully in God's hands. One remembers the prediction of Mother Michel-Archange Thuot to her novice in 1838: "You will have some missions." Now was the time for Mother Julie Deschamps to realize it by accepting the administration of St. Joseph's Hospice in Montreal.

Entrusted to a Miss Laferté and her lay co-workers in 1841, this establishment was declining. With great regret, these charitable ladies were about to give it up to the Grey Nuns. But first let us review the history of the foundation.

While visiting the poor one day, Father Jean-Baptiste Gottefrey, p.s.s. found on his path the body of a poor woman. A baby, hardly nineteen months old, was near the deceased playing care-freely in her hair. Moved by this scene, the compassionate Sulpician took the child and the following Sunday from the pulpit of Notre-Dame, he related the fact appealing to the charity of the public. The hearts of mothers were touched. One of them, a Mrs. Leblanc, offered to take the child.

Several days later, this new Vincent de Paul called together Mrs. Leblanc, Mrs. Valois, Mrs. Beaubien and Miss Ritchot, deliberated with them on the means of protecting homeless orphans. Mrs. Olivier Berthelet and Miss Thérèse Berthelet who had already made great sacrifices for the poor wished to be part of the association. At the first meeting held on December 23, 1842, Mrs. Berthelet was elected president.

April 2, 1850, this benefactor of the poor passed away bequeathing four thousand (\$4,000.00) dollars for the construction of a hospice which was to be entrusted to the Sisters of Charity.

In compliance with the wish of his dying spouse on June 15, 1851, Mr. Berthelet began the construction of a large stone building on the "rue du cimetière" today known as rue Cathédrale. Rising on a 374 × 100 foot plot of land, the future hospice measured 100 × 50 feet.

Eager to share in this good work his sister, Miss Thérèse, gave to her brother a considerable part of her patrimony. The women also competed with each other in order to acquire, either by donations or by benefit sales, the resources necessary for the project. However, they soon realized that despite their dedication, the lay directors to whom the work had first been entrusted could not ensure its survival. In mutual accord with the founder, they thought at first of the Grey Nuns, but one of the Administrators and the Directors opposed the plan. The tempest raged. Meanwhile, Mr. Berthelet remained patient. Mr. Narcisse Valois, a friend of the institution, was the visible Providence to the residents during this time of uneasiness and indecision.

Finally, one day Father Pierre-Louis Billaudèle, Superior at the Seminary, asked Mr. Berthelet if he would not agree to replace the lay directors by Grey Nuns. The time of Divine Providence had come.

On December 23, 1853, the founder went himself to offer the institution to Mother Julie Deschamps. He had already drawn up the terms of agreement which his daughter, Mrs. Larocque who had accompanied him, placed on the tomb of our beloved Mother d'Youville. On January 4, St. Joseph's Hospice opened its doors to the Sisters of Charity under the direction of Mother Rose Coullée, ex-Superior General and our Sisters Zoé Beaubien-Normant, Rose Caron-Agnès, Julie Gaudry and Suzanne Versailles.

Father Dominique Granet, Superior of the Sulpicians offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and visited the house before leaving. What destitution in these vast halls! The dormitories were in a pitiable state. Straw mattresses on the floor constituted the bedding for the hundred and eight orphan girls. One could easily imagine what the food was like. Yet, the priests from the Seminary had been supplying bread and wood. The College of Montreal sent the left-overs from their dining room for the children. A sewing room had been opened and used by les Dames de Charité; but this work was far from sufficient to answer to the various needs.

On March 9, 1854, Mother Julie Deschamps wrote to Mother Valade, Superior at the St. Boniface house.

On December 23, anniversary of the death of our beloved Mother d'Youville, Mr. Berthelet came to offer us his St. Joseph Hospice along with the other two houses. The houses are rented and he has reserved their use for eight years. The lot of the hospice measures 374 feet of frontage by 100 feet in depth. It is surrounded by a board fence twelve feet in height. There were one hundred and eight residents in this house that we have taken over. Everyone was half naked and almost without a bed. We had to spend more than \$1,600.00 to provide the essentials for their care. Fortunately, Divine Providence supplied this new outlay by concluding the sale of part of our farm at Pointe-Saint-Charles on December 31, for which we received an instalment of \$1,600.00 cash.

In 1856, Mr. Berthelet endowed the hospice with eight acres of land at Côte Saint-Antoine. This property was valued at \$3,260.00. The Community felt bound to acknowledge these many benefits. Mother Julie Deschamps promised that a Low Mass would be offered each year in perpetuity on May 27, the feast of Saint-Olivier, the founder's patron.

The orphanage benefited by the bounty of many other benefactors: Mrs. Larocque the worthy daughter of the founder, who sacrificed part of her fortune for the project,

Father Benoit Granjon, p.s.s. the first director of the institution, and his successors Fathers Jacques Arraud and Louis Musart who extended their generosity to training the orphans' choir. Father Jean-Baptiste Gottefrey, as we have said, promoted the Association of the Dames de la Charité. Father Léonard Villeneuve, p.s.s. who was known as Father of the poor, was also generous toward our dear children. Finally, Father Victor Rousselot, p.s.s., began his long career of charity at the orphanage on rue Cathédrale.

How could we omit mentioning beloved Bishop Bourget, this saintly prelate who was so fond of our poor! He especially loved the founder of the orphanage and spoke highly of him in all circumstances. It was he who made Mr. Berthelet known in Rome and obtained for him the high honor of Commander of His Holiness, Pius IX. How happy the pious prelate was to see his virtuous friend thus honored by the Holy Father!

Since the establishment of the parish of St. Jacques le Majeur in 1904, the orphanage, having become a recognized school of Home Economics served by the priests of the Archbishopric had been the object of their zeal and solicitude.

Let us now follow the various stages of development of the Institution through the course of its eighty-six years of existence. At first the orphanage admitted orphan girls who were trained in virtuous living and in manual occupations. From the time of their arrival, our Sisters organized a sewing class. The young students followed French classes at the elementary level. From 1864 to 1911, 5,167 children were thus initiated to Christian living and domestic work.

In 1911, the hospice became a School of Home Economics, subsidized by the Provincial Government and affiliated to the University of Montreal. Nine hundred and twenty-three young girls had received their training there when in 1930, civil authorities decided on expropriation. A move became necessary. A new building was constructed on Chemin Côte

Saint-Michel in the parish of Ste-Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, in the district of Villeray. Within a decade, a kindergarten for little boys and girls aged 5 to 12 years was added to the School of Home Economics. Then, in 1940, compelled to surrender the space to the Airforce, the Institut Nazareth, formerly St. Joseph's Hospice, sought shelter for its blind students at Côte Saint-Michel. The Orphanage and school would henceforth be only a memory.

FATHER MICHEL FAILLON, P.S.S. RETURNS TO CANADA

In resuming the course of events, we note that the year 1853 held a special joy for our religious family, that of the return to Canada of Father Michel Faillon, p.s.s. This good priest was coming to complete the canonical visit interrupted by the death of Father Louis de Courson. He was eagerly awaited by the Grey Nuns according to the chronicler of the time who recorded the following:

“On May 27, 1853, about three o'clock in the afternoon, our dear Father Faillon came to see us with Father Victor Roussetot recently arrived from France. The Sisters and the poor formed double rows along the driveway to the chapel to greet him.

The Superior and her assistant presented their respects to the beloved Sulpician. After a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, he went to the Community room where we intoned the “laudate Dominum.” Father Faillon knelt at the shrine of our beloved Foundress with visible emotion. After the singing, he kept us spellbound with one of his pious conferences such as we had appreciated so highly during his first visit; then along with his confrère, he visited the various wards and at the invitation of our Superior, he promised to return on the following day to celebrate Mass. This was another feast for all the personnel, like previous ones when this notable benefactor visited our religious family.”

PAINTING OF THE ETERNAL FATHER

Devotion to the Eternal Father was often the topic of Father Faillon's conferences. During his stay in France he had ordered in Versailles a new painting of the Eternal Father. This was to replace the one in the chapel which our beloved Mother had had painted, and which we wanted to keep in the community room. It reached Montreal on June 8, 1854, was solemnly blessed on the feast of the Blessed Trinity and placed in the chapel where it can still be venerated. Another painting to be hung opposite that of the Eternal Father was ordered from Versailles by Father Faillon. This painting of the Sacred Heart arrived only at the end of January, 1856.

ASIATIC CHOLERA

In the summer of 1854 Asiatic cholera again appeared in our town. Less threatening however than it had been in 1832 and 1849, preventative measures would bring it under control more rapidly. This time again, our Mother would offer the services of our nursing Sisters and she organized day and night care in the homes. The epidemic ceased as early as August.

A CALVARY AT CHÂTEAUGUAY

About the same time, we had the joy of seeing the crucifix which had so long been venerated in Notre-Dame Church, installed on the mound of Châteauguay. Mother d'Youville had prayed before it. It replaced the cross planted there in 1832.

FATHER BONNISSANT, ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIOR

In this year 1854, the feast of St. Louis, patron of Father Norman, was tinged with sadness. Father Dominique Granet who had been the Community's Ecclesiastical Superior for three years, surrendered this responsibility to Father Clair-Mathurin Bonnissant who until then had been our confessor,

while Father Victor Rousselot became our chaplain. Father Granet's dedication, kindness, and paternal solicitude had won everyone's affection and he would be sadly missed.

DEATH OF FATHER CHANIAL, P.S.S.

Five days later the Community would mourn the premature death of Father Chaniel, p.s.s., chaplain of our residents. Resting at Oka, undoubtedly seeking relief of his frequent headaches, he had gone to bathe in the lake when he suffered a massive stroke. He was only 35 years of age. Fr. Chaniel having come from France in 1848 had been named confessor to our poor the following year. In the practice of this ministry he had been admired for his dedication and his great humility. Possessing a certain knowledge of the goldsmith craft, he maintained all the clocks in the house in good order thus saving the money of the poor. When we were considering the printing of "The Life of Mother d'Youville", he offered to Mother Rose Coutlée, Superior, a contribution of forty (\$40.00) dollars saying: "This is all I own."

AUTONOMY OF THE FOUNDATIONS

A painful time would soon follow for our Institute. Five years had elapsed since our first General Chapter had met. It became necessary for Superiors of the various foundations to reconvene. In 1849 they had sought means of solidifying the bonds between the Mother House and the foundations. It had appeared that to ensure uniformity of spirit and of the Rule, a greater support from the Mother House would be in order. Mother Julie Deschamps now hoped that the second Chapter convoked April 17, 1854, would realize these objectives. But in the interval, the second Council of Quebec was held and Bishop Ignace Bourget returned from it convinced that it would be better to abandon the idea of a General Chapter. Furthermore, informed concerning the intent of the Major Superiors of the various foundations, His Grace inti-

mated to Mother Julie Deschamps that any hope of unity would be unrealistic. Only one course was imperative: to allow each foundation its entire autonomy.

Brokenhearted, Mother was compelled to inform Saint-Hyacinthe, St. Boniface, Ottawa and Quebec that the Chapter was cancelled. "...we consider as final your independence from the General Hospital of Montreal", she wrote. This terse declaration must have appeared cruel, but it is possible the poor Mother preferred to bear all the blame rather than to appear lacking in discretion or submission toward Ecclesiastical authority! Nevertheless, she allowed the Sisters full freedom to return to Montreal or to associate themselves definitely to their respective foundations. Sisters Honorine Pinsonnault and Tharsile Guyon returned from Saint-Hyacinthe; Sister Ursule Charlebois from Bytown (Ottawa), Sister Eulalie Perrin and Sister Perpétue Thériault from Quebec and Sister Marie-Anne Pépin from Saint-Boniface.

At such a distance in history it is difficult, not to say impossible to judge all these facts with certainty. The documents of the time state clearly that the autonomy was declared to comply with the wishes of the bishops.

In addition to her deep regrets, Mother Julie Deschamps added the expression of her desire that the bonds of sisterly love would unite the hearts and minds of all the Daughters of Mother d'Youville. This wish materialized. A cordial relationship exists among the Grey Nuns. In 1941⁽¹⁾ Nicolet merged with our Mother House, thus fulfilling the wish of Mother d'Youville. "May the most perfect union reign among you."

FOUNDATION OF A CONVENT AT SAINT-BENOIT

The Convent of Saint-Benoît, in the county of Deux-Montagnes, owes its foundation to the Honorable Jean-Joseph Girouard.

(1) The Community of the Grey Nuns of Nicolet was a detachment from the Hôtel-Dieu of Saint-Hyacinthe. Its foundation dates back to 1886.

In 1816, Mr. Girouard came to live at Saint-Benoît to take up the function of notary. Hardworking and studious, he acquired a reputation of skill and wisdom. He was considered to be one of the best notaries of this time. The chronicles of the period claim his fairness was of superior merit. Suffice it to recall here that Mr. Girouard wore on his sleeve a tiny paper triangle in order to recall God's presence. When he passed before a cross, he would sing the '*O Crux, Ave*' or would at least bow to it respectfully. He attended Mass daily and received Holy Communion often. On communion days, he appeared more joyful and never failed to visit poor families with his wife and to give alms. When he had received Holy Communion at the Convent, he would send breakfast to the Sisters in return for the Divine Food he had received at their house. By his eagerness to oblige them or to serve them in some way, one could identify the persons with whom he had had a difficulty. In view of acquiring the virtue of humility, he would read daily "the twelve steps" described by Saint Benedict.

"What a joy for us to speak of God freely!" he would say to Mrs. Girouard. Alluding to his future foundation he would add, "The world does not understand what we are planning for the glory of God. This important work must not be based on human motives since we are only instruments in its accomplishment. If we should be unfortunate enough to lose the merit of our actions, at least the poor shall benefit from them."

Love of Country is closely linked to love of the Church. Eager to work more actively at Canada's interests, Mr. Girouard embraced a political career. In 1830 he was called to represent, in the House of chambers, his County of Deux-Montagnes. He was still in office when the "Riot of 1837" broke out. The sad consequences of this trouble are well known. Having become one of the main centres of insurrection, the County of Deux-Montagnes suffered most severe

losses. The villages of Saint-Eustache and of Saint-Benoît were set aflame, their churches were bombarded and the property of parishioners was confiscated. In brief, prisons were soon crowded with political detainees.

Mr. Girouard had taken too active a part in these events to escape the consequences. He too was imprisoned. Liberated by the amnesty of 1838, he withdrew from politics, resumed the practice of his profession, rebuilt his fortune in a few years and devoted himself more than ever to good works. Widowed in 1847, he married Miss Emélie Berthelet four years later. The latter was to be a sympathetic helper in his work of charity. It was even the prospect of sharing in some good work that determined Miss Berthelet to be married. Two years later, one evening in January 1853 Mrs. Girouard found her husband beaming with joy as she entered his study. He showed her a sizeable amount of money the government had granted him to compensate for damages incurred in the uprising of 1837. Surprised at all this wealth, Mrs. Girouard asked innocently "What shall we do with this money?" "My dear, don't you want some clothes or furnishings?" "No", replied this woman of faith, so unattracted by worldly goods. "I assure you that I do not wish for anything." Mr. Girouard collected his thoughts, made a few steps, then said: "And your Convent, aren't you thinking about it any more?" — "Has the time indeed come to realize this wish?" Mrs. Girouard asked joyfully. "Precisely, and God has sent me this superfluity only to allow me the pleasure of carrying out my wish before my death; along with you, my dear."

The conversation continued on this highly interesting topic and early the following morning, Mrs. Girouard came to Montreal to present her project to Bishop Ignace Bourget. Always eager to promote the good works of his people, the Bishop of Montreal authorized this one with much enthusiasm. On May 4, 1853 the foundations of the new building were laid. Mr. Girouard thought it prudent to obtain an

early understanding with the Sisters to whom he wished to entrust his institution. Accompanied by his spouse, he came to the General Hospital and spoke to Mother Rose Coutlée, the Superior. She lauded the charitable enterprise of her distinguished guests and she enthusiastically acknowledged her interest in their project, without however, making any immediate commitment.

In the following December, Mrs. Girouard took advantage of a visit to Montréal to visit the Superior of the Grey Nuns in view of discussing with them the arrangements for the furnishing of the house.

She was extremely disappointed to find that the new Superior ignored the previous agreements and appeared not to approve them. Mr. Girouard understandably shared the concern of his worthy spouse. Their trust in Divine Providence was not shaken however. In the beautiful "Life of Mother d'Youville", a book which Mother Deschamps had given Mrs. Girouard, they found touching examples of submission and abandonment to God and their courage was renewed.

In January, 1854, Mr. Ouimet, the contractor, was ready to begin work inside the house. Being a fervent Catholic, he informed Mr. Girouard that he did not usually undertake any important work until he had a High Mass celebrated. He begged the founder to join him in assisting at this Mass. The latter agreed, and wrote to the Superior of the Grey Nuns inviting her to join in these prayers. He informed her of the progress and cordially invited her to come and provide consultation on the interior finishings of this enterprise.

Mother Deschamps replied "that she would willingly join in prayers for the success of his admirable project and that she herself may know God's holy will, but to her great regret, she was not yet prepared to accept the directorship of this establishment in Saint-Benoît since she felt she could not assume such a responsibility."

The couple was dismayed by this reply. The only friend who could offer them any comfort was kind Father Joseph Compte, p.s.s., the purveyor at the Seminary. Mr. Girouard told him of his feelings of disillusionment. The beloved Sulpician saw in this a cross necessary to success. "If human means fail, one can always surely rely on God", he said. These words comforted Mr. Girouard so much that he decided to renew his appeal to Mother Deschamps; but the Superior did not yield, basing her refusal on the fact that the proposed establishment presented no means of subsistence. She alleged further, that as previous experience had proven in the country, the Sisters could not easily earn a living from their labor. How else could she reply? Mr. Girouard insisted no further. In taking leave of her he said a word which deeply touched Mother Deschamps. "What you say is so wise and so prudent, humanly speaking, that if I had anything to reply, I would say it only with the book of your Foundress in hand: 'Always on the verge of being in want of everything, we however do not lack of necessities!'"

In the course of the summer of 1854, Father Joseph Toupin, p.s.s., who was passing through Saint-Benoît, dined at the home of Mr. Girouard. Conversation naturally turned to the Convent and the refusal of the Grey Nuns to accept the direction of this institution. Father Toupin assured his friend of his sympathy and promised to assist him in his proceedings with Mother Deschamps.

On September 11, Father Alfred Toupin, pastor at Saint-Placide, invited Mr. Girouard to accompany him to town. Was this a tactic of his brother Father Joseph Toupin, p.s.s.? The facts which follow allow us to suppose so. Mr. Girouard accepted the invitation without thinking however, of returning to the Grey Nuns. He was awaiting the completion of construction before making one last attempt. Upon a further refusal, he would approach another Community.

Father Joseph Toupin went to meet Mr. Girouard at the home of Mr. Berthelet, brother of Mrs. Girouard. He informed him that the Grey Nuns were now more favorably inclined to accept his offer.

Consequently, on the 13 after Mass at the General Hospital, Mr. Girouard requested an interview with the Superior. Mother Deschamps welcomed him warmly. Together, they discussed matters of common interest. Mr. Girouard had the affair so much at heart that he would neither eat nor drink until the deal was concluded and all was settled. The transfer of title to the property was agreed upon and signed before Mr. Lacombe, Notary for the Seminary. The matter was finally concluded, and the cause could now advance.

Before withdrawing, Mr. Girouard obtained from Mother Deschamps the promise that she would come to Saint-Benoît on the following day to visit the house he had transferred to her; then he wrote to Mrs. Girouard asking her to notify the pastor, Father Groulx, of their visit. The message reached the village at three o'clock, and at four o'clock Mr. Girouard arrived with Mother Deschamps and Mother McMullen, her assistant. The folks of the locality assembled to greet them. About five o'clock the visitors directed their steps toward the Convent, the outside of which was almost completed. Plans for the interior were submitted to the Superior. On the following day, our Mothers dined at the rectory with the pastor, the founder and other persons who became benefactors of the convent. In the afternoon, Doctor Léandre Dumouchel drove the Sisters to Lac des Deux-Montagnes from where they continued their journey toward Montreal.

On September 25, Mother Deschamps sent two trustworthy women to Saint-Benoît. These were: Pélagie Leblanc and Joséphine Chopin.⁽¹⁾

(1) The first dedicated her service to this house for almost a half-century. The second later entered the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul in New York. Her talents and her work won her distinction among the members of her Community.

Mrs. Girouard provided help for these two ladies temporarily in charge of the Convent. The ladies of the village also sent their servants and all rendered kind services.

The founders were thrilled as they filled cupboards with supplies.

While everyone in Saint-Benoît hastened to complete preparations, in Montreal, the Sisters were concerned with selecting the foundresses. The Superior had just named Sisters Alixe Christin and Leblanc-Emery. She was seeking a third when the young Sister Adéline Jacques asked her naively, "Mother, you have not named the third missionary. Is that Sister so very precious?" "Well, you are the one, dear child. It is you I select." And turning to the Sisters said, "She presented herself and I took her."

The departure took place on November 3 of this same year, 1854. Eight carriages sent by Mr. Girouard came to get the Sisters. After loving farewells all went to the chapel for a final prayer.

Mother Deschamps wished to accompany her dear Sisters. She took with her Sister Sauvé in order to give her the pleasure of seeing her elderly father. Our travellers arrived at Saint-Benoît about four o'clock in the afternoon, to the joyous peal of bells from the parish Church and from the boys' school. The welcome at the home of Mr. Girouard was warm. Our Sisters occupied rooms in this house for several days. By common accord the Convent was called "Youville Convent." The founder took the Sisters there so that they could take possession of it. All the doors had been closed and at the entrance, he courteously presented the keys to the Superior.

In Bishop Bourget's absence, Monsignor Joseph Larocque, administrator of the diocese, had come through Oka on the previous day, accompanied by his secretary.

Father Pierre-Louis Billaudèle, Superior of the Seminary, also came the previous day with Fathers Mathurin Bonnissant

and Joseph Toupin, p.s.s. The latter presented a beautiful chalice with its paten in engraved silver.

The pastors whose names follow, came in the morning: Fathers Joseph Désautels, pastor at Rigaud, Vincent Plinguet, from Sainte-Scholastique, Pierre Poulin from Saint-Hermas, Alfred Toupin from Saint-Placide, Campeau, from Saint-Augustin, Frédéric Pelletier, from Saint-Eustache. From Montreal there were also Fathers Dufresne and Rousseau. All were to enhance the official opening by their presence.

On November 9, feast of the Dedication, Bishop Larocque officiated pontifically at the High Mass in the parish Church while Father Billaudèle delivered the sermon. The bishop gave a brief but clear explanation of the ceremony which was to follow, then went to the Convent. Here, while psalms were being sung, he went through all the various rooms bestowing his blessing.

In the afternoon, Doctor Dumouchel had the honor of driving His Grace to Lac des Deux-Montagnes.

On the following day, as early as 5:30 in the morning, Father Bonnissant offered the Holy Sacrifice at the Convent for the Sisters and the poor. At 7:30 Father Billaudèle celebrated for persons from the exterior while the Mayor and Dr. Dumouchel sang hymns. All the gentlemen had breakfast at the Convent. It was during this first meal that Dr. Dumouchel offered his medical services gratuitously.

Finally the little Community settled in their Convent with the poor whom the founder had offered them as first-fruits of their labors. Several days later, Mother Julie Deschamps and Sister Dosithée Sauvé returned to the Mother-House, trusting in the care and dedication of the foundresses.

Fathers Ambroise Groulx and Clément Aubry successively provided services to the Convent. Later, new needs arose giving rise to new initiatives. Divine Providence, always attentive to the requirements of its children, sent a priest with an

apostolic heart to Saint-Benoît in 1861. Father Maxime Tassé understood the inseparable ideals of Charity and Education, and wished this house to become more than ever a centre for learning and Christian living. From that time on, young girls could receive there, not only masterful training but also a first-rate education.

However, after twenty-two years of existence, the Convent was in need of major repairs, and if the work was to expand, larger quarters were required. Various inconveniences also had arisen because of the fact that the house was rather far from the parish Church. Thought was therefore given to constructing a new building on a plot of land which would be closer. When agreed upon by the trustees, Father Tassé donated the land. In addition, he made an outright gift of two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) and appealed to the charity of his parishioners. All agreed to contribute according to their means, and in less than a year, the new Convent was built. On January 1, 1878 it was ready to be blessed and occupied. On January 9, in the presence of numerous clergy and a large number of the faithful, His Grace Bishop Charles-Edouard Fabre presided at the blessing.

A few days later, numerous students came with their teachers. Since then, as a lively source of Christian upbringing, the Youville Convent has given Christian mothers to society, and to the Church, two hundred twenty-five Sisters.

Let us end this historical account with a true story dating back to the time of the foundation. On July 28, 1856, at about five o'clock in the morning while the Sisters were at meditation, an employee came to inform them that a cow and her calf were fastened to the fence around the yard. Sister Marie, Superior, did not wish to interrupt the exercise for this. Immediately afterward she went out with the Sisters and noticed the beast with a poster bearing the following message fastened to its horns: "Given to the Sisters of Youville Convent, Saint-Benoît, July 27." There was a general exclamation!

Who could have been the generous donor of such a gift? How could someone have brought it here without anyone's knowledge? Father Joseph Compte, p.s.s. was suspected. It was in fact he who had entrusted to Mr. Lemaire, the beast taken from the farm belonging to the Seminary, and had instructed him to bring it to the Sisters before daybreak. Alas! The following October, the cow was found dead in the pasture. But two days later, it was replaced by another, bearing the following message: "Expelled from the stable of my Master in the middle of the night, without knowing the reason, and not wishing to stray, since this is against the law, I request a place in the stable of Youville Convent, and promise to be a good milk cow." This time, the gift came from Dr. Dumouchel.

Mr. Jean-Joseph Girouard died on September 18, 1855. His funeral took place four days later. A second service was held on September 23 in the Convent Chapel, and a third on October 4, at the Mother House. The remains of the beloved founder lie in the crypt of the Youville convent where an inscription on white marble preserves the memory of his kindness and generosity.

CHAPTER III

1855 — 1859

The winter of 1855 presented a threat to the poor. Civic authorities were obliged to provide relief and as always, the Seminary took an active interest in this. Food kitchens having been opened, our Sisters from St. Joseph Hospice had charge of one of these distribution centres. The Mother House also opened its doors to the poor who came in large numbers.

Despite this increased burden, Mother Julie Deschamps did not hesitate to have the chapel repaired in anticipation of the Triduum of Thanksgiving for the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. This preparation was both spiritual and material as she wished the Queen of Heaven to be duly honored. On March 12, Bishop Bourget addressed a circular to Religious Communities expressing his faith and his zeal towards Mary Immaculate. It contained a fresh invitation to intensify religious fervor which our Sisters eagerly welcomed.

Father Michel Faillon experienced considerable influence in spreading the knowledge and love of the Virgin Mary. He spoke to us of her part in the plan of Redemption, the advantages of interior life and of filial surrender to Mary. The lively testimonies of his faith and his trust supported his teaching. He distributed profusely medals and pictures depicting Mary's interior life. About this time, he gave enriching conferences to our senior Sisters. Notes on his spiritual counselling edited in 1933, emphasized the spirit which should animate the members of Mother d'Youville's family. This spirit con-

sists essentially in obedience and charity which were so dear to the heart of our Foundress, and which she so earnestly recommended to her Sisters.

Father Faillon added: "Consider this advice as the most important I have ever given you, and as a legacy from one who is devoted to each one of you", closing his remarks with the suggestion that "a family feast be celebrated yearly on the feast of the Presentation of Mary in the Temple."

Our Mothers welcomed this proposal with joy, and for over eighty years, this feast of November 21, preceded by three days of recollection, has been observed in our Institute. As well, the unfailing dedication of the Sulpician Fathers continued to solidify the spiritual attachment of the Grey Nuns whom they considered as their daughters. All our chaplains have been faithful in preparing us for this renewal by pious and valuable conferences.

It was with these dispositions that our Mothers welcomed the beautiful triduum of the Immaculate Conception set for August 13, 14 and 15, 1855 in our Community.

The repairs to the chapel were hardly finished when already it was being decorated for the feast. High above the main altar a rich crown adorned the statue of the Immaculate Virgin, and rays of light issued from its hands. Garlands of greenery fell beneath her feet and were intertwined on the walls amid coats of arms and royal emblems. The sanctuary was encircled by lights, and an abundance of flowers cast a sweet scent about the altar. As reported by our Seniors, these celebrations were splendid indeed.

Amid the joys of the triduum, Mother Deschamps received a visit from Father Auguste Campion, Vicar-General of Cleveland and pastor of Toledo, Ohio, who came to request Sisters for the establishment of a charitable institution in his parish. The Bishop of Cleveland had previously made the same request for his diocese. Following our well-founded

refusal, he had addressed his request to the Ursulines who were dedicated to teaching children. Father Campion, on the contrary, required Sisters of Charity.

Mother Deschamps believed this new request was a manifestation of God's will. Signing the acceptance of this request on September 16, 1855, the General Council informed the Bishop of Cleveland of this by the following letter dated September 19:

Allow me to express to your Grace my deepest gratitude for requesting through Father Campion, your Vicar-General, a contingent of Sisters to work at the Lord's vineyard in Toledo.

If we were not fortunate enough to settle in Cleveland two years ago, according to your Grace's wish, we are indeed happy now, to accept this new request to settle in your diocese where we shall devote ourselves to the works of charity which shall be entrusted to us.

Confident in your protection and that of your Vicar-General, I shall send you four of our Sisters, trusting that their Bishop will be to them both a powerful protector and a kind father.

I beg your blessing on my entire Community, especially for our missionaries in Toledo who will be happy to acknowledge you henceforth as their Pastor and Father.

A week later Bishop Rappe replied in these terms:

I learned through Father Campion, my Vicar-General, that you had consented to his request and promised a group of your Sisters to establish a house of charity in Toledo. I approve his project wholeheartedly and pray for the success of your work in my diocese. I shall do all in my power to endorse your noble efforts. However, I must advise you of the fact that I fear this foundation is premature, considering the numerous projects and the heavy burdens which Catholics of this town have taken on lately. Nevertheless, Father Campion who is aware of the circumstances be-

lieves he can manage. Let us then place our trust in Divine Providence and hope you shall succeed.

Please accept in advance, the expression of my deep gratitude and count on my entire devotedness. I count on your prayers and send my paternal blessing to you and your missionary Sisters.

Our Sisters Henriette Blondin, Thérèse Brady, Mary Jane Hickey and Suzanne Monarque were designated for this mission. The departure took place on October 24, 1855. Under the protection of the Archangel Raphael, Mother Julie Deschamps and the new missionaries travelled by boat as far as Buffalo, N.Y. There, Father Connoly who had accompanied them entrusted the travellers to the care of Father Campion.

Having reached their destination, the kind pastor had nothing to offer them but lodging at the Ursulines. This house, measuring thirty feet in length, had only one storey with an attic and six Sisters were already inhabiting it. Receiving the newcomers was a problem. After several proceedings, the Pastor obtained a recently constructed house from Mr. Wall, a kind Irishman. Our Sisters occupied it on November 15. The settling-in was easy as they had only their trunks to unpack. The latter were used as tables and chairs. Only one stove provided heat for the whole house.

Soon, Father Campion brought in twelve orphan girls. Although they were given a very warm welcome, our Sisters had to resort to the use of their own clothing in order to preserve them from the cold. One evening, one of the little girls wearing a red flannel waistcoat for a dress, brought forth a great roar of laughter and much commotion. It has been recorded that passers-by stopped at the windows "to see what the NUNS were doing."

A young Protestant doctor, Dr. Hazelets confessed later that he himself had spied on the Sisters at first, but having soon verified their joyous dedication, he had developed admiration toward them. Consequently on occasion, he offered

them his services gratuitously. Mr. Coghlin provided them with essential supplies over a long period; Mr. Rowsey gave them a cow; Mrs. Coghlin, Mrs. Rowsey, and Mrs. McBean organized a charity sale for them. This help was insufficient however, and so Mother Julie Deschamps' heart was burdened with sadness and apprehension as she left her daughters to return to Montreal. On November 20, she wrote Mother Marcelle Mallet, Superior of our Sisters in Quebec:

I must tell you about the Toledo mission. This city is much larger than I imagined. It is still very young and already it has a population of 12,000.

In a few years, it will be very commercialized as roads and railways cross it in all directions. Its very long and very straight streets, bordered with trees, offer a charming sight. Our Sisters are well respected in Toledo. The non-Catholics, less fanatical here than in other parts of the United States, live on good terms with Catholics. In harmony with the latter, they rejoiced at the arrival of the Sisters of Charity. From the very beginning they invited the Sisters to visit them as well. You can well imagine that we did not hesitate to respond to their wish and I assure you that the demonstrations of joy in some of the Protestant homes which I myself visited, were far from appearing dubious. We were often invited for tea. In a word, these good people showed us great friendliness. Without delay, our Sisters accompanied by a charitable woman began to visit homes. From their very first excursions they perceived happily that the territory entrusted to their care by the Pastor was indeed an area worthy of the zeal of the Sisters of Charity. On arrival in Toledo, the house destined for the Sisters was not ready for occupation, so we were taken to the Ursulines where we were greeted cordially and where we remained for eleven days. These Sisters, six in number, belong to the Cleveland house, the Episcopal city which is about a hundred leagues from Toledo. I believe the Ursulines are the same everywhere. As for me, I shall never forget the kindness and the love shown us by those in Toledo. The first three came from Boulogne only five years ago. Bishop

Rappe, today Bishop of Cleveland, was the chaplain of this Community in France. On his first voyage, he brought back a group of Ursulines who were truly worthy of their good Bishop's trust. In order to render greater service to the faith they readily adjusted to circumstances...

In February 1856, the City of Toledo was flooded. The Sisters could not cope with providing relief for the victims, and Sister Suzanne Monarque was overcome by fatigue. Montreal was summoned to their assistance, and Mother sent two strong and courageous young missionaries, namely Sister Adèle Bélanger and Sister Elizabeth Sobiensky along with Marie Lizotte, one of our best employees. What a joy it was for the Toledo Sisters to see Sisters from back home!

Divine Providence however, had a new trial in store for the Sisters. The elderly Mrs. Wall inconvenienced by the noisy neighborhood of children, demanded that her husband dismiss his tenants. Though saddened, he yielded to her request. Father Campion was still endeavoring to find a house for the little community when Mr. Frederick Bakewell, a young convert from Protestantism, informed of the situation came to offer a house which would eventually become the property of our Sisters.⁽¹⁾

This house was more spacious and more comfortable. The move was promptly carried out as the furnishings were scanty...a few chairs, mattresses, a stove and trunks. On May 3, 1856, they spent their first night in the Bakewell house. On the following day, the new benefactor came to inquire about the situation, and with the help of Father Campion he proceeded to set up the stove. It was ten o'clock when the Sisters and the orphans had breakfast, and what a breakfast! Since they lived

(1) Mr. Frederick Bakewell, converted to Catholicism by the zeal of Father Campion, eventually became a Sulpician priest. From 1862 until his death on December 12, 1869, he exercised a holy ministry at St. Patrick's Church in Montreal where his dedication is still remembered. It was at the time of admission to the Seminary that he donated his property to the Grey Nuns.

on alms, a little bread was all they had that morning. However, after this change of dwelling, they were more abundantly supplied. The Lord also sent them one of the first consolations of their apostolate. Having taken in a sick and needy person who had long neglected her religious duties, they experienced the joy of caring for her and preparing her for a happy death.

While our Sisters were rejoicing in the prospect of being able to be of service in Toledo, there was a rumor that the departure of the Ursulines had been decided. Considering the lack of resources to support two religious houses. Father Campion deemed that the Sisters of Charity could suffice for the moment. They visited the sick and received orphans and in time they could assume teaching. He hoped that Bishop Rappe would accept these good reasons and would succeed in relocating the Ursulines advantageously elsewhere, or would direct them to the Cleveland house. This did not meet with the Bishop's approval. On May 26, 1856, he wrote to Mother Deschamps:.

There has been question of withdrawing or rather discharging the Ursulines of Toledo. The reason is as follows. As I had warned you before your Sisters came to Toledo, it is extremely difficult for our poor Catholic families in this town to support two religious communities.

In conscience I could not approve the proposal of my Vicar-General without breaking rules of justice and honor. On my refusal, Father Campion tendered his resignation which I had to accept. Though he possesses outstanding qualities as a priest, in reality, he is not a business man, a quality indispensable to our new missions.

I am aware that our people of Toledo are quite angry with me over Father Campion's departure, as well as for the double burden I am allowing them to carry by refusing to withdraw our Ursulines. My position in this city has therefore become very difficult.

I am sure your Sisters in Toledo have remained completely apart from all this and they will help me by refusing to accept the position of the Ursulines. It was for this reason that I wrote to them last Saturday.

I have to replace Father Campion by a religious order and you may be assured, Reverend Mother, that I shall do all in my power to compensate our dear people of Toledo for the departure of Father Campion.

I intend to visit Toledo in ten days or so. With God's help, I hope all will turn out for the best.

I need the support of your prayers. Please do not refuse this help to one who is wholeheartedly yours...

Painful as was this event for kind Father Campion, it was nevertheless the means through which Divine Providence led him into full participation in God's divine plan. He obtained his admission to the Seminary in Montreal, and exercised a fruitful ministry for many years, especially at St. Patrick's parish where the Irish people still keep a grateful remembrance of him.

As Bishop Rappe had informed Mother Deschamps, he went to Toledo. From there he wrote on June 12, 1856:

I have been in Toledo for several days and from here, I reply to your letter of June 3. I thank you most sincerely, Reverend Mother, for assuring me of your wise and prudent concurrence with my views. I trust that your Sisters in Toledo will respond to your motherly advice. I hope that with some sacrifice on the part of both budding Communities all will be well. I have entrusted your Sisters to Father Evrard, a wise and pious priest who is active and gifted with a special talent for business. In addition, he has a perfect knowledge of three languages and a fifteen-year experience in ministry. He will be dedicated to both young Communities.

The sacrifice required to consolidate your establishment in Toledo would be to obtain for your dear Community, quarters suitable for the work it intends to pursue. Your Sis-

ters will not be able to do this without your assistance. The city will help the construction of the building for your work, that is, an orphanage and quarters for the Sisters destined for this work, as well as for the care of the sick in the homes. As for a hospital, I do not deem it prudent to consider this for the present. I have some hope that the city might entrust to them the house for the poor and the sick, and supply a decent retribution as well as a house furnished for this purpose.

At the end of August, Mother Deschamps resolved to go to Toledo to study the situation on site. She had been told that our young Sister Suzanne Monarque was very ill. Symptoms of tuberculosis alarmed her companions. It was urgent that she return to the Mother House. Sister Adèle Robin-Ste-Croix was designated to replace her. She received this assignment with great faith and left with our Reverend Mother. The travellers reached Toledo in early September. The condition of poverty in the little Community had improved very little. At meals, more fat was served than meat, there seldom was any butter, and the beverage was made from scorched barley.

“Poverty displayed its excesses everywhere.”

Mother Deschamps told the friends of our missionaries about their financial difficulties and many responded to her appeal as this letter to Bishop Rappe testifies:

November 24, 1856

The principal purpose of my trip was to see your Grace in relation to the affairs of our establishment in Toledo. Such circumstances have deprived me of this privilege, I am writing to you today. In view of securing premises where our Sisters could build a larger house, I had taken upon myself, as you already know, the search for a loan which would be sufficient to allow the purchase of a 40 acre farm capable of supplying revenue for the establishment. All my efforts have been unsuccessful because of the widespread scarcity of cash. I see no other means for expansion than to utilize part of the revenue from the bazaar the Sisters are

preparing, along with all their savings in order to buy two or three acres of land adjacent to the acre which Mr. Rowsey had so generously offered them. This land which was part of his farm on "Legrange Street" had previously belonged to Mr. Baker. In the case where this land would be too expensive or less favorably situated, another alternative could be considered. A few citizens of Toledo, who are in comfortable circumstances, have made attractive offers in order to help our Sisters to build. This is what I believe to be the most expedient and would approve this project which I am submitting to you on condition that your Grace approves it as well.

On November 29 the Bishop replied kindly as follows:

I wholeheartedly approve of your plan, but I would advise you to consult Father Evrard to ensure whether the good Sisters of Toledo will still be able to prudently provide for the maintenance of their dear charges after utilizing part of their resources gathered at the 'Fair' and if this measure will be pleasing to the contributors. I believe it will.

Father Evrard must be better informed about these matters than I am. You would do well also to consult him concerning the location which would be the most appropriate for the orphanage.

I would like to reiterate my gratitude and devotion toward your precious colony in Toledo. If, in the past I believed that the time had not come for you to settle in Toledo and that it was not proper to suppress the Ursulines who were established here, I nevertheless had a high esteem for your excellent Community. My regret at this time, is to be unable to help them leave the house they occupy and which is too small; but I promise I shall do all I can for their spiritual welfare.

Mother Deschamps' correspondence shows with what interest she followed the development of the Toledo mission. At a cost of \$2,000.00 a two-acre plot had been bought in a

favorable section of the city with the intention of building a house of charity there for the sick and the orphans.

On May 15, 1857, she wrote to Father Evrard concerning this matter:

Numerous occupations have until now, deprived me of the pleasure of answering your kind letter of April 24. I beg your pardon. I know not how to express all the gratitude I have toward you, so great is your interest for the welfare and development of our establishment in Toledo. I am really embarrassed at the sight of all you are doing for us. I beg God to take care of you.

I was greatly satisfied with the purchase of the land, the conditions and the price, and I believe that, considering our means, we could not do better. My views as to the manner of proceeding with the construction of the building are in perfect harmony with the judicious plan you transmitted to me. It is obvious that great prudence will necessarily have to be exercised in all these operations if we do not wish to become bankrupt. Although I rely on the good will of the kind people who were generous enough to make profitable pledges, I fear greatly that they may not be able to honor them. As you so rightly say: "It is easier to make a promise than to fulfill it." But, in order to raise funds, could we not do in Toledo what is done in our country for poorer Communities, that is to canvass Protestants as well as Catholics in favor of this good work. Here, this method of collection succeeds very well. This visitation of the people, despite its unpleasantness, could be done by the Sisters. If you judge that it would not be proper for our Sisters to solicit, a committee of charitable persons could be organized. It is understood however that if this were to lead the committee to think that because of the services rendered, it would have the right to intervene in the management of the work, it would be better to abandon the plan, for it could create difficulties and perplexities for our Sisters who depend entirely on you for the conduct and execution of the work. All this is merely a proposal. You know, better than anyone, what spirit reigns in your area, and so,

you would know better than any other if it is fitting to carry it out.

Sister Blondin will remit to you the land-title as well as the signed papers. I praise the Lord for the good things you say of our Sisters. I am pleased to note that they are trying to put into practice the good advice you are kind enough to give them.

The alms collected in the Diocese of Cleveland and elsewhere, the fruit of their labors and of their savings, allowed our Sisters to begin that very year, 1857, the construction of a building, part of which they could occupy by August 12, 1858; but the whole was completed only in 1861. The cost amounted to \$21,505.00.

From these humble beginnings rose St. Vincent's Hospital and St. Anthony's Orphanage. The blessing of the latter, constructed in 1907, took place on October 27, the fifty-second anniversary of the arrival of the foundresses. The three hundred boys and girls it sheltered at the time received a careful education in a comfortable atmosphere which resembled family life as closely as possible.

As for the hospital, it has undergone several extensions: two wings blessed by Bishop Horstmann on July 25, 1905, another addition dating to 1916, still another in 1925 and successive improvements have brought the hospital's capacity to 350 beds. The Nurses' Residence blessed on March 18, 1917 by His Grace, Bishop Schrembs has increased in dimension over the years so that it can now accommodate over 200 students.

FATHER FAILLON RECALLED TO FRANCE

On September 21, 1855 Montreal knew that Father Michel-Etienne Faillon was recalled to France. This departure was to sadden all those who had known the venerable Sulpician. At the Seminary, the priests were comforted only by the hope of a possible return. The three Communities under the guardianship of the Sulpicians: Hôtel-Dieu, the Congregation of

Notre Dame and the Grey Nuns in whom he had taken such paternal interest, were grieved by it. A few days after this departure, Father Victor Rousselot, our confessor, wrote to Father Faillon:

How can I tell you of the surprise, the grief and the pain which our Sisters experienced at the news of your departure! The language of faith was required in order to comfort them. I repeated many times that I did not give up hope of your return to Canada. Circumstances could in fact become such that in a year or two it may be judged opportune to send you back among us. Fiat! Fiat!

OUR SISTERS OF ST. HYACINTHE AND OF OTTAWA JOIN THE MISSIONARIES IN ST. BONIFACE

It was in that same year, 1855 that our Sisters in St. Boniface, unable to recruit new subjects, found it necessary to appeal to the other foundations for help. St-Hyacinthe and Ottawa responded generously. Their Institutes were as yet very young. However, they sent eminent Sisters on a loan agreement: Sisters Theresa McDonnell-Ste-Thérèse, Ste. Marie, Mary Curran and Justine Dupuis-Fisette. Sisters Ste. Thérèse and Ste. Marie, both from Ottawa travelled by train with Bishop Grandin and three of our Sisters as far as St. Paul, Minnesota. At this point the prairie trail began. Day after day, at the slow pace of the oxen, they travelled while the wooden axles of the Red-River cart creaked and jolted. At night, tents were set up, one could hear the wolves howling, and the mosquitoes were fierce. The saintly Bishop gave generously of spiritual help but he could not ward off the elements, ferocious beasts, nor mischievous insects. At least, knowing what endurance the new missionaries would need, he immediately set the example.

The sacrifices were partly compensated along the way by the natural beauty of the untrodden prairie. In this land of vast horizons, twilights and daybreaks are mostly always magnificent. What our Sisters admired the most were the rose-

covered prairies; prairies as far as the eye could see, all covered with roses caressed by a gentle breeze and the morning sun. What a splendid view beneath an azure sky! Our travellers wended their way through this prairie land. The delicate flowers crushed under the feet of the oxen exuded their fragrances which delighted the missionaries.

Though the road had been long, it came to an end. The missionaries arrived safe and sound in St. Boniface. Dear Sister Marie-Louise Valade opened wide both her arms and her heart. The Grey Nuns of Montreal, of Ottawa and of St. Boniface were united into one family.

The new missionaries revealed themselves to be true Sisters of Charity. Sr. Ste. Thérèse in particular, immediately deserved the qualification of "Woman of Prayer" given to the Sisters by the Natives. She was also called, "The kind Mother of the Poor, God's Healer, or simply, 'our' Sister Doctor." The care given by Sister Ste. Thérèse coupled with kind sympathy extended to the soul as well as to the body of these poor Natives. She could be seen going through the prairies, in rain, snow or wind. Neither distance nor the weather mattered to her. If anyone was in trouble, she went to them, if anyone was sick, she hastened to care for them. Her whole heart was in her work. Never did she refuse to help others. It was no wonder that she was so well loved.

KIDNAPPING OF SISTER STE. THÉRÈSE

In 1858, the unification of the Red River mission with the Mother House of Montreal took place following long preliminaries as we shall see in the course of this chapter. On this occasion, the Community sent other Sisters to help our dear missionaries. Bytown was reclaiming the Sisters so generously sacrificed over three years. Sisters Ste. Marie and Ste. Thérèse, the two missionaries, were therefore recalled. They received orders in 1858, but because of difficulties they could not leave until 1859.

Preparations were being made for the departure. The Indians and the Métis held council and determined not to let their 'Sister doctor' leave. "I shall burn myself alive rather than allow 'our Sister' to leave," said one of them.

The day of departure arrived. A High Mass was celebrated for the success of the voyage and the little caravan set out. Mother Valade accompanied the Sisters to the first stop and spent the night with them in the tent. Did she have a presentiment to be on guard for some dreaded happening surrounding the travellers? At dawn, everyone was up. "Everything is fine" the good Mother observed with satisfaction. By night-fall, the little caravan would undoubtedly reach Pembina on the American border where it would meet Bishop Grandin who had gone ahead on horse-back in the company of Bishop Taché. Reassured, Mother Valade bade farewell to the Sisters and returned home while they continued on their way.

Having arrived at what is today, Morris, the caravan stopped to prepare a meal. The carts and travellers were immediately surrounded by a band of Indians rushing from a nearby forest.

In threatening tones, the chief said to Sister Thérèse, "You are our prisoner. Get into our cart and come with us. We shall not hurt you." In fact, none of these Indians would have dared to harm a Sister. Two of them had even asked a priest from the Bishop's residence "if it would be a sin to touch a Sister." Suspecting their intention, the priest had replied emphatically: "If you touch the Sisters, you will be excommunicated."

Sister Ste. Thérèse who ignored this detail, was chilled with fear and felt she had better obey. While Sister Ste. Marie would continue her travels toward Ottawa, the captive, under heavy guard, would return to the Red River. Miss Annette St. Amant who nicely relates the event in *L'Art d'Etre Heureuse*, concludes thus: "That night, Charity reached its peak. At early dawn, amid cries of joy and frantic acclamations, Sister Ste.

Thérèse, the friend of the poor, returned to her kingdom. Some thirty horsemen, with rifles to their shoulders, escorted the triumphal cart, circling proudly on their horses bedecked with pompons. The bells of the Cathedral burst forth suddenly into joyful peals. They were sounding for a baptism, but everyone believed they were part of the feast."

Finally, the cortege reached the Convent. A volley of artillery burst forth with loud cries of "Hurrah for our Sister doctor!" Exhausted by emotion and by the jolting of the trip, Sister Ste. Thérèse retired after a short visit to the chapel. On the following day, she would be back at her task and for yet more than a half-century, she would continue to comfort and assist the Natives in their distress.⁽¹⁾

A BRANCH ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CRÈCHE AT ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE

While these events were unfolding, Mother Deschamps at the Mother House was attending to the little ones from the Crèche. Because of the lack of space, they had to be transferred to the house adjacent to St. Joseph's Hospice. In early October, Sister Mathilde Thériault installed them there with the help of Angélique Marion and Marie Lagacé, our kind workers. The eighteen month old babies returning from foster-mothers were also received here. In 1858, the Mother House took in some of the handicapped from St. Joseph's and assumed the care of little girls until the age of their First Communion. Sisters Elmire Thibodeau and Marie Louise Bélanger-Casgrain were in charge of this new ward known as "The Preparatory Group."

FATHER DOMINIQUE GRANET, PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

On April 21, 1856, Father Pierre-Louis Billaudèle, the beloved Superior of the Sulpicians, had his dearest wish ful-

(1) Sister Ste. Thérèse died at St. Boniface on November 4, 1917 in the sixty-fourth year of her religious life, at the age of eighty-two.

filled. According to his own expression, he "came down from the cross." The quinquennial elections allowed him to take his place in the Community ranks. Father Dominique Granet, his successor, retained him at the Seminary in order to benefit by his wise counsel and his lengthy experience. Even with a new Superior, no one forgot the dedication and the kindness of the one whom they remembered as a father, the "Grandfather", a term which made him smile.

"You know the news", Father Victor Rousselot jokingly wrote to our Sisters at Saint-Benoît on this occasion. *"The dear Grandfather has resigned and Father Granet, now Superior at the Seminary, is your new grandfather. Grandfather Billaudèle's humility has been admirable. Now that he is no longer the Superior, he is more joyful than ever. He wished to lead a hidden life, a life of recollection. Now he is happy. The last place in the house was what he desired. I wonder if all the Grey Nuns have reached that point!"* (Letter of April 21, 1856)

GIFTS FROM FATHER FAILLON

A few days following this event, Father Bonnissant delivered to Mother Deschamps, a number of copies of the Biography of Father Olier, written by Father Faillon. Having seemingly left a part of his heart in Canada, the author gave us numerous signs of his friendship. In the month of January, 1856, the Community had also received from him a painting of the Sacred Heart which is still seen today to the right in the nave of our chapel.

It pictures Father Normant exhorting Mother d'Youville, her Sisters and the poor to venerate the Sacred Heart, a devotion then little known in Canada. This painting was blessed by Father Billaudèle on Easter Sunday which that year, occurred on March 22.

On September 8 of the same year we received eight more paintings as a gift from Father Faillon, depicting the interior life of the Blessed Virgin. Blessed on October 18, these paint-

ings were distributed among our houses. After addressing deep gratitude to the beloved benefactor, Mother Julie Deschamps received the following charming reply on December 4, 1856:

You thank me for the paintings that you pleased me in accepting. I, on the contrary, thank you for giving me the opportunity of contributing by this humble means to the benefit of your dear Sisters and to the glory of our holy Mother Mary. You say that you get the most generous share of my gifts. What do you mean by that? It is said that Jacob had a weakness for Benjamin. I use this famous example to justify the weakness which you notice in me. To us, is your Community not the youngest of Ville-Marie's Communities? Furthermore my good Grey Nuns show me so much trust, good will, they adopt with so much simplicity and abandonment, all the practices suggested for their advancement, that truly, I believe I would be acting against the will of God if I did not do my best to respond to their holy desires.

You tell me, Reverend Mother, that the Blessed Virgin would not love me any less if I allowed you to pay for the two statues that I am willingly giving you. But are you sure of this? I have my doubts, and so I prefer to take the surer course. These statues belong to me. I ordered them and paid for them myself. I would then be selling them if you paid me. But never could I sell for money, statues of Mary and of Joseph. I would fear to be like the unfaithful disciple. If you really wish me to sell them to you, I shall agree providing it is not for money or anything which has money-value. I shall sell them to you then for five Ave Maria's each, requesting that in addition, each Sister and Novice give me the same, drawing from the treasure of her own heart. All that will undoubtedly be better than a whole bag of money, and in the end, all the real benefit will be mine...

A letter addressed by Mother Deschamps to Father Faillon in December 1856 will bring us up to date on the latest events of the year.

I imagine you will not find me obtrusive if I include with our New Year wishes a few details about our family which God deigns to increase. Since the eleventh of this month, we number eighty-two professed Sisters, eight novices and ten Postulants. I am sending you the list of our names, so that you may know who has made profession since you left Montreal.

Our wards are crowded with the handicapped, the elderly and the orphans. Despite this, we could not refuse a new work proposed to us by Father Superior from the Seminary, that of taking in Irish maid servants who often have no place to go and are in danger of perdition. At the present time, we are preparing to receive them. I assure you Father, that it is only by restraining ourselves in every way that we can assume this new responsibility.

But if, at the cost of our little sacrifices, we had the joy of contributing to the salvation of souls, we would be amply rewarded. I dare to request your prayers for the success of this work.

I do not remember if I spoke to you about the mill we had to build at Châteauguay, only eighteen acres away from the old one, in order to preserve our right on the water power which would have been taken away from us by a few individuals as the law of December 1854 allows. The cost of this new mill will not amount to less than 7,500 louis and will not give us any greater advantage than the old one which was sufficient for milling the grain of the seignior. I do not believe that what we will receive will reimburse more than half of this cost. The remainder will be a loss for the poor unless the Blessed Virgin, to whom we have entrusted the matter, comes to our help by inspiring a greater generosity on the part of the members of Parliament. The mill was blessed December 14 under the patronage of Mary Immaculate.

Tomorrow, we shall sign the bill of sale on the lot we had on rue Youville. The price of sale is 5,000 louis in cash. The remainder will be paid as rent. Father Comte believes that this land, which is less than an acre in area, has brought in

a good price. We are thinking of applying this amount to the purchase of land adjacent to that which we received as a donation from Mr. Berthelet on last July 16 in order to help St. Joseph's Hospice. We are beginning negotiations today.

Last week, I received a letter from our Sisters in Toledo. God is blessing their work. People continue to be generous toward them. On December 25, they received \$1,400.00 from a bazaar that had been held for them. This amount is more than sufficient to feed the forty orphans they are caring for. I shall not tell you about the shelters. Our Sisters will write to you. Our Father Rousselot is holding up very well, walking daily from the Seminary to here in good or bad weather. He does penance for us all!

FATHER FAILLON'S RETURN TO CANADA

Meanwhile, many hoped that Father Faillon would one day return to Canada. Father Victor Rousselot wrote to him about this on September 29, 1856.

I have just come from the General Hospital where I had gone to celebrate your feast. Everyone, the Sisters, the poor and myself prayed for you. Hereafter, the feast of St. Michel will be a Communion day for the Sisters in your memory. On this day, everyone will beg the Lord to reward you for all your kindness to us. Among other things, we wish you a slight eye ailment, such as would not harm you at all, but which would inspire Father Carrière to send you back to Canada for a third time. How happy we would be to have you. As for you, what joy you would experience at seeing the major Seminary, the construction of which is almost completed, or the chapel of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, or especially the renewal that is taking place daily in the Community! Let us trust in Divine Providence and have faith that we shall see you again.

Father Faillon's return to his native land did not appear to have been favorable to his health. It weakened to the point that he could no longer continue his work. His Superiors real-

ized then how salutary the Canadian climate had been to him. Fr. Carrière hesitated however, to allow once more the departure of the confrère whose presence had been so useful to him. The desire to preserve his health prevailed nevertheless, and a third trip was decided upon. On November 3, 1857, the beloved priest was greeted on Canadian soil.

Generous as always, he could not return to the Grey Nuns without causing them some pleasant surprise. A six foot statue of St. Joseph had preceded him in our midst. Blessed by himself on the 11th of the same month, it was installed in the lateral chapel built at the expense of Father Rousselot and facing that of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows.

SANDWICH, AMHERSTBURG AND WINDSOR

At this same period, Bishop Pinsonnault of London requested Grey Nuns of Montreal to replace in Sandwich the Sisters of the Sacred-Heart whose boarding school he wished to transfer to his Episcopal city. While attending to the poor, the Sisters of Charity could teach at the elementary level, the Bishop thought. After due deliberations, our General Council accepted this foundation, designating as foundresses Sisters Honorine Pinsonnault, Eulalie Perrin, Delphine Guenette, Justine Mulhall and Rose Brown-St. Patrice.

Their departure took place on September 15, 1857 and Mother Julie Deschamps again wished to go and install the little colony herself. They were assigned to the house which our Sister Raizenne had formerly occupied.⁽¹⁾

A vegetable garden and fruit trees beautified the exterior but inside poverty reigned with all its harshness. Without the generosity of the Baby and Casgrain families, our mission-

(1) Sister Raizenne had left the Institute in 1826 to found a religious teaching Community. Before she was able to realize her plan, she died in Sandwich with a reputation of great holiness. (See Vol. 2 *Love Spans the Centuries* Ch. IV)

aries would certainly have lacked essentials. Suppliers refused to allow them credit, except for bread and oatmeal. They received other essential supplies only very rarely. Their distress was such that Father Dudet, Pastor at Amherstburg, had compassion on them. He had them come to his town and gave them the school which the Sisters of St. Joseph had just left. Later however, to respond to Bishop Pinsonnault's request, our Mothers sent a few Sisters for the elementary schools of Sandwich and Windsor.

ST. BONIFACE IS REUNITED TO MONTREAL

May 1857, we shall follow Bishop Taché, the beloved Bishop of the Red River, as he pleads the case of our missionaries who had become autonomous on September 4, 1854.

On the occasion of a trip to Montreal, His Grace spoke to Bishop Ignace Bourget about the impossibility for Sisters to recruit in a country which was hardly civilized. Autonomy would fatally result in extinction! Bishop Bourget readily understood this and encouraged Bishop Taché to negotiate the merger. After having so keenly suffered from this separation, could the Mother House have been unfavorable to a possible return? Mother Julie Deschamps admitted to Bishop Taché that the letter of September 4, 1854 had been suggested (not to say imposed) by Ecclesiastical authorities and she assured him that she would eagerly welcome the day when complete and indissoluble union would be achieved. Thus assured, Bishop Taché requested more Sisters for a mission he was planning in Alberta (Lac Ste. Anne and St. Albert). Mother Deschamps promised them on condition that they would have all the necessary spiritual help and that they would be able to observe the Holy Rule. The Bishop informed her that the missions were poor and the resources uncertain. He could not even promise the essentials.

— We know that the priests will not allow the Sisters to suffer; we ask you only to supply food and clothing replied Mother generously.

- And what if the priests cannot supply their subsistence?
- In that case, our Sisters shall fast along with them, and they shall beg God's help both for the priests and for themselves.

Bishop Taché promised to send the Superior of St. Boniface as early as possible to conclude the merger. As soon as spring came, Mother Marie-Louise Valade set out, and on July 5, 1858, she arrived in Montreal accompanied by a métis woman. One can imagine how warm and affectionate the welcome was in order that the dear Mother would forget the long and painful separation. She had feared for the very existence of her work while, in silence and powerlessness, Montreal had regretted losing its members. There were burning tears over this un hoped-for meeting. On both sides, it was felt that nothing had changed with regard to fraternal love.

Mother Valade's passage in Montreal allowed her to note the progress of the Community and the development of its works. She visited St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's Orphanages and praised the project being planned whereby Father Rousselot would have a shelter of 116 ft. x 40 ft. built on the property of the hospice for the smaller children, where they could play and learn the name of their Creator.

Finally, on September 8, she had the satisfaction of seeing negotiations concluded under the auspices of Mary in her Nativity, negotiations which had led her to Montreal and had resulted in the merger of the Community of St. Boniface with that of the Mother House. A document containing the clauses of this merger was drawn up, and Bishop Bourget, attended by Fathers Bonnissant, Superior and Rousselot, confessor, presided at the assembly which was to sanction this reunion. To the Sisters gathered together he said, "This feast shall be for you the occasion of peace and charity. The document which we have just signed today, is a document of peace which will unite you to your Sisters who were separated, if not in spirit, at least in body, by unfortunate circum-

stances. It will produce in you new powers to secure the glory of God." After having recalled the beauty and the sacrifices of missionary life, the Bishop invited the Sisters to request of Mary in her Nativity, the zeal and charity required to fulfill fruitfully this ministry. "Let us go to Mary's cradle to draw from her apostolic spirit", he said in closing, "It is there that we shall sign this merger. May she bless it and present it to the Eternal Father so that he may ratify it forever."

The Bishop then signed the document and gave the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament during which the TE DEUM was sung with great fervor.

In order to consolidate this cordial agreement, Mother Deschamps granted three Sisters to Mother Valade for St. Boniface. They were Sisters Hedwige Dandurand, Vitaline Royal and Marie-Anne Lassiseraye. According to the promise she had made to Bishop Taché, she designated Sisters Zoé Leblanc-Emery, Adèle Lamy and Marie Jacques-Alphonse as foundresses for the mission of Lac Ste. Anne. Mother Valade prepared the departure, attempting to inform everyone about the zeal and sacrifice which would be required.

Friday, September 17, 1858 was the day for the farewells. The new missionaries appeared happy to have been chosen to make Christ known and loved in the distant land. Before the departure, about seven o'clock, Fathers Bonissant, Superior, and Rousselot, Chaplain, came to the chapel to recite the prayers of the itinerary with the Community assembled. Mother Deschamps went to the station with her courageous Sisters. The young Sister Aglaé Lamy-Caron, sister of Sister Lamy and a few others accompanied her.

The difficult travels through the prairies lasted thirty-three days. They suffered much from the cold and from hunger, Mother Deschamps wrote to the Sisters of Quebec.

In the morning, everything in the tent was frozen, even their blankets. They had travelled two weeks without any

mishaps. One evening before retiring, as they crossed a river one of their oxen went into deep water. His cart was loaded with goods among which was a large box containing Mass vestments, altar supplies, maps, etc. Everything was wet and either ruined or lost.

Their arrival was almost solemn. Bishop Taché had sent to meet them, two Sisters accompanied by a few women and several beautiful four-wheeled carriages. The joyous sound of bells was heard from far away and the whole Red River district was in a mood of rejoicing. At the convent, they met the Sisters and the orphans in ranks along the pathway. After Sisterly accolades, all went to the chapel which had been decorated as for a feast day. After the solemn blessing of the Blessed Sacrament during which the Te Deum was sung, everyone went to the community room to chat just as they had done formerly and were to do hereafter. St. Boniface and Montreal now formed only one and the same Grey Nun family.

CHAPTER IV 1858 — 1861

In 1858, at the general elections, the following were maintained in their respective offices: Our beloved Mothers Julie Deschamps, Superior General, Elisabeth McMullen, Assistant, and Jane Slocombe, Mistress of Novices. A new phase was opening for our Institute. Mother Julie Deschamps entrusted to St. Joseph the care of directing events. On December 22 of that year, on the occasion of a Mass celebrated by Father Faillon in the new chapel dedicated to St. Joseph this kind Mother recommitted all the Community's interests to our heavenly Manager.

DEVOTION TO THE FIVE WOUNDS

In the following year a devotion dear to Bishop Bourget was to be developed among us. The following is the letter which His Grace addressed to us on this matter:

Montreal
January 29, 1859

To Reverend Mother Deschamps, Superior General

My dear daughter, a slight illness which has confined me to my room gives me the opportunity of fulfilling a resolution taken a while ago; that is the sharing among all the Communities of the Montreal Diocese, the rich spiritual treasures which are hidden in the devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and to all the Sacred objects that the Church proposes to our veneration in order to maintain us in salutary devotion.

In order that you may know my thoughts, I must point out to you that such was the Church's intention when it instituted the feasts of Christ's prayer and agony in the Garden of Olives, of the Passion, of the Crowning with Thorns, of the Spear and the Nails, of the Holy Shroud, of the Five Wounds and of the Precious Blood. Thus, all communities are asked to honor in a special cult the Holy Days that remind us of Christ's sufferings.

It seems to me it would be more pleasing to the Lord and more advantageous to these Communities if each celebrated one of these feasts with a more special devotion. For this reason, I propose that of the "Five Wounds" which is celebrated on Friday of the third week of lent.

Consequently, you will deem it a joy in your Community to work with renewed zeal toward acquiring this devotion to the "Five Wounds" of the Savior. You shall prepare yourselves for this feast with still greater care, greater piety and greater solemnity.

In addition, you shall make it a duty to spread this devotion to the "Five Wounds" of Our Lord by word and example and by every means your zeal can inspire.

The office of this feast is so beautiful and so touching that your Community will find therein, an inexhaustible source of piety which will cause you to delight in all the delicious fruit on the tree of the Cross, that according to St. Ignatius, are sorrow, affliction, shame, mourning, lamentation, contrition, tears and interior grief.

You shall beg your Superior or your Director to translate into French this beautiful Office in which the Church, the Holy Bride of Christ, conveys to us its sorrow over the suffering of her Divine spouse, and expresses the most tender and affectionate sentiments the heart can inspire.

You will find therein, topics for beautiful meditations and pious hymns, suitable for nourishing a devotion which, more than ever, shall be that of your Community for time

without end. I bless you with all my heart, as well as all your kind Sisters and I remain ever,

Your devoted servant,
Ignace, Bishop of Montreal

THE HOLY RELICS

In order to inaugurate among us this special devotion, the pious Bishop came to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in our chapel on April 1, 1859. This was followed by the solemn exposition of the relics of Saints. It was the prelude to the touching octave which brings us new graces as it returns each year.

LAJEMMERAIS HOME IN VARENNES

In the spring of this same year Father Joseph Desautels, pastor at Varennes, made known to our Mother General his desire to have daughters of Mother d'Youville in his parish. At first, the Council was bewildered. Varennes had few poor people. Proximity to the city gave the destitute the advantage of being admitted to the Mother House. On the other hand all that could be offered the foundresses was an old hotel called "Saline" because of a nearby mineral spring. The Sisters would have liked to count on the generosity of the parishioners in order to build a more suitable house but the latter were not interested in an establishment of this kind. One reason would however, determine the Grey Nuns to accept this foundation. Varennes was the parish of Marguerite d'Youville. In many other places, her name was honored. Was it not appropriate that her memory be preserved at the place of her birth? "In addition," Mother Deschamps added, "if we went to Varennes only to prevent one mortal sin, wouldn't it be worthwhile?" On June 19, 1859 therefore, the Council decided definitely in favor and on September 30, Mother General went to install the foundresses, namely Mother Rose Coutlée, Sister Célairie Beaudry-Régnier and Sister Denise Pépin-Dufrost.

On the following day, October 1, Bishop Ignace Bourget went to Varennes to inaugurate our work. After celebrating Holy Mass at the parish church, His Grace went to the "Saline" in order to bless a bell which he would name "Marie-Marguerite", and also the house itself, placing the chapel under the patronage of the Eternal Father. Our good Father Bonnissant, p.s.s. accompanied the Bishop to this ceremony after which the women of the village served a banquet for the guests.

Our Sisters then took possession of the house which received the name of Lajemmerais Home in memory of the family Dufrost de Lajemmerais, the ancestors of our beloved Foundress. On the very first day, a handicapped person and two orphans were admitted.

It was Mother Deschamps herself who inaugurated the service to the poor. In fact, during the banquet served to the guests, she took it upon herself to bring these persons a generous share of the menu. The invalid who had a sullen character but a very good appetite, relaxed to the point of exclaiming cheerfully that "never before had she been invited to such a feast."

The Home progressed very slowly during the first twenty-one years, but in 1880 the "Saline" was replaced by a solid four-storey brick structure measuring 84 ft. x 45 ft. which was surmounted by a beautiful steeple. The elderly, the poor children or orphans and the women boarders would experience greater comfort there. This delightful improvement could undoubtedly be attributed to Divine Providence, to the work and the good administration of our Sisters but also to the generosity of Monsignor Joseph Desautels. This good pastor donated to them four acres of land received from the parish. In addition, he bequeathed \$6,000.00 on the sole condition that they would accept to care for Father F.X. Bourbonnais. This was not a problem for our Sisters, for even before being aware of the conditions of the will, the Lajemmerais Home

had offered to this worthy priest an apartment which he had well deserved by past kindnesses. Besides the names of the two benefactors, the chronicles of the mission record: Rev. Joseph-Salomon Théberge, Rev. Filion and Etienne Birs, Dr. François Painchaud, Mr. Azaire Archambault, notary and Misters Brodeur, Decelles, Pariseau, Beauchemin and Létourneau.

A CONVENT AT ST. NORBERT, MANITOBA

Let us go now to our St. Norbert mission in Manitoba. The history of St. Norbert Convent goes back to 1858. To tell it, is to relate the untold difficulties, the painful labor, the distress and the grief of the foundation years at the Red River.

Situated nine miles east of St. Boniface, the parish of St. Norbert is bordered by the Red River and the La-Sale. Because of this, in its early history, it was known as the "La-Sale River Mission."

The first wooden chapel, built in 1856 and measuring 90 ft. x 33 ft. was ministered by a missionary from St. Boniface. In the following year, St. Norbert received its first resident priest, Father Jean-Marie Lestang, O.M.I., who is considered to have been the founder of the parish. From the time of their arrival in 1844, our Sisters collaborated so well in all missionary work that Father Lestang did not hesitate to associate them with his work. Sister Hedwidge Dandurand, recently arrived from Montreal and Sister Flavie Laurent there for eight years, were chosen for the new foundation. Mother Marie-Louise Valade and Sister Mary Curran arrived in St. Norbert on December 29, 1858, accompanied by His Grace Bishop Alexandre Taché.

Numerous parishoners came from a considerable distance in order to meet the caravan and to welcome them by several volleys of artillery. Our Sisters were given to them as a gift. It was thus that the fatherly bishop presented them to the population. Happy to welcome them, these good people

nevertheless could offer them only the great luxury of poverty. The inventory of the original cabin has been preserved.

1 mattress (without bed) 2 blankets, 2 pillows
1 table, 1 bench, 1 stove
1 frying pan, 2 kettles, 2 cups, 2 saucers
6 spoons, 4 old knives and forks

On this solid base of destitution joyfully accepted, Divine Providence was to build the Convent of St. Norbert for it was as teachers that the Grey Nuns had been called.

The difficult period of the early beginnings lasted fifteen years. In 1874, a more suitable house was built. In 1889 a third one modified and renovated the second and in 1904 the present structure was built.⁽¹⁾

During all this time, St. Norbert had Fr. Lestang as pastor, then from 1862-1905, Mgr. Joseph-Noel Ritchot P.D. The latter exercised his zeal in Christian and French training of the children in the parish. It is known what a stubborn struggle the west has had in order to protect language and religion in schools. Mrg. Ritchot was among those who remained firm and overcame all difficulties. Having encouraged our Sisters by every means at his disposal, this dedicated Pastor did not see the complete development of his work. In 1905, God recalled him to himself.

Mgr. Gabriel Cloutier, P.A., Vicar General, succeeded Mgr. Ritchot. Following the example of dedication of his predecessor, he was also a friend of youth. His frequent visits to the classrooms encouraged and stimulated the students, all of whom appreciated this paternal solicitude. After having been pastor for twenty-five years, Mgr. Cloutier passed away in his rectory on April 27, 1930.

(1) Since this date, the Convent was further renovated and extended by the construction of a new wing in 1941.

In 1908, the convent of St. Norbert celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation. The women of the parish organized a celebration at which His Grace Bishop Adélaré Langévin, Archbishop of St. Boniface presided. The presence of their Pastor enhanced the homage of gratitude which all the parishioners wished to render to the unselfish dedication of the Grey Nuns. For many years our Sisters had spent themselves in St. Norbert, without any remuneration other than the alms of a few charitable people.

In the year of its Golden Jubilee, the Convent was elevated to the rank of Manitoba High School. In 1934 it became a Collegiate. Its records preserve the names of 7,063 students of which 395 are graduates. We also are pleased to note that it has trained more than 90 Sisters and a considerable number of teachers (Statistics of 1934).

ST. JOSEPH'S KINDERGARTEN, MONTREAL

While St. Norbert was giving birth to the future Collegiate, a work more humble, but no less useful was being established in Montreal, that of the kindergarten at St. Joseph's Orphanage. Father Victor Rousselot, p.s.s. was not only its founder, but its sole benefactor since he had assumed the entire burden. Begun on July 26, 1858, this building was finished and blessed by Bishop Ignace Bourget on June 2 the following year. On the same day, His Grace also blessed a beautiful statue of St. Joseph which was placed on top of the building.

A visitor of that period accurately described the appearance of the "Patronage", the work of an era which our twentieth century has replaced by kindergartens.

"The beautiful brick building on Bonaventure Street, facing the railway station, has been completed. We dare say it is arranged, furnished and supplied as a model institution. More than two hundred children come here each day. In general, they are children of laborers. They arrive in the morning with their little lunch boxes containing their dinner, and leave in

the evening. The activities have such appeal for them that they are eager to return the next day.

When we entered, we were impressed by the alertness, the contentment, the good behavior and the cleanliness of these little people. The hall in which they were at the time is a large room divided into two by a partition four feet in height. On one side were the little boys, on the other, the small girls. These children were playing and laughing peacefully.

The hall was elegantly painted. At the far end there were a crucifix and two statues; one of the Blessed Virgin and one of St. Joseph. On either side, there were hooks on which to hang coats. Above these, was a small shelf for the lunch boxes. At one end of the hall, there was a washroom cleverly laid out.

The Sister in charge of activities gave a signal with a wooden clapper and immediately all the playing ceased. Militarily, and with imperturbable gravity, they formed a line on each side. On another signal of the clapper, they made an about turn and each child placed both hands on the neighbors shoulders. Then, with the smaller children in the lead, the double file marched to class to the tune of one of our French Canadian songs.

The classroom is another beautiful hall, high and well ventilated. One half of it is set up in tiers and it is most amusing to see the little ones taking their places quickly, without however, breaking ranks, so perfect is the discipline. Facing the tiers, is a long desk used for classes. On this desk the Sister displays wooden letters one after another, while the children name them or rather unanimously call them out enthusiastically as they appear. They do the same for whole sentences. With unbelievable rapidity, they learn to read and especially to pronounce correctly by this method. There is also a huge alphabet on a chart hanging on one of the walls of the hall. Beside each letter is displayed an object whose name begins with it. A small violin is beside the letter V, a small kitten beside the letter K, etc. It is from this chart that the small

children learn quickly and remember perfectly, having always in sight this wonderful thing called the ABC's. Little minds may be held in check for several months by it, but once they have mastered this tool, they rise rapidly to higher levels.

A large world map in bright colors is on the wall opposite this chart. A small boy was sent to the map with a long pointer he could hardly hold, but of which he was very proud. He indicated the five parts of America and the St. Lawrence River. A little four year-old girl was called to the desk and established order in a sentence after the teacher had mixed up the letters. The children counted as they sang, they counted on ball-counters, and as they bought and sold apples and oranges which alas were imaginary. They answered intelligently questions from the Catechism and about the Bible.

By way of physical exercise, the whole class was invited at times, to do a sort of tapping with hands and feet. They participated marvelously in this exercise, which had the advantage of dispelling sleepiness which threatened to overcome them. However, there were also two small cots where one could lay children who fell asleep during the lesson. Two were taken thus in Sister's arms and laid on the cots without being awakened by the noise.

Finally, a large blackboard was brought in with figures of... guess what? In a hundred guesses, you would be off the mark, so we might as well tell you. On this marvellous blackboard, were geometric figures... and why not? Is it more difficult for a child to understand what an angle is? a circle? a perpendicular? than to understand rules of grammar, all more or less arbitrary, and often contradictory, at least in appearance. Let us say immediately, that they did not tackle any of Euclid's propositions, but remained with basic definitions. The children were happy that this was the end and that for the time being, they did not go on to physics and chemistry. The two joyous groups then marched toward the hall singing

"Marlborough s'en va-t-en-guerre". As they went, they cast a sly glance at their little playmates overcome by sleep.

The hall was not the only place where they could play. They remained there only when the weather was bad. Outside, there was a covered porch, and a beautiful yard where trees had just been planted and where most of their recreations were spent. Classes never lasted long at a time. There was a great variety in the activities of the kindergarten.

There is no need to say what appreciation is owed to the priests from the Sulpician Seminary, particularly to Father Rousselot, p.s.s. and to the worthy citizens who not only endowed this Institution, but through it have introduced into the country a new system whose influence will soon be felt in all teaching at the elementary level."

Not content with having utilized his money in order to found the first kindergarten in Montreal, Father Rousselot also wished to train the first teacher. He initiated Sister Julie Gaudry to this method of teaching which was already utilized in France. At first, our Sister's humility made her protest but the Founder shrewdly assured her that "what a French person was able to do, a Canadian will have no problem in doing with flying colors." In fact, the Canadian Grey Nun responded fully to his hopes. Through many years, kindergartens increased in our Institute and it was always easy to find teachers capable of understanding the principle on which they operated and of assuring their success.

DEATH OF SISTER EULALIE LAGRAVE

Perfect joy is a rare thing here below! As she was contemplating the successful beginning of St. Joseph Kindergarten, Mother Deschamps experienced the sting of painful concern. She had received word from St. Boniface that dear Sister Eulalie Lagrave, stricken with paralysis, was drawing near to the end of her career. Let us retrace a few details of this edifying death.

Sisters Zoé Leblanc-Emery, Adèle Lamy, and Marie Jacques-Alphonse had stopped at the Red River on their way to Lac Ste. Anne. To spare the feelings of the dying Sister, she was not told of their departure for the last lap of their journey, but she soon surmised it. "Oh, they are already gone... Poor Sisters, they shall have a beautiful crown in heaven!"

Yes, they had gone. Retained at the dying Sister's bedside, Mother M. Louise Valade had made Sisters Hedwidge Lafrance, M. Anne Lassiseraye and Vitaline Royal responsible for escorting them as far as la Prairie-du-Cheval-Blanc (St. François-Xavier). Bishop Taché had gone also, to ensure that the travellers had all that was required for a "comfortable voyage" which was to last fifty days.

The day after this departure, at approximately four o'clock in the morning, Sister Eulalie Lagrave was dying. Surrounded by the Community, she fixed a loving gaze on her companions. Though her heart was breaking, Mother Valade nevertheless recited the final prayers and whispered the brief prayer: "Jesus, Mary, Joseph, that I may die peacefully in your holy company!" "Peacefully", murmured Sister Lagrave, "How beautiful it is to die peacefully!" She smiled and surrendered her soul to God. It was August 4, 1859. The cofounder of St. Boniface had dedicated to this work fifteen years of heroic sacrifice.

The departure of this laborer of early times created a void which was difficult to fill. Kind Mother Deschamps understood this and immediately sent reinforcement. As early as September 15, Sisters M. Anne Pépin and Sophie Ethier left for St. Boniface.

MOTHER McMULLEN VISITS ST. BONIFACE

Eight days later a letter to Montreal gave notice of Mother M. Louise Valade's fatal illness. Realizing the gravity of her state, she manifested the wish of having an official visit. She probably wished to receive the approbation from Major

Authority before she died, and the assurance that all in her foundation was in conformity with the rule of our dear Institute.

Mother Deschamps could not let such a legitimate desire go without a response. She even wished that the Visitor would attempt to reach the new missionaries already on their way. Forthwith Mother McMullen offered to fulfill this mission. Sister Rose Clapin was assigned as her travelling companion. But Sr. Clapin was the bursar and that day she was out on business. Four men were sent to search for her. She was indeed surprised when they arrived almost as soon as she had at the store she had just entered. "Mother Superior wishes to see you on an urgent matter", they said. At once she returned home rather worried. Mother Deschamps was awaiting her in her room, while several Sisters were already preparing the bags. The good bursar understood what was happening. She submitted respectfully and accepted her assignment as being God's will. Three hours after receiving Mother Valade's letter, Mother McMullen and the bursar were on their way to St. Boniface. On September 30, they were at St. Paul. Sisters Marie-Anne Pépin and Sophie Ethier had just left. Without losing any time, our travellers took a stage-coach and arrived the following day at the very place where our missionaries had spent the night. The latter were folding their tents and preparing to continue their journey. On hearing the stage-coach, Sister Ethier raised her head and exclaimed, "Sister, there is a Grey Nun going by!" — "What are you saying? A Sister here? At the same moment, from the stagecoach was heard, "Sister Pépin! Sister Pépin!" Astounded, they thought they were dreaming and they could hardly recognize Mother McMullen and Sister Clapin coming toward them. A few words were exchanged, but the coach could not stop any longer. As they saw it disappear, the missionaries wished they could follow it but alas, they had to continue their journey through the prairies. In a few hours, Mother McMullen and her companion were at St. Cloud

where the Benedictine Sisters welcomed them with great charity. However, days went by without any news of the caravan. Mother McMullen was experiencing great anxiety when finally she saw the Sisters appearing very weary with fatigue and vexation. Their drivers had been drinking and loitering along the way, without any concern for their passengers, but the good Mother would now continue on with them and her astuteness would foil their plans. They were hauling liquor, and for this reason, they avoided much travelled routes risking meetings with the Sioux, then very hostile. Mother Elisabeth McMullen obtruded and directed the caravan herself as far as St. Boniface.

The poor exiles were indeed overjoyed at receiving this first official visitation from the Mother House. What a comfort it was for dear Mother Valade to remit her responsibility into the hands of a representative of the Superior General!

Mother McMullen remained in St. Boniface eight months. She had the satisfaction of visiting the mission of St. François-Xavier established by Bishop Norbert Provencher in 1850, and that of St. Norbert, opened only a few months ago. She was able to see on the spot, the dedication, the abnegation, the religious spirit of the Sisters, and especially their inalterable attachment to their vocation and to the Mother House. These were all comforting details which, transmitted to Mother General, would compensate her for the absence of her Assistant whom Sister Catherine Fréchette replaced in the interim.

FIRE IN TOLEDO

In the course of 1860, two fires were recorded; one at Toledo, the other at St. Boniface.

On the night of September 4 - 5, 1860, fire broke out in one of the dependencies of the Toledo Orphanage and it was reduced to ashes. This building housed the laundry. Above the latter was a dormitory where a Sister and five young girls slept. The fire having reached the upper storey awakened two

of the girls who, partly burned, jumped from the windows. Unfortunately, the three others perished in the flames. Our dear Sister Adèle Bélanger, having made her way to the stairs and finding it ablaze, also jumped from a window but there was an obstacle in the way and she was badly hurt. Then, Sister Adèle Robin-Ste-Croix courageously picked her up in her arms and carried her to the house and cared for her. This act of fraternal love caused her an infirmity which lasted many long years.

Numerous friends and benefactors came, but they could only share the distress of the Sisters as they stood before the smouldering ruins, as well as the dead and the wounded. Accompanied by Mother Jane Slocombe, Mother Deschamps hastened to comfort her dear Sisters. Tears became less bitter and with resignation, courage was restored. Soon however, our Mothers had to leave and they brought Sister Adèle Bélanger to Montreal with them. This dear Sister lived on another seven years in the infirmary, in a pitiable state, but always resigned to God's plan.

Bishop Bourget on learning of the Toledo disaster, appealed to the charity of the people in his Episcopal City. A collection in the churches of Montreal yielded \$1,000.00. The Sisters of Toledo, deeply touched by the fatherly care of the holy Bishop, recorded this kindness in their chronicles. Still today, they faithfully transmit the memory of it to those who continue their work.

ST. COLUMBAN HOUSE

On her return from Toledo, Mother Deschamps gratefully accepted the use of a house offered by the Sulpicians from St. Patrick's. This gift made it possible to open a refuge for Irish girls which they had taken in at the Mother House in 1857. Sisters Julie Fournier Painchaud and Mary Kennedy were placed in charge of it.

They received nine abandoned women. Only in heaven will we ever know how many acts of mortification and self-sacrifice these dear Sisters must have accepted in order to ease the pain of these suffering members of Jesus Christ. This refuge called St. Columban's was but a ruin and had to be demolished a short time after.

FIRE AT THE CATHEDRAL IN ST. BONIFACE

In the fall, Mother Deschamps caught cold and contracted asthma, the attacks of which were very troublesome. She was forced to spend some time in the infirmary. She was there when, at the end of December, she received news of the fire which had destroyed the Cathedral of St. Boniface in a few hours.

The circumstances which triggered this great trial were as follows. A young French priest, Father Joseph Goiffon who had succeeded Father Georges Antoine Belcourt at Pembina, was returning to his mission when he was caught in a violent snow storm through which he rode all day. At night, he noticed that his legs were frozen and even his horse was overcome by cold and fatigue.

Unable to walk, the poor missionary was forced to eat raw flesh cut from the flanks of the dead horse at his side. He remained five full days in this pitiable state and was found on the 8th by a white man who took care of him for some time. When his feet began to thaw, the flesh began to putrify. Hearing of his sad situation, the missionaries of St. Boniface sent for him, and on December 3, the doctors amputated his right leg, and waited till he had regained a little strength before removing the left foot. A ruptured artery caused a considerable loss of blood which further exhausted the patient. On the night of December 13, all hope of saving him was lost. Fearing to be caught unready, preparations for the funeral were made in secret. In those days, all the commodities of

civilized life had to be made on location. Candles, for instance, had to be made in the home.⁽¹⁾

It was December 4, 1860. Two housemaids at the Bishop's Residence were getting ready to make candles. They had placed on the kitchen stove a pail with sixty pounds of tallow. The container was not large enough to hold the boiling substance and some spilled over on to an overheated stove. Instantly, flames broke out. Bewildered, the girls threw water onto the burning tallow; and one can imagine what followed! Boards which were drying over the stove, fed the flames which got out of control while the housemaids called for help. Michel Morin, the only man present at the Bishop's Residence, came upon the scene, and seeing the gravity of the situation, immediately gave the alarm. Unfortunately, it was too late! Someone thought of Father Goiffon immobilized in a neighboring room, but the latter insisted that they save the furniture first.

"Leave me here and save what can be useful", he said. He was removed despite his objections. It was high time! He was hardly out when the flames engulfed his room. The Bishop's Residence was now a burning furnace. The library containing five hundred books valued at \$4,000.00, the furniture, the supplies, nothing could be saved from the destructive flames.

However, the most acute loss was that of the Cathedral which had been built at the cost of such labor and privations. We owed to the boldness and daring of our dear Sister Scholastique Gosselin the preservation of some of the vestments. For a moment, we believed her to be a prey to the flames. Reverend Father Maistre had raised his hand to absolve her when she appeared carrying her precious load; her head gear burned and she was overcome with fatigue and with grief. Mother Valade, despite her ailing condition, had

(1) Father A.G. Morice, O.M.I., *Dictionnaire Historique des Canadiens de l'Ouest* — Granger, Montréal. 1908.

had the courage to go to a window from where she witnessed the destruction in less than two hours, of that which the Catholics in the area held most dear. She offered the hospitality of her house to the Oblate Fathers who gratefully accepted. Nevertheless, at night, they had to occupy a wretched and cold attic at the College. Father Goiffon was installed in the business office at the Convent.

Mother Deschamps, greatly distressed by this catastrophe, was comforted on hearing of the universal sympathy of the people. Governor McTavish, though non Catholic had been one of the first on the scene of the fire. This kind friend sent the Reverend Fathers twelve woolen blankets. Later, he continued his benevolence toward them. The poor were not the last to help the victims of the conflagration. Some even gave up indispensable items in order to help the missionaries. Following the Governor's example, the non Catholics also showed great generosity.

DEATH OF FATHER LARRÉ, P.S.S.

After such painful events, another bereavement struck the Community, especially Mother General who lost, in the person of Father Romain-Sauveur Larré, a judicious advisor. On December 18, 1860, the Lord called this beloved Sulpician to eternal happiness. It was a sudden call. Within three days, an acute illness had claimed its victim, three days of prayer and anxiety for our Sisters! Mother Julie Deschamps who was filially attached to him but could not hope to see him, addressed the following message to the beloved patient:

It is with great sorrow that we learn that you are seriously ill. While we hope that your illness will not lead to death, I yield to the wishes of my Community and to my personal need of expressing our deep and sincere gratitude.

Dear Father, we could never forget the kindness and the important services you have rendered to our religious family and to each one of us! I consider myself as the guardian of my Sisters and in their name, I beg you to accept our

gratitude, and also to forget and to forgive any grief we may have caused you. I do not doubt that we have already been pardoned long ago. If it should please God to call you, I beg you to remember the poor Grey Nuns before God, especially the one who, because of her office, is more responsible than the others. I dare to remind you Father, that if I occupy that place, it is partly your fault. I trust you will pray more for me so that I may obtain perfect submission to the will of God. The Sisters, our poor and our orphans are praying for you, trusting that the Blessed Virgin will answer us and restore your health.

Please accept once more, Reverend Father, our deepest respect and gratitude and deign to give us your blessing.

Responsive to this mark of filial piety, the beloved patient raised his feeble hand over Father Rousselot, our confessor, who had delivered our message, and in him, he blessed all the Grey Nuns. He also left us as a souvenir, a small crucifix which is still preserved in our museum.

In announcing his death, the newspapers awarded him this praise: "He was kind and devoted to all; a model of ecclesiastical regularity, a holy priest in the full sense of the word."

At the same time, our historian consigned to our archives the following: Our Reverend Father Romain Sauveur Larré came to Canada on August 1, 1828. He was appointed chaplain of our Mother House on November 25, 1835, confessor of the poor and director of the Community, replacing Father Antoine Sattin on April 14, 1836.

This kind Father had a shrewd mind and sound judgment. He was gifted with rare prudence and discretion. Through fourteen years, he guided our religious family with kind vigilance and singular zeal. He did not fear to warn and to correct.

As a chaplain of an active Community, he soon noticed any danger it could face and always told us: "Before launching

into action, before exercising one's zeal, one must pray. Before the work of men, there is the grace of God which is requested and obtained through prayer. Human powers are short-lived and quickly overthrown. They stand solely on the power of God and are fed only at the hidden source. Let us pray!" And this good Father gave us the example.

In his conferences, he never forgot to draw our attention to our beautiful name of "Sisters of Charity", and according to Holy Scripture, he wished us a true understanding of the poor. Does not the whole Christian faith rest on the love of God and neighbor? If charity is to be the characteristic of a Christian, how much more of the religious who is to be an imitator of Christ.

In the fulfillment of his duties, Father Larré displayed a tenacious zeal for discipline, impeccable respect for traditions, and an austerity that was never contradicted. Called in 1860 to serve the new Church of Notre-Dame-de-Toutes-Grâces, he was fully active in his parish when, on December 15, he became seriously ill. He was taken to the Seminary where his condition only worsened.

A good laborer for the kingdom of God, Father Larré had worked fifty-seven years and to his last hour in the service of the poor and the lowly. He fell in the line of battle after one last day of combat. A beautiful death! An eminently Sulpician death!

His obsequies took place at Notre Dame Church on December 21. Our Sisters attended in large numbers. Another solemn service was held in our chapel on January 21, 1861. This was a fitting tribute of gratitude to him whom we could consider as one of our spiritual benefactors

THE ACQUISITION OF MONT STE-CROIX

We have just mentioned 1861. This was the year our property at Mont Ste-Croix was acquired.

Our Mothers had considered the need for larger accommodation for the Community and to avoid flooding which occurred each spring due to proximity to the river. However, fearing that a move away from the General Hospital would be detrimental to the poor, our Fathers had not approved the project at first. They called attention to the fact that the land at Pointe-à-Callières had been conceded to the Grey Nuns only on the condition that they maintain the hospital constructed by the Charon Brothers with the authorization of the Seminary. Our Mothers therefore abandoned the project.

However, a few years later, Father Michel Faillon studied the situation during his stay in Canada and he became our advocate with the Sulpicians who considered the request. Father Joseph-Alexandre Baile who had become our Superior, was favorable to the project and even promised Mother Julie Deschamps his fatherly support. At first Mother set her choice on the land which Mr. Olivier Berthelet had given us at Côte Saint-Antoine, then she thought it was too far from town. The land of "the Red-Cross" belonging to the Seminary appeared to be a better location. On February 3, 1861, Mother proposed its purchase to the twelve Administrators and again consulted our Fathers who after certain hesitations, finally agreed to sell without interest, at least for a few years. Our Community then came into possession of the land measuring 12 acres, 16 rods and 232 ft. in area. The cost of this land between Dorchester and St. Catherine Streets, Guy and St. Mathieu was \$880.00 an acre.

FLOODING AT POINTE-À-CALLIÈRES

The overflowing of the river in the spring of 1861 again motivated the acquisition of Mont Ste-Croix.

The historian reports that in the evening of April 14, the water covered the lower floor and rose rapidly to fourteen inches in the wards of the poor and to eight inches in the chapel, the parlor, the business office, the kitchen and the

dining room. Fifty-three Sisters were forced to interrupt their annual retreat begun the previous day. In the night moans and cries of distress were heard nearby. Three persons had drowned and numerous beasts perished. Our employees brought our animals to the laundry and to the second floor.

On Monday morning, Father Rousselot rowed his boat to one of the kitchen windows. He celebrated Holy Mass at the altar of the Eternal Father in the Community room. It was this way until April 20, that is, for six days during which the water level remained about the same. But we were indeed terrified when fire started in a huge vault not far from the College. We feared all the more since the wind was blowing our way and shrouded us in smoke.

Mr. Rodier, Mayor of the town, sent word to us that we need not fear. Men and barges would be sent if there was a need. For two days this charitable magistrate had already been helping the flood victims. However, the water having gone down, our missionary Sisters who had come for the retreat were able to return home Wednesday morning. Bishop Bourget, Father Granet, Father Faillon and a few others came to assure us of their sympathy. Concerned about their poor, our courageous Sister visitors obtained permission to visit them. Our Fathers and the members of the St. Vincent-de-Paul Society provided them with vehicles, and supplies for the victims. The losses from this flood were evaluated at \$500.00 in kind for our Community.

DEATH OF MOTHER VALADE

April 20, order having been restored, the Sisters resumed their annual retreat. On this same day, we received the details of dear Mother Valade's long illness. It was the first funeral-knell! In the early days of July a letter from the Red River had given notice of the event which had occurred on May 13. It was a grievous and painful loss for the whole Institute, but particularly for the Foundation. Energetic and courageous till

the end, the beloved Mother had responded fully to the hopes of Bishop Norbert Provencher and her Superiors.

Her funeral service had been carried out in a solemn way on May 15, in the convent chapel, but her body could not be laid in the crypt because of the flood. It was brought to an elevated spot near the ruins of the cathedral and the Sisters were unable to accompany the mortal remains of their Mother. The men carried the coffin on their shoulders as they waded through four or five inches of water.

Bishop Taché wrote to Bishop Bourget the following details of this death:

The early missionaries of the Red River are the first apostles which Canada has given to a far-away land. It is on the banks of the Red River that the tombs of the first Canadian heroines are being dug; they whose hearts were torn away from loved ones and from their homeland, and who so far away, offered the world the great example of Christian charity and dedication inspired by Catholicism. In Canada, more than elsewhere, one will understand the rightful grief of the citizens of St. Boniface who have been tested by fire and water. This parish witnessed the destruction of the grave of Bishop Provencher, its true father and first missionary. It had not an inch of dry ground in which to bury the remains of the foundress of the Sisters of Charity who died during the flood. The Funeral convoy of Sister Valade was indeed sad! This procession offered a dismal sight as it wended its way through a foot of water in order to lay, in the ruins of the cathedral, the remains of the beloved Sister who, through seventeen years of sacrifice and dedication, had done so much good in her land of adoption.

While we were still distressed by a series of mishaps and trials, the soul of this pious Sister took its flight toward heaven. There, in her true homeland, she will offer for Canada, the sacrifices which were the consequences of her choice of the Red River as her land of adoption. May these

wishes, that are also our own, be granted. May God bless Canada and comfort the people of the Red River.⁽¹⁾

BIOGRAPHY OF SISTER MARIE-LOUISE VALADE

Deceased May 13, 1861

Marie-Louise Valade, the daughter of Francois Valade and of Marie-Charlotte Cadotte, was born at Ste-Anne des Plaines, P.Q. on December 26, 1808. From her home, she drew rudiments of wisdom and virtue which made her assess worldly goods at their true value. At the early age of seventeen, she left her family to dedicate herself to God in our Institute. Having entered September 18, 1826, she made profession October 21, 1828.

Gifted with talents and precious qualities, a humble and peaceful character, and remarkable prudence in business management, she was appointed Councillor, and then became an aid to Sister Elisabeth McMullen, bursar at the time. When Sister McMullen became Superior General, Sister Valade succeeded her as bursar.

Our dear Sister had been in this office for three years when in 1843, there was question of founding a mission at the Red River. Her devotedness prompted her at first to offer herself for this work if it was thought she was capable, but her self-diffidence made her wait till God's will was manifested. The future clearly revealed that she was indeed the Superior designated by Providence for the apostolate of the Red River.

Having accepted the foundation, the Administrators, with great assurance, named Sister Marie-Louise Valade, Superior, Sister Eulalie Lagrave, Assistant, Sister Gertrude Coutlée-St. Joseph, Mistress of Novices and Sister Hedwidge Lafrance as Councillor. The chosen ones accepted with deep humility the choice that had been made of them to go and establish the base for the first religious institution in St. Boniface.

(1) *Revue Littéraire de l'Université d'Ottawa*. Première année No. IV, avril 1900.

The departure was set for April 24, 1844 and the trip lasted one month and twenty-eight days amid accidents, dangers, suffering and perils of all sorts. Finally on June 19, the canoes entered the Red River. Only God knows what was going on in the souls of the foundresses at the moment of their arrival into port!

Bishop Norbert Provencher had not been able to have a convent built before being assured that the Sisters would indeed come, consequently, all he had to offer them was a house in ruins which he would have repaired. On taking possession of it, the foundresses knelt before a small statue of the Blessed Virgin which Father Larré, p.s.s. had given them before their departure from Montreal. They begged the Queen of Heaven to be their mother, their director and their guardian. Before this gesture of filial love, how can one not call to mind our beloved Mother d'Youville and her companions dedicating our Institute to the Virgin Mary! From this very moment, Mother M. Louise Valade became the soul of her religious family and withstood with admirable generosity all the privations of a foundation in its infancy in a land not yet civilized. Further still, she drew from her faith and trust in God, the physical strength which her feeble health seemed to deny her in order to come to Montreal to plead for her threatened work.

To the qualities of a good Administrator, this kind Mother added the virtues of a fervent religious and of a perfect Superior. Stern concerning the performance of duty, she could however, understand human weakness and her firmness was always tempered with kindness. Filled with supernatural love toward her Sisters, she was attentive and exercised maternal kindness in their regard. She would correct with such kindness and gentleness, with such tact and prudence, that instead of becoming bitter, the Sisters loved her all the more. Her compassion for the unfortunate led her to make great sacrifices in order to help them. Her greatest joy was to con-

tribute to the development of the poor Indian missions, and so she showed much gratitude to anyone who could help her in her apostolate. On the other hand, she enjoyed the esteem, the trust and the veneration of all.

After seventeen years of missionary life, God crowned her life with more trials. She experienced the pain of laying to rest her cofoundress, Sister Eulalie Lagrave. She herself was afflicted with cancer which caused cruel suffering and the final weeks of her life were saddened by the great loss of the Cathedral of St. Boniface and the Bishop's residence. What immense grief she experienced at witnessing the destruction by fire of what had cost the early missionaries so much work and so many privations! Nevertheless, she incited her Sisters to perfect submission, while she herself, a prey to intense pain, was completing the consummation of her sacrifice.

Finally, satisfied with her generosity, God called her to rest. Mother M. Louise Valade died trusting Him who had called Himself the Ressurrection and the Life. It was Monday, May 13, 1861 about five-thirty in the evening. She was 52 years, 7 months, 14 days of age and numbered 34 years, 5 months and 11 days as a Sister.

CONSTITUTIONS PRESENTED IN ROME

In May 1861, a modification was brought to our prayer manual. The litany of the Holy Name of Jesus was removed from the morning prayer. In the preceding year, Bishop Bourget had transformed those to the Eternal Father into invocations and aspirations as we know them today. It had also been decided that the Triduum on the occasion of the feast of the Presentation of Mary would close with the collective renewal of vows on the morning of November 21, and that the consecration to the Eternal Father would be reserved for the newly professed at the closing of the profession ceremony.

These various changes had been suggested by the Holy See in view of the approval of our Constitutions. For a long time in

fact, our Mothers had desired the seal of Pontifical Authority on our religious rules, and 1861 was to mark the first stage of this long procedure.

Our petition, supported by Bishop Ignace Bourget and by Father Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant, our ecclesiastical superior, was entrusted to Father Dominique Granet, p.s.s. who made a trip to Europe in the summer of 1861. Having left on June 20, this good Father returned on November 14, but without the favor we had hoped for, since such an important document cannot be obtained in only a few months. Our Institute was to be recognized as pontifical only on July 21, 1865 and the Constitutions were approved by His Holiness Pius IX only on July 30, 1880, but in 1861 our hopes had been turned toward the Eternal City. We prayed, increased our fervor, and applied greater zeal in helping the poor. Three more new foundations were to solicit this dedication: Saint-Henri School, in Montreal, the Beauharnois Home and the Institute of Nazareth.

SAINT-HENRI SCHOOL

Before his departure for Europe, Father Granet had probably made known to the Grey Nuns Father Antoine Mercier's desire to open at Saint-Henri des Tanneries, a school where works of charity could be conducted at the same time. Mother Deschamps and the Council agreed to the request. Since the Seminary had built a public chapel at Saint-Henri, Father Mercier had the right to use the basement for classes, putting off till later the extension of the services. On August 15, 1861, Sisters Elizabeth Dupuis and Victoire Godard took possession of a small house near this chapel.⁽¹⁾

(1) This school was closed in 1870. The Sisters of Ste-Anne replaced our Sisters and established a boarding school. In 1885, at the request of Fr. Remy C. Décary, pastor of the parish, our Sisters returned to Saint-Henri to take charge of a home there and to visit the poor and the sick in their homes.

During the first two weeks, they prepared to receive the pupils. Soon Sister Philomène Lalumière joined them. Our dear Sister Dupuis, Superior, gave this mission its thrust. From the start, the people were pleased with the arrival of the Sisters. The latter were not only teachers dedicated to their children but in addition, they were true Sisters of Charity who visited the sick and comforted the unfortunate.

BEAUHARNOIS

On August 20, 1861, Mother Deschamps escorted Sister Dosithée Sauvé, Superior, Sister Herménie Malépart and Sister Louise Crooks to Beauharnois, a parish on the shore of Lac Saint-Louis, twenty miles from Montreal. The Council had accepted a hospice gratuitously offered to the Grey Nuns by Father Louis-David Charland, the Pastor of this parish. It was a two-storey house measuring 35 × 25 feet, an elegant residence having belonged to a bourgeois from the northwest, and which was called Hospice Saint-Joseph.

Our Sisters were received at the rectory with exquisite friendliness. After supper, the worthy pastor showed the Sisters their house. All recited a fervent prayer in order to call God's blessing upon the new enterprise. Our Sisters welcomed as their first guests, an elderly blind man and an epileptic woman and they accepted poverty as "queen and mistress of the house."

As he gave the Superior \$199.00, the pastor expressed regrets at doing so little but she, having been formerly bursar at the Mother House, was able to satisfy the initial needs with this small amount.

So numerous were the needy who came, that as early as 1864, no place was left vacant. One day a handicapped person had to be refused. It was then that Pastor Charland requested that the Mother House extend this hospice. In 1867, a three-storey stone house measuring 72 × 52 feet was built. Some thirty orphans were taken in, as well as handicapped adults.

In 1900 a wing was added and dedicated to Christ, the Redeemer. The pastor, Father Eucher Lussier, rendered this addition possible by his personal bounty and his zeal in securing help for the Institution. In 1904, this kind pastor retired in the building which his generosity had helped to erect. In succeeding years another wing, measuring 60 × 40 ft. was added. These extensions allowed the Sisters to further develop their work by adding a kindergarten which accommodated 155 children. Since the foundation in 1861, the most cordial relationships have always existed between the people of Beauharnois and the Sisters of Charity. There has been a continuous exchange of services. By their generous contributions, by their support of St. Anthony's Loaves, and by their special alms, the parishioners allowed the Sisters to care for almost 4,000 children. In return, the Sisters made it their duty to visit the poor and sick in their homes. Well over 10,000 home visits have been recorded.

* In Beauharnois, as in our other missions, for some eighty years there was the edifying example of a house supported by charity and toward which Providence has never failed. There is no doubt that the generosity of benefactors has been great, but greater still is the trust of the poor in God's Providence.

NAZARETH INSTITUTE

Attentive to all physical, moral and spiritual poverty, Mother Deschamps seemed to say with Saint Bernard: "God's affairs are my business." Consequently, she would be favorable to Father Victor Rousselot's request for Sisters in a home for the aged on rue St. Catherine and for an institute for the blind. The following is the story of this foundation.

Father Rousselot's noble and generous heart was touched by the fate of the blind, forsaken beings, doomed to a passive existence. Touched by their misfortune, with dauntless courage, he wished to come to their assistance. He could not at this time have a special house built for them, but he would

at least begin this good work. In the existing Nazareth Home he opened a classroom for five blind persons.

In daily contact with the Grey Nuns through his ministry, he did not hesitate to entrust this new work of charity to them. They took it up whole-heartedly. Invincible before the difficulties which every foundation faces in its early beginning, they did not recoil from sacrifice in order to provide the blind with the means of broadening their horizon.

In the spring of 1869, Father Rousselot, relying heavily on Divine Providence, proceeded with the work of erecting the building destined for the blind. It consisted of a hall 80 × 36 ft. added to the Nazareth Home and having a chapel at the Centre. He dedicated his own inheritance to this work which was so dear to him. In addition to this, he received donations from his family in France and also organized a collection in Montreal.

Amid his additional undertakings the beloved priest in no way neglected the spiritual welfare of his charges. The chronicles state that nothing was more touching than to see him instructing the young Gadouas, a Protestant, the first pupil in the Institution. Every day, he came to speak to him of God. While directing and supervising the work which he was having done in the yards and gardens, he taught catechism to the child who renounced his former ways on October 30, 1862.

In March 1871, the blind took possession of their new residence. They numbered twelve. Hereafter, at Nazareth the word of the Gospel would be realized: "The blind see." In fact the blind could see since they could now read, write, calculate and work.

The work of Nazareth is interesting and deserves a notable place in our history. Knowing it better, we will appreciate it more. For this reason, we have recourse to the text of a conference given by a Sister from the Institution.

The blind see since Valentin Haüy understood in a practical way the possibility of bringing the blind to life by replacing sight with touch. He devised characters in relief and in 1784 he opened in his own house, the first school for blind youth. This school later became the noted National Institute of Paris.

Valentin Haüy rendered an immense service to the blind, but he merely opened the way. Their great genius and benefactor was Louis Braille, the inventor of the wonderful system which bears his name. This inventor, born in 1809 in the village of Coupvray near Paris and who became blind at the age of three as the result of an accident, aroused a particular interest in Father Rousselot. This was understandable, since having been placed at the National Institute of Paris where he was a model student, he became an accomplished professor.

The zealous Sulpician was captivated by him who once told that: "Often, during my outings, I would sit on a mound and work at my combinations." This system would arouse in the priest a curiosity other than that of the citizen who at seeing the blind person piercing his paper, had asked him one day: "What are you doing? Why are you pricking the paper?" Father Rousselot was interested in the work of this genius, in this system which was ultimately accepted in 1829 and which endowed the blind with a marvellous alphabet.

Father Rousselot then founded Nazareth, the only French speaking Catholic institution in Canada, in order to train blind children of both sexes and to prepare them for a trade, fine arts or a liberal profession according to their individual aptitudes. It provided development on the intellectual, moral and technical levels.

From the time of their arrival at the Institute, the blind took a physical education course identical to the one given in Paris. The yard provided the opportunity to run, jump and play. With time, gymnastic equipment (parallel bars, horizontal ladders, giant steps, stilts, etc.) were added. All these

means of physical exercise stimulated the blind youth, developed their bodies and made them supple, thus preparing them for good intellectual development.

From 1862 to 1875, progress was slow and difficult. The zeal and dedication of Father Rousselot and of the Sisters of Charity met great obstacles in the prejudices of their pupils who because of their very blindness, believed they were unable to succeed in any of the arts or trades.

A few girls, however, did beadwork and boys wove cane-bottomed chairs. The first pupil who was successfully initiated to Braille was Marguerite McCarthy, admitted to the school in 1865.

The first reading books came from Paris but they were very few in number and not very practical for our country. Through this period therefore, education was rudimentary; teaching was given orally and classes were not well attended.

However, in 1868, the chronicles report that the trustees visited the Institution. Impressed by what was being accomplished, they offered the Superior an allowance of forty-five dollars per trimester.

These results, however encouraging for the students, did not correspond to the dedicated care of the Sisters, nor to the goal Father Rousselot had set.

From 1875 to 1889 teaching progressed rapidly. For health reasons and on the insistence of his family, Father Rousselot returned to France where he remained for some time. The Nazareth Institution was to benefit by this for the founder, as soon as he arrived in his native country, came in contact with the National Institution which by then, had achieved a high degree of perfection. He saw that the greater number of students who had left this Institution had obtained employment as organists, as music teachers, or were practising a trade which allowed them to earn an honest living. Desiring to secure similar advantages for his dear protégés in Canada, he

realized that only a blind professor could convince the students and the public that blindness cannot impede a blind person from becoming a good worker, a good organist, a good professor. He urged Mademoiselle Cailhé, Director of the National Institution of Paris, to designate to him one of her young ladies trained to virtue by her teaching, her advice and her example of dedication and continuous abnegation. Mademoiselle Rosalie Euvrard, a professor at the Institution for the blind in Nancy, eagerly accepted this far-away mission, happy to take overseas the knowledge she had acquired, and to transmit to others the benefits she had so generously received. In September 1876, she arrived among her new students who welcomed her with joy and affection. Upheld by the Sisters, the work of Mademoiselle Euvrard became easy. Knitting and crocheting were taught and intellectual programs were organized similar to those of the Paris Institution. Music especially, was taught very seriously. In June of the following year, the most distinguished professors of the city attended the examination of twenty-three competitors. Two classes of vocal exercises, one of harmony and twelve pianists received sincere congratulations from the examiners. The docility, the studiousness of the pupils, their earnestness at work responded to the zeal of their young teacher. Impressed by the intellectual, moral and artistic development of this young French lady, the Sisters wondered why they wouldn't secure for the blind entrusted to them in Montreal, the great benefit of such a varied and elaborate training.

Consequently, they began working toward this. Recently a Braille printing system had been sent by the founder. The most used books were therefore printed: catechisms, Bible-History, grammars, geography and Canadian History. The students being fewer in high school, the teachers took on the great task of transcribing by hand the other books required for a complete course of studies. These included world history, Church History by Drioux, Verniole's literature, versifica-

tion, logic, a resumé of the natural sciences, mineralogy, botany, zoology, chemistry, physics and astronomy.

In 1890, four students graduated from High School and our first musicians were admired by the Montreal public before whom they made their formal appearance. Edward Clarke, Eugénie Tessier and Téléspore Urbain were the glory of the beloved founder.

Since then, the lot of the blind person has constantly improved. In 1932, the personnel of Nazareth moved into a large, modern building situated on land measuring 517 × 610 ft. at Côte-des-Neiges on Chemin Reine-Marie. The personnel numbered 350, 260 of which were blind.

Twelve fully active classes were under the control of the Catholic School Board of Montreal. Students having successfully completed the ninth year of the program were awarded a diploma.

In general, the physical and intellectual aptitudes of the blind child lend themselves well to musical studies. At Nazareth, these studies comprised solfeggio, harmony, counter-point, fugue and composition. Piano, organ and violin were studied. Forty-five sound-proof rooms opening on to an audition room (100 × 30 ft.) served for the daily practice of 135 students. The music school was affiliated with the University of Montreal. Nazareth numbered among its former students, two European prizes, several laureates, bachelors and licentiates in music, one licentiate in civil law, and one bachelor of arts (Statistics of 1934). The Institution numbered eleven blind music teachers, seven in the classrooms and three in the workshops. The Braille library had over 6000 books and the music library 850.

Such was the prodigious intellectual activity at Nazareth over a span of thirty years. But in February, 1940, its property was requisitioned by the Ministry of National Defense for a

school of aviation. Nazareth was forced to move again. St. Joseph's School at Côte Saint-Michel (Villeray) conceded its locale. The work was continued on a modified scale since boys could be admitted only till age twelve. Each of the students who benefited by training at Nazareth, revered the name of its founder and noted benefactor, Father Victor Rousselot, p.s.s.

SANDWICH, WINDSOR AND AMHERSTBURG

Attentive to every detail of the rule, concerned about maintaining unity among members of the Institute, Mother Julie Deschamps experienced some apprehension regarding the houses of Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg. They had been established at the request of Bishop Pinsonnault with the formal promise that they would remain united to the Mother House. But not yet settled as to the pattern he wished to establish for the work of the Grey Nuns in his diocese, the Bishop after a while thought of exacting certain changes which were incompatible with the primary goals of the Institute. Consequently, some regrettable proceedings were undertaken by the Bishop toward our Sisters in order to cut them off from their Mother House, and to oblige them to form an autonomous community, with its centre and its novitiate at Sandwich where they could recruit and thus assure the continuance in the diocese, of a work called to produce much fruit."⁽¹⁾

Informed toward mid-November of the danger her missionaries were facing, Mother Deschamps sent her Assistant, Mother Elisabeth McMullen, to assess the situation. The latter left Montreal on November 28, accompanied by Mother Slocombe, the Mistress of Novices with a letter from Mother Deschamps to the Bishop. After investigating matters, Mother

(1) Letter from Bishop Pinsonnault, November 11, 1861.

McMullen judged that the best thing to do was to withdraw the Sisters immediately.

She had no difficulty in persuading them. As soon as the will of their Superior General was manifested, all returned willingly to the Mother House in Montreal.

CHAPTER V

1862 — 1863

Let us now go to the Canadian West. History must tell of the immense services which were rendered there for the past century by the 868 Sisters whom obedience led to these mission regions. It will be a homage of gratitude to these valiant missionaries who played such an important role in the work of civilization but whose courage, often heroic, has sometimes been ignored.

A certain priest once said, "Beautiful indeed are our missionaries, born from the faith of Rome and from the heart of France; beautiful as is dedication, beautiful as is sacrifice, beautiful as is love!"

To be a missionary does not necessarily mean to go into exile. Jesus, the ideal missionary, did not have to leave his native land. For three years, he could be seen on the roadways of Galilee and of Judea.

Following the example of Jesus, the Grey Nuns went on mission in their own country, Canada, which was known as a land of vast expanse. It is into this vastness that, responding to an appeal of Bishop Provencher, our first four missionaries went forth on April 24, 1844, to instruct, comfort, help the natives and spend their lives for the salvation of these souls.

The second volume of *Love Spans the Centuries* told in detail of the founding of St. Boniface. It related the fifty-eight days of travel by birch-bark canoes, and of the numerous portages which the Sisters endured through the five-hundred mile distance.

We extol, and rightly so, the valor of modern explorers, but do not these religious apostles also deserve our admiration, they who faced the same perils through zeal for souls? Did they not trace a deep furrow in the field of social apostolate? Did they not imitate the zeal of the courageous French missionaries who, three centuries ago, came to our land as yet uncivilized, in order to render it fruitful by their sweat and their blood?

In 1859, Bishop Taché having noted the previous help the Sisters gave the missionaries by attracting the natives through the good care they lavished on them, by raising the prestige of their sex in the eyes of these people, by catechising the women and children, proposed to our Community two more missions: Lac Ste-Anne and Ile-à-la-Crosse. However, the good Bishop could not even assure that the Sisters would have the necessities of life. "In this case, they shall fast along with the priests, and shall beg God to help them both", Mother Deschamps had replied. Assured that at least spiritual help would be supplied and that the Sisters would be allowed to live according to their Holy Rule, the Community accepted these foundations and Sisters Zoé Leblanc-Emery, Adèle Lamy and Marie Jacques-Alphonse left the Mother House. The voyage was made in conditions similar to those of the first voyage to the Red River. Difficulties and mishaps were not lacking, for in addition, they had to cross the western prairies and swamps. Mud was the greatest obstacle. Our Sisters then experienced "the torture of the cart". This rugged vehicle without springs would get stuck in the mire, and would jolt along over rocks and fallen tree trunks. The constant jolting, in fact became a real torture during the long journey through the prairies. Added to that, was the unpleasant lack of privacy, for some Indian families had joined the caravan. Truly, our Canadian missionaries were not envious of foreign missionaries.

On September 24, 1859, they arrived at their destination, not at St. Albert, as this mission did not yet exist, but at Lac

Ste-Anne which was some forty miles further west. Reverend Father Albert Lacombe, O.M.I. then in charge of this mission, welcomed the Sisters with joy.

The métis and the natives shared the joy of the missionary and they came to greet the Sisters. The reverend Oblate Fathers gave them the house they had received from the first missionary, Father Jean-Baptiste Thibault, and they withdrew to a small house beside the church. Without delay, our Sisters began to study the Cree language, taught school each day to 30-40 children, put the church linen in order as well as the clothing of the missionaries, visited and treated the sick. But coming to share the labors of the missionaries, they also had to share their poverty.

Father Lacombe liked to repeat, "This Community of Grey Nuns is admirable for sacrifice and generosity, not only for sending its Sisters to such far-away and such difficult missions, but for giving them on the sole condition that we would help them to fulfil their religious duties and their Rule. We were very poor, but these Sisters shared joyously our poverty and the severity of the time."

In the spring following the arrival of our Sisters at Lac Ste-Anne, the Métis and the Natives abandoned the Fort in order to go hunting in the prairies according to their custom. Only a few families remained, living like the missionaries on fish from the lake. In July, when fishing was no longer productive, the hungry Natives had recourse to the missionaries who shared their dry meat with them. Father Lacombe's meat storage was finally exhausted and for many weeks, the main food of Priests and Sisters consisted of crushed barley and curdled milk.

This did not disturb our generous missionaries; they tried to create resources for the mission by reducing expenditures. Without ceasing their occupations as teachers, nurses, seamstresses, they also became farm-hands and thus revealed themselves to be true missionaries indeed.

In 1861, our Sisters experienced the joy of receiving a visit from their chief Pastor, Bishop Taché whose kind heart was touched by the sacrifices, privations and numerous difficulties of this foundation. It was then that His Grace put on snow-shoes and went with Father Lacombe in search of a more suitable location. They stopped forty miles east of the lake. "This will be the place", said Bishop Taché, as he planted his staff in the snow... "and the mission shall be called St. Albert."

In 1863, Father Lacombe was able to bring the Sisters to the new foundation established on the west bank of the Sturgeon River, nine miles from Edmonton. The house destined for them was neither spacious nor comfortable. It measured only thirty feet by twenty-six and had but one floor. Consequently, the Sisters soon had to move to another which measured fifty feet by thirty and had two storeys. With better lodging, the Sisters increased their works by sheltering more orphans, some old-folks and a few sick persons. The Natives and Métis were not the only ones to benefit from their charity. Strangers who had been seeking gold in Saskatchewan had been victims of various accidents in a wilderness where the most ordinary supplies were hard to come by. What would have become of these poor miners if the missionaries had not granted them hospitality, and if the Sisters of Charity had not given them willing and judicious care?

To tell of the works, sacrifices and sufferings of these noble missionaries is to repeat the story of the Apostles in their conquest of the pagan world. The cold, hunger, endless travels, persecution by sorcerers, the spite of tricksters, the compulsory remoteness from confrères, all combined to increase the burden of their daily cross.

Their sacrifices were fruitful. The sufferings of the missionaries brought forth Christians as had the blood of martyrs.

The works increased to the point where our Sisters had to have a school-house built a few hundred feet from their con-

vent. There, each day, two Sisters taught the three R's to some seventy children whom they also trained to virtue. In 1870, smallpox raged with such force in the region that, of 700 persons, 300 died. The orphans at the convent were stricken and many died despite the good care the Sisters gave them. This epidemic increased the number of orphans. One of them told his story as follows:

“I was with my parents, very far away in the prairie. Our camp consisted of five or six huts. Suddenly, smallpox broke out. Apart from my parents, everyone was stricken. All died. Then my parents finally contracted the illness and died. Before he died, my father called me and said: I too am going to die... you will remain alone, but have courage son. Pray to the Great Spirit; he will not abandon you. After I die, try to go to the mission. You will be well there. After he had told me that, my father died too. I was all alone! I was scared. For several days, I remained there. I ate raw fish and potatoes; but the dead smelled too bad. I closed the door of the hut and put branches before it to prevent the wolves or dogs from eating my father. I took a few fish and got on my horse by climbing on a tree trunk, and I left. I was very scared because the dogs were following me. At night, I tied my horse and lay on the ground. Soon, the dogs ate up my fish and then I had nothing to eat. I also lost my horse, and I had to walk many days and nights. I was cold and thirsty. Everything was frozen and I had nothing to light a fire.

Finally, I was found by two Natives who brought me to their camp and Father Frémond who was passing there, took me with him. He then gave me to the Sisters who in their charity, found the means of clothing me, and by their motherly care, made me almost forget that I was an orphan.”

Another time, it was a little Blackfoot child of four whom a missionary brought to the Sisters. This poor child also had lost his parents. His mother had just died. Friends enshrouded him along with her and left the two victims of death and

barbarity under a tree, while they went away expecting wolves would devour them and thus eliminate the need for burial. Luckily, someone passed by before the wolves came. He heard cries and delivered the poor child from his bonds and gave him up to the missionary who entrusted him to the Sisters.

Bishop Grandin himself, in one of his voyages, met a poor child whose mother had died of hunger. The Natives in the camp were all suffering from want, and they neither could nor wished to care for this orphan girl. An old pagan Indian man said he would take her but since she did not belong to anyone, he would eat her. Another, better disposed, hid her and then delivered her to the Bishop. As the charitable Bishop entrusted her to the Sisters he wrote the following:

“I am aware that you can positively not receive any more children. You lack space, you lack clothing and you even fear to lack food. It doesn't matter! I am sending you another orphan girl; and if I found a hundred in her situation and sent them to you, you would accept them. I know you will make place for this hungry little girl whom I have taken away from a worthless Indian who would have eaten her. If in order to clothe her, you must cut up one of my cassocks, you may do so without fear..”

More than eighty years have elapsed since these events. This territory has undergone considerable changes. This region, then the property of the Hudson Bay Company and the realm of the Natives, was bought by Canada in 1870 for eight million dollars in currency and in land. The railroad companies, agriculture, commerce and industry have developed the natural resources to an amazing degree. As the white population grew, so came plenty, even luxury and the latest refinements of modern civilization.

But, while the railroad, agriculture and industry transformed the intellectual and moral aspect of this country, they

wrought in the mind and heart, changes equal to those brought about in the material and commercial world.

Our works also expanded with the country. This house of St. Albert alone, with a personnel of 300, today possesses a parochial school (High School), an orphanage, an Indian Boarding School for children of both sexes and an Industrial School for boys. This house belongs to our province of St. Albert which comprises four modern hospitals (Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, St. Paul), one parochial school and one high school in Legal, one Indian Boarding School at St. Paul, one at Beauval and one at Ile-à-la-Crosse. The latter mission also possesses a hospital.

ILE-À-LA-CROSSE

Let us now follow to Ile-à-la-Crosse our Sisters: Rose Caron-Agnès, Marie-Anne Pépin and Philomène Boucher.

Bishop Vital Grandin, coadjutor to Bishop Taché, having negotiated the establishment of this house, was to accompany our Sisters to their far-away mission. His grace, fearing the cold autumn weather for the trip, set the departure for June 4th. Preparations were made hurriedly. Even before the news had reached Sister Agnes' family, her dear mother was stricken with paralysis. Though the event spared the future missionary the anguish of the farewell, it subjected her to a cruel sacrifice. She did not think of complaining, nor of asking for a delay. Submissive and resigned, she would go where God was calling her. On Bishop Grandin's advice, the Sisters prepared an ample provision of medical supplies. Would they be called upon to replace doctors and pharmacists?

The time of departure soon arrived. On June 3, 1860, after night prayer, the deep silence was interrupted by sobs among the ranks. The small group advanced slowly, giving each of the hundred Sisters gathered there, one last embrace. On the 4th, after Mass, while the message of appropriate hymns echoed in everyone, a delightful breakfast was served but

appetites were lessened and no one was surprised. The departure was committed to the Virgin Mary.

Our brave missionaries travelled by steam-boat as far as St. Paul, Minnesota then they settled as best they could among boxes and bundles in carts to continue the five hundred mile route to St. Boniface where they arrived tired on July 10.

Twenty days later, they undertook the last lap, sixty-five more days of travel by lakes and rivers; a trip fraught with mishaps, difficulties and accidents of all sorts. Our Sisters landed at Ile-à-la-Crosse on October 4, 1860. On October 6th, the house was blessed and the first patient was admitted.

Let us consider the little family in exile. The good Superior, our dear Sister Agnès, was in charge of the sacristy and of the sick. Convinced that the women of prayer could heal them, the Indians came for medicine, even for their future illnesses. The young Superior had the good sense not to disappoint those she wished to bring closer to the divine Healer. She gave them rhubarb tablets!

If smallpox was feared, Sr. Agnès went to the huts with the vaccine. Let us hear her account. "I came to the last tent. I lifted the skin which closed the opening and I crawled inside. Alas, I was facing twenty-one big Indians, half dressed, dirty, and wearing iron bracelets. I became oppressed for I realized I was dealing with Manitagasous (those who speak to the devil); however I tried to show a spirit of resolution by explaining to them through my interpreter, a child of nine, the purpose of my visit. Immediately, one of them spat on the arm of his neighbor, wiped it with his sleeve, presented it to me and I applied the vaccine. It was my hundred and sixty-sixth case..."

All the labors compatible with their strength and their calling were honored by our missionaries in Ile-à-la-Crosse. From the time of their arrival, they undertook to remove both large

and small rocks and stones in order to cultivate a few vegetables.

True Sisters of Charity, our missionaries dealt especially with distress, and ignorance of the poor Natives and God gave them the daily comfort of seeing to their education. No less than fifty children attended classes, with good results. Both French and English were taught to the satisfaction of the Bishops and Government inspectors. Cheerfulness and joy reigned everywhere, even in the dining room where our Sisters were compelled to practice great mortification. The menu offered three times a day was invariable: fish and potatoes. Sometimes bannock was added, and barley-water without sugar.

In 1877 the kind Superior wrote:

On Palm Sunday, only one fish remained in the larder. Far from being discouraged, we were happy in the certitude that Providence would come to our help, and that once again, we would experience its powerful protection as we had in so many previous circumstances. On the following day, fishing was plentiful enough to supply our needs.

Do not these simple lines reveal the faith and abandonment of the guardian of the little flock?

Ile-à-la-Crosse was founded on the Cross. True daughters of our beloved Mother d'Youville, our missionaries were called to imitate her, especially in 1867, when fire reduced the new Convent to ashes. On the lake, some distance away from the house, seated on a snowbank in 30° weather, powerless, they watched the huge fire consume, not only the building, but the supplies and resources of their poor mission. They recovered courage and recited the TE DEUM.

But their greatest trial came from the Métis uprising in 1885. Our Sisters, having learned that the enemy was coming toward Ile-à-la-Crosse, took the prudent decision to flee.... Along with the children whom they could not return to their parents, the Sisters took refuge fifty miles away from their

mission, where they spent thirty-three days of great anxiety. This page of history is indeed touching! Jesus journeyed with them. In the night of April 29th, at 1:15 a.m., the priest stirred up their courage by giving them Holy Communion. On the 30th, after having said Mass, Father Rapet, in order to stimulate their trust in God, quoted the words of the Introit for the following day: "*In their distress, they cried out to you, and from above, you heard them!*" On May 3rd, they were on Ile Sainte-Croix. The Blessed Sacrament remained day and night in a tent prepared as well as possible. On the 11th, seventeen canoes, filled with Chipewyan Indians, landed on the island bringing help but no news from their mission.

While they waited, they lived like the Natives. "We ate around the fire, we were smoked like hams, we sat on our blankets on the ground, we looked like real Chipewyan women", said our dear islanders. "Since the Natives were numerous, Father Rapet preached a retreat for them with the zeal of a Francis Xavier."

Sister Langelier wrote on May 19, 1885:

Yesterday, twenty-three more canoes full of natives came to help us in case of danger. The chief of this band edified us by his great simplicity toward Father Rapet whom he had not seen for a long time. 'Through the fifty-nine days since we left', he said, 'we have done something which is not right; but it is my fault. Sunday during the night, there had been a frost. I wanted my men to leave early, so we said only a short prayer, but after breakfast we prayed longer.'

As you may conclude, our Sisters were in the hands of good defenders. They were eager however, to return home and to rest after a month spent living in tents. Though peace had yet not been concluded, they received this consolation on May 30th.

Finally, on October 4, 1885, the gloom was 'shaken off' and the whole house took on an air of festivity. Grateful hearts

were celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the arrival of the missionaries in Ile-à-la-Crosse.

Let us note here, the main impressions of Mother Eugénie Letellier, Provincial Superior, on the occasion of a visit to Ile-à-la-Crosse in 1898.

“What first strikes one at Ile-à-la-Crosse is the tranquility in which our Sisters live. One could not imagine a more peaceful, more uniform life. Never anything new, nothing remarkable distracts the missionaries. Each day brings a repetition of yesterday’s occupations, and each occupation is performed by the same person, and even though it had been said that “Uniformity breeds boredom”, all the Sisters are happy, joyful and have a deep affection for their mission, living always in peace and unity of charity. The following thought of one of them reveals the contentment of the entire family: ‘Nothing is as dear to my heart as the Mother House but nothing is as beneficial to my soul as my solitude and its hidden labor!’

Much good is done here through the Christian training given to the children and which radiated to entire families. The number of children varies each year from forty to fifty. This is not a great number in itself, but if one considers that since 1860, our Sisters have sown the seed of Christian faith in as many souls, along with knowledge and skills, one would be delighted at the service rendered to the faith and to civilization by their work with these humble people. It is known however, that the Chipewyan and the Cree have simple and gentle dispositions and naturally are religiously inclined. The missionaries therefore experience great consolation in working with them. The following story will illustrate:

Mission times are sacred for these tribes. In order to follow the exercises with greater diligence, they give up everything: hunting, herds and homes, and they come to the centre of the reserve where they remain throughout the time of the mission. Now, it happened that for a certain mission, a few Métis from the area, rather indifferent, and perhaps less blessed

than the others, had sought to dissuade a few Chipewyans from attending, alleging that during their absence the dogs would devour their animals, but this was a lost cause. 'Our souls are more precious than our animals', they replied simply. Others said, 'The shepherds abandoned their sheep in order to go and adore the Savior and no harm came to them'... and they went to the church on the reserve. They appeared to have the fervor of the early Christians."

Six years later, in July, 1905, Mother Provincial, returning to Ile-à-la-Crosse for her official visitation found the place flooded. She describes as follows, the difficulties and sufferings of the missionaries:

"There is water everywhere! Several buildings are immersed. One cannot see the barley and potato fields, the fences are falling, and the water has reached the doorway, carrying along everything it can. Waves whip against the doorstep. This morning, we are thinking of seeking refuge on another island. If the water continues to rise, we shall have to pack everything. The boats are ready.

The Water is neither rising nor going down. The priests' residence is threatened with ruin. The roof, covered with moss, is lifting with the wind. The house is a refrigerator in winter. The Sisters' house is a real disaster. It would be impossible to repair it. Everything is old and deteriorated.

It is edifying to see how contented our missionaries are. This place of privation, of sacrifice and of trials is very dear to them since God permits these things..."

Nevertheless, seeing the dangers to which our missionaries were exposed each year, our Mothers decided to close the mission. Everyone was distressed by this decision, particularly the Chipewyans who begged the Sisters not to abandon them. They even tried to retain them by force.

The Sisters accepted the sacrifice imposed by obedience and they left in September, 1905. Several of them had been there some thirty years.

Sisters of St. Joseph from Lyon, expelled from France by sectarian laws were to replace our Sisters. They remained only five years, and on September 30, 1909, Bishop Albert Pascal, O.M.I. addressed the following letter to the Mother House:

To Reverend Mother Filiatrault,
Superior General of the Grey Nuns of Montreal

Reverend and dear Mother,

As you know, the dear mission of Ile-à-la-Crosse is in mourning and desolation. In order to obey you and be agreeable to the Community, I had consented to replace your Sisters by French Sisters. Alas! they were not able to remain where the Grey Nuns had lived fifty years in less favorable conditions. God seems to be telling us that the Grey Nuns of Montreal, the preeminent apostles of the most meritorious missions of the Canadian west, are alone capable of succeeding in such difficult areas. Reverend Father Grandin and I have exhausted all our means of persuasion without success. All the Communities of France and of Canada have refused. What will become of us! Canadians are leaving for China and Africa and yet, they cannot evangelize their own country! This thought is painful and breaks my heart.

Reverend Father Rapet came to tell us of his sadness and the fate of this mission. Our hearts are sad and we have decided to write and beg your pity and that of your Council. Father Superior Lecoq will write to you, as well as Father Grandin the provincial of the Oblates. I refuse to believe that you will not see God's will in this.

The following reasons can also carry some weight:

1. The school is now well situated and no longer presents the danger of flooding that was so harmful to health in the past.
2. A new apostolic vicar will soon be elected and it would be painful to transfer this mission to him without a school and without Sisters to conduct one.

3. The Government will help us from now on, as the school is the first clause and condition of the treaty with the Indians.
4. A railroad is being constructed from Prince Albert to Green Lake, therefore travel will be easier.
5. This mission is one of the oldest and recalls the glorious names of Taché, Laflèche, Grandin, etc.
6. These holy apostles and your Sisters buried there, seem to be weeping for you and calling you back.
7. For my part, I who have been accused of favoring the departure of your Sisters while I did all I could to prevent it, shall be comforted.

In closing, Reverend Mother, I beg you to convey my respectful regards and blessing to your assistants. Pray for me and believe in my entire devotedness in the Lord.

Albert, O.M.I.
Bishop of Prince Albert

Which daughter of Mother d'Youville could have resisted such an appeal! On September 21, 1917, our Sisters returned to Ile-à-la-Crosse and continued to do great good there. God also continued to test them. On April 1, 1920, the house was entirely destroyed by fire. To our expressions of sympathy and regret, Sr. St. Nazaire, the Superior, responded by what I would dare call a poem to Divine Providence:

We were too comfortable and I felt that since our new companion had arrived, there were no more crosses. Every-day we wondered: 'what will the Good Lord send us? We are too comfortable.' I assure you that we thanked him. Now, we are Grey Nuns, true daughters of the Cross and of Mother d'Youville. Do not worry too much about us Mother. Divine Providence will take care of our needs. I have the firm assurance of this.

In 1928, a regular hospital was built near the school. This was a new means of apostolate which since then has borne fruits

of conversions and blessings. St. Joseph's Hospital at Ile-à-la-Crosse has a capacity of 30 beds.

LAC-LA-BICHE

According to a note from a missionary of the Northwest, Lac-La-Biche is situated at the intersection of the 50th degree latitude with the 113th degree longitude. It is a magnificent body of water, studded with islets of various sizes of which most are covered with groves of birch and poplar and are separated by small rivers. It is on these islands that the Natives camp each fall to catch their yearly supply of fish.

The lake measures approximately twenty-five miles in its widest spread from the northwest to the south, and it measures from thirty to forty leagues (120-160 kilometers) in circumference. It is surrounded by a thick forest interspersed with prairie land.

Winter properly begins in November. The lake then freezes over and creates a surface which will break up only toward the end of May. Despite the rigorous climate and the long winters, the land is very fertile. Barley and wheat grow well there. Potatoes and various vegetables are produced successfully, but farming requires labor and care to which the natives and Métis are not accustomed.

Fruit is practically unknown. Only wild strawberries and raspberries can be harvested as well as various rather tasteless berries. The forests provide hunting for the Natives. It is there that they hunt deer, moose and bear. There they set traps and snares for fox, lynx, marten, and otter. They use the flesh of these animals for food and the furs are traded for clothing, tools, ammunition, etc.

The population at Lac-La-Biche consists of Métis, a few French Canadian families, Cree Indians, Sauteux, Chipewyan and a few English Métis families.

Lac-La-Biche has been considered as a mission post only since 1853, although from 1844 to that date, the inhabitants

had already been visited several times by Father Jean-Baptiste Thibeault whom everyone considered as God's envoy.

In 1854 Lac-La-Biche was honored by a visit from Bishop Taché who dedicated the mission to the Immaculate Heart of Mary under the title of Our Lady of Victory. The Bishop and his missionaries hoped that there, as everywhere else, the Mother of God would win a complete victory over the enemy of all good.

On June 24, 1854, Father Tissot, O.M.I. arrived at Lac-La-Biche to take over the direction of the mission where he was joined in September by Father Maisonneuve, O.M.I. These two energetic and untiring missionaries spent the winter in a tent. In the spring, they succeeded in clearing a few acres of land and in working at their house which was ready for occupation by June 13, 1856 when Bishop Taché returned to visit the mission. The zealous prelate solicited from Mother Deschamps a few Sisters for this post.

Our Sisters Delphine Guénette, Adélaïde Daunais and Marie Tisseur were selected as foundresses. The departure from Montreal had been set for May 20, 1862. The caravan consisted of two priests (Fathers Joseph-Noel Ritchot and Jean-Baptiste Germain) who were going to St. Boniface, and a young lady (Marie Lalonde) who wished to dedicate herself to the missions.

The voyagers arrived at the Red River on Pentecost, June 7th. On the 8th, they resumed their travels toward Lac-La-Biche where they arrived on August 26th, at ten o'clock at night. In view of this foundation which had been contemplated for so long, the Oblate Fathers had built a two-storey house. They themselves had made the cement, and sawed by hand each of the boards for the doors and windows.

When the Sisters arrived, the building was not yet completed, and there was no furniture. After having slept in tents through the fifty days that their trip through the prairies had

lasted, the Sisters were prepared to sleep on the floor for many more weeks. Boxes served as a table and they ate kneeling or seated on the floor. At Christmas, the priests gave them a few seats as a gift. These were crude stools, without back rests.

In May, 1863, our Sisters opened a day-school. At this time, there were sufficient families around the Mission to warrant a school, but the parents valued education so little that they did not send their children. For this reason, the school failed.

The situation continued until October, 1864, when Bishop Taché, Bishop of the Northwest, made his pastoral visitation to this Mission. His grace constantly urged the Indians and the Métis to have their children educated by the Sisters who had left their homeland for the welfare of the Natives. The solicitations of the Bishop brought more than forty children to school but this success was short-lived because of the inconstancy of the parents.

This lack of success confirmed the opinion the Sisters had that in order to really benefit these people, they needed a boarding school where they could keep a certain number of children; but this plan appeared unattainable because the Mission was so poor. However, they assumed privations and hard work in order to realize their desires. For many years, in addition to their regular work, they took an active part in farm labor, helping with the harvests, milking cows, and caring for the livestock.

The Oblate Fathers and Brothers also worked hard in order to make the farm prosper. God blessed their efforts and soon the Mission had a flour mill. At this point, the bran was separated from the flour. The biscuits which were served daily were not any larger but they were of a better quality.

The generous dedication of our Sisters allowed them to receive temporarily in their convent a few poor women and children. A Cree woman who desired to be instructed for

baptism was admitted ten months with our Sisters, then returned to her hut, renewed and a fervent Christian.

Through the summer of 1865, an epidemic brought mourning to many families. Our Sisters diligently visited the sick, giving them of the medicines which they had brought and which the sick took avidly. This charity inspired in the Indians such trust toward the Sisters that some brought their dying children to them saying, "Here, Sister, take care of my child. Maybe you will heal him. You have candles to light your nights. You take care of him!"

It was impossible to refuse! The poor children were already in agony. Several of them went to join the angels.

In 1868, the district of Saskatchewan, that of English River and the northern part of the York district were separated from the Red River and entrusted to the pastoral care of Bishop Vital Grandin.

Lac-La-Biche being included in this separation, our Sisters now came under this good Pastor whom they knew.

Bishop Grandin made his first pastoral visit to this Mission in March, 1869. His Grace showed the Sisters great fatherly interest, dispensing words of comfort and encouragement.

In 1870, in order to facilitate the administration of the Mackenzie vicariate for his Apostolic Vicar, Bishop Grandin ceded the Mission of Our Lady of Victory provisionally to Bishop Henri Faraud who arrived there with Brother Alexis on February 28th.

This good Bishop who intended to make this mission the storehouse for the Mackenzie, began the enterprise by accelerating the works of the establishment. He added a circular saw to the power of the flour mill in order to secure the wood necessary for his building project.

His Grace went out to camp for weeks, even months in order to supervise the hay-making. He brought with him the

Sisters, girls and children to help with the work in the fields according to their strength.

On his return, the Bishop handled the scythe and brought the whole personnel along with him. The Sisters as well as everyone else had to do their part and the three of them were no longer sufficient to fulfil all their duties conscientiously. They discontinued teaching the day scholars and dismissed some of the boarders.

Though grieved by this situation, they did not however, dare to remonstrate, but Divine Providence came to their help by inspiring Mother Deschamps to delegate her assistant, Sr. Ursule Charlebois, to make the official visitation of our northern missions. In addition, she sent help in the person of Sister Saint-Michel (Prévost) and of two dedicated ladies. Upon hearing of this, the Sisters, beaming with joy, counted the weeks, the days and even the hours.

On October 11, 1871 at about eight o'clock in the evening, the visitor arrived at Lac-La-Biche. The Sisters and the girls went out to meet her embracing the messenger of joy and hope. The hearts of everyone were beating in unison and so everyone's tears mingled together. "We have been understood", the missionaries kept repeating, "and that means everything to us."

Our missionaries enjoyed this favor, and the visitor was to them a personification of kindness. All would have wished to keep her, but the kind Mother had been missioned to go and encourage other missionaries as well. Without telling them so, she planned to pass by Our Lady of Victory again in the spring in order to encourage the dear Sisters. Great was their joy as they greeted once more the one they so rightfully loved. The six days of joy vanished like a dream. On April 26th, the beloved visitor set out for St. Boniface. At that time, the mission had sixteen student boarders and five day-scholars, but it was not long before it became almost empty. This ill-will of the parents and certain opposition once more

quelled the efforts of the Sisters. By 1872, they had only seven boarders.

Several missionaries who had studied the Cree language reported that they had not been able to find in it the word "gratitude." This undoubtedly explains the absence of this sentiment in most of these people. The following are a few examples. A young Indian, who appeared as a walking skeleton, aroused the compassion of the Sisters. Through many weeks they cared for him lavishly and diligently. When he had recovered strength and gained weight, the Sister who had served him with motherly kindness, one day said to him, "Alexis, would you please get me a few armfuls of wood from the wood-piles?" He went, but a few days later, he claimed his salary in arrogant fashion. An old Cree woman whom the Sisters had sheltered and fed so that she could prepare for her first communion, worked for them half a day through the five weeks she stayed at the Convent, then she requested a dress as her pay.

Another example:

In 1872, the cold was intense and there was a strong wind. Some Indians arrived with the body of a man who had died that very morning. The deceased was wrapped in a buffalo skin and fastened to a wicker sled drawn by four dogs. While the men dug the grave, the cadaver remained outside on the sled, and the dogs, seeking softness or warmth laid on top of him. When the grave was ready, Father Remas went to the cemetery for prayers since the deceased had been baptized. When it was time to put him into the grave, the priest said "Uncover his face and let me see him." How stunned he was! The 'cadaver' opened his eyes and gave signs of life. The frightened priest ran to tell Bishop Faraud who immediately sent Father Vegreville to give him absolution and notify those who had brought him to take him back home. The latter started off with the dying man. On the way, they said to each other, "He is going to die. If we take him home, his wife and

children will again be upset. Let us not say anything and we'll just leave him down the hill and tomorrow morning, we'll bring him back to the cemetery'... What they had planned, they carried out.

Each year, since their arrival at Lac-La-Biche, our Sisters received one, two and sometimes three large boxes which our clever bursar for the missions of the Northwest managed to fill with the generous help of our houses. It was thus that our Sisters came into possession of a beautiful statue of St. Joseph, a precious relic of the Holy Cross properly enshrined and donated by Father Damien-Henri Tambareau p.s.s., spiritual books for their library, clothing, tonics, shoes, tools, school supplies. The prudent solicitude of good Sister Assistant Charlebois also supplied several sets of Sunday dresses for the girls. Let us not remain silent on the fact that many Sisters from the Mother House and the Vicarial House deprived themselves of sweets in order to send them to their Sisters in exile who kept a faithful remembrance of their kindness.

If you wish, let us attend the opening of these boxes and you will have an idea of the simple joy which reigned as they took inventory. The precious box was surrounded by the Sisters, one holding a hatchet, one scissors, and the other a hammer. Each worked eagerly and carefully at removing screws, nails, wires. Finally the lid was lifted. With each article which was taken out, there were joyous exclamations of gratitude; tears of thankfulness filled everyone's eyes; all noticed what great care and loving attention was displayed in the packing.

When all had been examined and delivered to its destination, the Sisters went to the chapel to beg God's blessings on those who helped them with such touching unselfishness. This scene at Lac-La-Biche was renewed each spring in each of the Indian missions where our Sisters labored.

Let us now learn more about these children trained by our Sisters. Though they numbered about twenty, coming from various tribes, they gave the Sisters more trouble than a

hundred civilized children. They did not lack talent, but they disliked study and work so that it was a difficult task to bring forth good results with those whom the Good Lord had entrusted to them. Despite this characteristic indolence of the Natives, the teachers were able to submit their pupils to many public examinations in the presence of Bishops Grandin and Faraud, of the Oblate Fathers, of Colonel Jarvis, of Captain Gagnon, of Judges Pruden and Iraill and a large attendance. These distinguished persons always gave public testimony of their satisfaction at the progress of the pupils.

It was following one of these examinations which Judge and Mrs. Iraill had attended, that their eight year old son was entrusted to our Sisters in order to receive a primary education which greatly satisfied the parents.

In general, the children of this area were docile enough, but were very inconstant. They took to the woods where they ran about, dirty, in rags, with a bundle on their back, following the example of their parents, through bushes and marsh land. In this errant life, they found greater pleasure than in all the delight of a well-kept home. These children, like their parents, cherished their dress and their customs. It was even difficult to get them to abandon them for something better.

Keeping them under constraint over long periods rendered them restless. It became an urgent necessity for the Sisters to take them to the woods occasionally, or into the prairie or to the lakeside where they could freely gambol and frolic. There, these poor children of the woods found themselves quite at home. Their true character showed up perfectly.

They quickly built tents, lined them with silky moss, decked them with greenery, crowned their heads with flowers, tatoored their faces imitating the most ridiculous of their people. The hammock was not forgotten. They swung in it taking turns. The calumet (peace-pipe) had its "fac-simile", improvised drums resounded amid yells and Indian songs.

Anyone who saw the way these children acted when they were left free would probably believe that the teaching and training lavished upon them was all in vain. When evening came, it was with regret that these poor children returned. They would more willingly have spent the night under the trees being devoured by mosquitoes rather than follow the Convent rule.

Regular work was intolerable to them. The following is a typical example among many. A poor woman had reached extreme poverty. She had absolutely nothing with which to feed and dress her numerous family. Moved with compassion, the Sisters offered to keep the youngest of her daughters who had been staying with them for several weeks in order to prepare for her first communion. The proposal was gladly accepted both by mother and daughter, but for some reason, the contract was deferred for a fortnight. When the mother returned to sign the required contract, her daughter said, "Mother, you don't know... It is hard to wash dishes three times a day." The mother immediately changed her mind. She brought her daughter along with her as delighted as if she had owned a mansion, and yet, she did not even have a tent to set up along the lake.

In order to complete the picture, let us add to the details already given, that the Indian was happy to fold up his tent in the morning only to set it up at night on the edge of a lake or a river or on the slope of some green hill. There, the whole world belonged to him. He ate, played and slept as long as he had food. Then, he would go back to fishing and hunting, risking having to fast for weeks on end. Cleanliness was not his dominant quality. Superstition was sometimes practised to a degree of frenzy. An example of this is seen in the father who in 1880, killed his eighteen-year-old son a short distance away from the Mission, because in several dreams he had seen him turn into a man-eater.

Singing is one of the passions of the aborigines. Most of them have an accurate and clear voice. Our Sisters' pupils sang at High Masses and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament on Sundays and feast days. It was a delight to hear them. The girls were taught to read, write, sew, cook, wash, iron and mend, in one word, they were taught everything connected with the care of a home.

Not all of the pupils responded to the attention and care they were given. Defections were frequent and rewards were scarce. The Sisters did not give up despite this lack of success, for some unhopèd-for returns proved that good grain will germinate sooner or later.

Before going any further, let us make it clear that what has been said concerning the Natives, is not to depreciate their character, but to explain the position of the Sisters in their regard, and the arduous task which was theirs. In the end, once convinced of what is good, these people were capable of practising it generously.

In 1898, the Lac-La-Biche mission had been existing for 36 years. During this time, this establishment had gone through so many phases that it appeared impossible to subject it to further changes.

However, according to the wish of Bishop Grandin, the Lac-La-Biche Colony was moved to Saddle Lake, also in Alberta, on July 22, 1898. This transfer, rendered necessary by circumstances, was indeed in God's plan since our Sisters, settled at the very centre of the Reserve, could give Christian teaching to a greater number of children.

From the very time of their arrival, the Natives were happy with the Sisters. Mr. Sibble, the Government Agent, praised the school highly. The pupils numbered forty-six... twenty-seven boys and nineteen girls.

The following year (1899) our Sisters wrote:

On the beautiful feast of Christmas, three little non believers, all sisters, received baptism. Others are being prepared.

The supernatural consolation which we receive from these renewed persons, so open to the teaching of the faith and so docile to God's grace, amply reward us for the sacrifice we had to make by exchanging our dear house at Lac-La-Biche for this new mission.

May God grant that we reap many fruits of life and salvation in this solitude so covetous of human joys.

In 1932, we migrated again, Sisters and children were installed in a more spacious house at St. Paul, Alberta. It was named after an Indian chief, 'Blue Quill's Residential School.'

LAUDATORY BRIEF

Let us return to the year 1862, when we received a first testimonial of approbation. Bishop Alexandre Taché, O.M.I. on his return from an "ad limina" visit to Rome, delivered to our Reverend Mother the Laudatory Brief which the Holy See deigned to grant to our Institute. What fervent thanksgiving each Grey Nun rendered to God for such a favor! As to our Constitutions, we were to revise the text according to the prescription of the Congregation for Regular Bishops. With his customary zeal, Father Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant wished to assume this task, and as early as April 15th, this kind priest remitted the modified copy to Bishop Lynch of Toronto who was going to Rome.

THE SCHOOL AT CÔTE-DES-NEIGES

Let us now sketch the beautiful story of Côte-des-Neiges where good Mother Julie Deschamps was to found a school in 1863.

According to the geography of Pierre-Georges Roy, provincial archivist, Côte-des-Neiges received its name, not from the snow which is particularly abundant in this region, but from some colonists who came from a village in France called Côte-des-Neiges and whose genesis is as follows:

In past centuries, there lived in France a good Catholic called Louis Vadboncoeur who by the sweat of his brow, had succeeded in amassing a small fortune. Since God had not given him any children, he was wondering what to do with his money, when he got the idea of building a church. But he had to chose a place. An angel appeared to him and said, "You and your wife must set out on a walk." The two started out and after several days, they saw a cross of snow from the top of a hill. Vadboncoeur recognized in this a sign from God. He said, "It is there that we shall build the church. It shall be dedicated to Our Lady of the Snows." This was done and soon a small village sprang up around the little church.

Colonists from this region came to Canada, and grouped together on the Northwest slope of Mont-Royal, they found a striking resemblance to their village. They settled there and built a chapel which they dedicated to Our Lady of the Snows. In 1863, it was Father Louis Collin, p.s.s. who was serving this mission and requested our help to open a parochial school. In truth, he expected much more from the Sisters than simply educating the youth. From the very beginning, the Grey Nuns would be laden with care of the sacristy, service to the poor and visiting the sick. The foundresses, — Sisters Suzanne Versailles, Superior, Solange Caron-Sicard and Rose Brown-St. Patrice — assumed these various services without any question, with a great supernatural spirit. Immediately our Sisters earned at Côte-des-Neiges the reputation they would enjoy as long as the institution lasted. Parents and children venerated "their Grey Nuns" and the latter returned this love in affectionate service.

It was not charity, but the great generosity of the parishioners — among others, that of Mr. J. Lavoie — which provided for the maintenance of the poor. "If the cold was intense at Côte-des-Neiges, if many suffered from rheumatism, our hearts were always comforted by the sympathy of the people," the missionaries said.

On two occasions through the fifty years, our Community wished to give to teaching Congregations the school for which they were better prepared than were the Sisters of Charity, but each time, our Superiors were forced to give in to the entreaties of the people who then boasted of "having been victorious even over Mother General."

The day did come however, when the Sisters were finally recalled. They left Côte-des-Neiges in 1913. During this half-century, they had made 22,546 visits to the sick, assisted 2,646 indigents and taught 5, 292 pupils of which a good number became fervent Grey Nuns.

MOTHER JULIE DESCHAMPS, HER SPIRIT, HER VIRTUES

Mother Julie Deschamps carried the burden of General Administration for ten consecutive years. The election of 1863 would relieve her of this responsibility. Before greeting her worthy successor, let us examine the moral strength of this exceptional woman who was our beloved Mother Deschamps.

Under her administration, the Community expanded, new foundations appeared, and service to the poor increased considerably. It was obvious that the goal of her religious life was above all the glory of God and the salvation of souls. She aimed at guarding the observance of the rule and striving for greater perfection. She did not indeed allow personal whims nor loss of time.

In God's service, Mother Deschamps wanted women who were strong and generous. The model of perfection she sought to reproduce was that of our early Mothers. "A Congregation prospers only as long as it is inspired by its founders," she used to say. So this dear Mother drew from our founders the principles of strength, vitality and wisdom which always inspired her.

Our Mothers lived by faith, seeing God in all things and blessing the Eternal Father's Divine Providence in all circumstances. And so Mother Deschamps valued only one thing: the will of God and trust in his Providence. "I try to see my difficulties in God and to keep my will in line with his," she wrote.

The spirit of faith of our Mother was revealed particularly in her respect for the Church, in her obedience to its laws and to all the ordinances of the Holy See and of the bishops. When Mother received from Rome the brief attributing to Mother d'Youville the title of Venerable, she read the pontifical document while kneeling and then kissed it respectfully.

Mother had a deep filial respect for the Sulpicians, our founders, benefactors and spiritual guides. With genuine pleasure, she seized every occasion to express to them the gratitude of our religious family. Recognizing in them the true protectors of the Institute, she never failed to consult and obey them in all difficult circumstances.

The spirit of faith in the service of the poor — which was our family heritage — was not in jeopardy under Mother Deschamps. Her final recommendation was "Take good care of our poor". So touching in simplicity, this word summarizes the whole life and depicts the character of her whose memory shall never die in the grateful souls of so many people sheltered, fed and comforted in our houses.

Mother Deschamps in fact possessed to the highest degree this respect for the poor. Her faith made her see in them, the suffering members of Jesus Christ, and at this thought, her charity became as an ardent flame. She spent herself in good works and revealed herself in the most dedicated, caring and sometimes ingenious service. It was thus that in order to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our Institute, Mother Deschamps struggled to find room for forty-five more beds in the Hospital already filled to capacity. It was only when this difficult task was accomplished that the worthy Superior

could, with increased intensity and satisfaction, set her mind to the general organization of the celebrations.

Mother Deschamps "saw her lords in the poor" and treated them with great consideration. Through the twenty-five years of her administration, she insisted in taking her turn at presiding at their meals and she expressly ordered the kitchen staff to share equally between the Sisters and the poor, the vegetables, fruits and other desserts on hand.

On her official visitations, after Mass, even before taking her own breakfast, she would go to see if the orphans and the elderly had enough to eat and if the food was well prepared. If necessary, she would urge the cooks and the housemothers to prepare the menu with greater care.

In 1894, at the closure of the St. Charles Home, Mother Deschamps welcomed to the Mother House forty-five handicapped persons from this house. A poor cancerous woman had however, been left behind with another invalid woman to care for her. Informed of this, Mother Deschamps called Sister Noel (Marie-Elmire Lévesque) who was in charge of St. Marguerite department and said to her: "Sister, you would oblige me by receiving in your attic, a poor cancerous woman! I shall have a room built for her from the wood of our old house." The charitable Sister accepted willingly and the poor patient soon arrived. She was in a piteous state. The Sister provided basic care but she had to resort to the kitchen, to the supply room, to the laundry, etc., in order to satisfy the needs of the patient. Our compassionate Superior understood the difficulty and gave orders to the Department Heads to supply all that would be requested by Sr. Noel. She even went herself to the attic in order to make sure that her protégée was receiving satisfactory care. The latter was not only grateful for the kind care received but especially abashed at the consideration and attention of the Superior General.

The heart of our Mother also opened wide to the children of the Crèche. Having grown up, one of them was adopted

and learned to work. Some time after, not knowing how to discern his association with other dangerous youths, he became involved in a crime... and Joseph landed in prison! The bare walls, prison meals and close supervision were foreign to him. The days were long. He was however, allowed to look through the high window. He saw carriages, wagons, carts passing on the street. Suddenly, he spied a certain vehicle. He applauded and exclaimed: "It is the carriage from home; yes, it's the carriage from home. I know that big horse" and Joseph was as happy as when he had played in the Convent yard.

When his days of detention were over, he was free again. Where would he go? His clothing did not protect him sufficiently from the seasonal cold. The Grey Nuns' cart had awakened memories. "Well," he thought, "I'll go back home. They'll take me in." He immediately turned his steps toward the Mother House. It was a great distance away. "Truly," he thought, "I shall not be able to make it." Then he thought of renting a carriage; but who would pay for it? He boarded it without a worry and having arrived at the General Hospital, he went to the treasurer and asked her to pay the driver. Taken aback, the latter informed the Superior. On hearing of the incident, Mother Deschamps smiled; then with tears in her eyes, she replied: "After all, he is one of our orphans; it is bad enough that he has no family; pay the driver and Joseph can stay here if he wishes."... and Joseph stayed.

Alas, he had not yet attained perfection. Helping in the laundry, he claimed his place at table with the employees. The latter, who were often inconvenienced by him, objected. What was Joseph then to do? He said to himself, "Mother General has always been kind to me, I'll go to her". He sent her a message requesting permission to take his meals with the hired men. Having his own room would for him have been the realization of a dream. In his letter, he expressed sentiments capable of touching the tender heart of our

Mother. He had been orphaned and deserted. He had no one in whom to confide except this kind Mother, so tolerant toward him. This time again, Joseph had been listened to and understood.

After Joseph, it was Jacob who gained favors from our Superior General. Everyone knew the one who rang the Angelus through a span of fifty years. His story has been told in our annals. For the time being, let us recall an incident related to the kindness of our admirable Mother Deschamps. One summer evening when Jacob had gone to Châteauguay, the Superior there had given him a bag of apples. On his return, he went to the purveyor's office and requested his bag of apples, but it had already been taken to the cellar. He addressed a written request to Mother Deschamps who called the purveyor. "Sister, order a bag of apples from the Manor... of the best, Sister, of the best, you understand?... for Jacob!"... and Jacob recovered his property.

The condescension which Mother Deschamps practiced toward the poor, she practiced to an equal degree toward the employees of the house. Once the orphan girls' house-mother, on going to the ground floor at mid day, was surprised to see one of our carpenters who was still working. "Sir", she said, "it is dinner time, why don't you go and eat?... but what do I see? Tears? What is the matter?" This caring concern caused the tears to flow more abundantly and the poor man dared not reply. "Tell me what is troubling you and I shall try to help."

— "Ah! Sister", the man replied, "I have been working here many years. My family's livelihood depends on my salary, and today I was laid off; my services are no longer required."

— "Really?", said the Sister, "I can't believe it. I'll go and find out about it." At that very moment, she met our Mother and told her of the employee's plight. The compassionate Mother replied: "Go and tell the purveyor for me, that this conscientious man must not go. He has a family and it would

be wrong to dismiss him." The Sister hastily delivered the message. The purveyor had but to yield to her Superior's decision and Mr. M. continued with his work saying, "This good Mother Deschamps has a heart of gold. She understands how difficult it is for a father to sustain his family."

Some time later, Mr. M. was suffering from inflammatory rheumatism. He was bedridden for several months. The election of 1887 freed Mother Deschamps of her current responsibility and she became the treasurer. Each week, she made it a duty to visit the sick man and brought to him the week's pay. "It is only right", she said to her companion, "to give Mr. M. the salary he would have earned if he had not contracted that illness at our place." Again superior in 1892, Mother Deschamps signed an agreement on February 3, 1894 between Mr. M. and the Community of the Grey Nuns. From the beginning, the proud but poor had a claim on her alms and the persons entrusted to her inexhaustible charity could count on her admirable discretion. To know of a need and to seek the means to meet it was everything for her.

Genuine kindness is necessarily effective. Mother Deschamps, like St. Paul, practiced every form of charity, not only with her beloved poor, but first of all toward her Sisters in the Community.

One could not approach her without being influenced by this person so strongly imbued with great charity in all circumstances. We remember her as she was among us; her beautiful eyes with an honest intense look which reflected both authority and kindness, her motherly smile; her words which inspired command and respect, were never trite, always amiable.

In accepting the responsibility of Superiorship, Mother Deschamps understood perfectly that she was to keep intact the spirit of the Grey Nuns, — simplicity combined with a charity which gladdens the heart and tempers the austerity of our life, rendering it sweet and free.

Her attachment to the Institute and her desire to have its prescriptions observed did not remain for her a simple theory. She was punctual at all exercises and presided with exactitude. To her, each observance had value. She liked to be the first to arrive at recreation. "This exercise is as important as the others," she would say to the stragglers. A young Sister asked her one day if it would not be better, when one arrived late for prayer, to perform an exercise in private, elsewhere than in the designated location rather than to distract the others. Mother replied "Even though one arrives late, it is better to perform the exercise in common. That is the rule, and Jesus promised to be among those who came together to pray."

The exercises which Mother preferred were above all, those of the liturgy and those prescribed by the Constitutions and the customs. Apart from the religious duties she exacted only devotion toward the poor and the unfortunate. In her chapters at the Mother House or in the missions, she constantly recommended great fidelity to the rule and customs. The rule of all rules for Mother Deschamps consisted of the ten points which constituted the whole line of conduct given to our first Mothers by Father Normant. She drew the attention of young novices to this compendium of religious obligations prescribed by our Foundress. Mother Deschamps had her Sisters choose, or she chose for them one of the fundamental points, so that they might examine it in the light of their needs. Some of them later demonstrated how they had benefited by their fidelity to this advice.

Mother Deschamps loved her Sisters with a truly motherly love. Let us say here, so as not to repeat, that perhaps she handled the Sisters with "an iron hand and without using a velvet glove". Some wondered how to reconcile her kindness with words and behavior which were sometimes so harsh! This contrast is explained by her too great eagerness in pursuing

good. She wished to remove the obstacle immediately, even by storm.

Because our courageous Mother had a will which was extraordinarily strong, giving way to the impetuosity of her ardent soul, she appeared at times, to ignore the arduous efforts of her Sisters, the pain and powerlessness of their souls. This was the shadow on her profile. Seen from a distance, one saw in our Mother, the soul of a leader. Seen from close, one saw the heart of a mother, for no one escaped her motherly solicitude. Mother Deschamps could soar above all the details of general administration in order to exercise a minute supervision so as to convince the Sisters of all the ways in which they could be useful to their Community.

A Sister once informed her of a remark made to her concerning her lack of education. Mother tenderly replied, "Sister, I forbid you to worry about that. I would be fortunate if I had a dozen Sisters like you!"

At a time when many letters were awaiting the attention of the Superior General, a Sister requested an interview. "My dear child, I cannot just now. See my huge correspondence!"

The Sister insisted. "But Mother, listen to me! You have just sent your assistant as far as the Mackenzie to comfort and encourage your Sisters, and I am here, close to you!" "Poor child," replied Mother, deeply touched, "come, sit close to me and tell me what troubles you. I am ready to listen."

Another incident will demonstrate her kindness. One day, the Superior having heard of a Sister's reprehensible conduct, called for the Sister. The guilty one feared the wrath of Authority. She knocked at the door but not daring to enter, she looked fearfully at the one who had called for her. "Come in, come in, my child, you are at your Mother's house." At these words, the delinquent fell at the knees of the one who was offering mercy and tenderness.

At the end of her life, this virtuous Mother also had her own bitter suffering which could be understood only by someone who had drunk of the chalice. It was heart-rending to hear her at times when God seemed to have abandoned her. It appeared as though the powers of Darkness had let loose against her. "O, my God, have pity on me, have pity on me. Be merciful unto me. Justice of God, punish me as you will" she would cry and severe trembling shook her whole body.

The fourth volume of our chronicles, in continuing the account of the career of our eleventh Superior General, will reveal in greater detail the enrichment of this person so precious to the Community, and her death sanctified by suffering.

To write only the story of her soul one would be far off the mark. As the years of her Superiorship unfolded: 1877-1887... 1890-1895, the Community expanded. The soul and the Community are inseparable.

CHAPTER VI

1863

The General Chapter of 1863, presided by His Grace Bishop Ignace Bourget, elected Mother Jane Slocombe, Superior General, Sister Elisabeth Forbes-McMullen, Assistant, Sister Hedwidge Robin, 2nd Assistant, Sister Ursule Charlebois, Mistress of Novices.

Who was this religious of whom Father Flavien-Pierre Martineau, p.s.s. said: "Mother Slocombe is without a doubt the Superior of all Superiors! I have never met in France or elsewhere any religious as qualified...?"

Father André Nercam corroborated this testimony in these terms: "Just as there is only one Mother d'Youville, so there is only one Mother Slocombe." And Father Woods, s.j. added: "Once you meet Mother Slocombe you never forget her."

This Sister comes from Taunton, County of Somerset in England. She was born there on October 29, 1819, of Protestant parents. Mary-Jane however inherited from her family, the natural virtues which characterize people of faith and refinement. In this home, the Bible was read three times a day, morning and evening prayer was said together. Sundays were scrupulously observed. There were no outings, no recreation, through respect for the Lord's day. At eight, little Hella, sister of Mary-Jane, was severely punished for sewing a dress for her doll on a Sunday.

In her tenth year, Mary-Jane lost her kind parents. She however received a fine training in a boarding school for children of the nobility. A Bible carefully preserved testifies to

this. On the first page is written: "Mary-Jane Slocombe, Taunton Lodge."

Her broad knowledge and her sound judgment led Mary-Jane to study the Catholic faith which she readily embraced at age seventeen. Her modesty and her discretion kept from us the details of her conversion.

At this time, the Honorable Judge Pike and his spouse, friends of the Slocombe family, made a trip from Canada to England. The Slocombe girls, being orphans, drew the compassion of Mrs. Pike. The latter, enchanted with Mary-Jane's beautiful qualities, planned to employ her as a maid. She therefore invited the young lady to accompany her to Montreal. The girl accepted readily, for since her conversion to Catholicism, her home had become the occasion of struggle. Furthermore, none of her family objected to her departure.

Mrs. Pike was happy with her choice: "Mary-Jane is a perfect lady," she would say. "She is a beautiful girl, with a soft, melancholy look and pleasant manners and she readily wins affection and esteem. She does the honor of the house in royal fashion, sets a beautiful table, and skillfully prepares a meal. She is orderly and seems to be proficient in everything: housekeeping, management of the kitchen, needlework, etc..."

In this strange land, Miss Slocombe had no other connection but the Pike family. In her isolation, she felt the need for a wise and prudent director who would lead her in the path of virtue. Father John Larkin, p.s.s., then in charge of English speaking Catholics, was called to fulfill this delicate task. This holy priest welcomed the young stranger and his experience in counselling soon allowed him to discover the moral quality of his new client. Through prudence, and in order not to impede God's work in this privileged person, the wise director seemed to let her walk alone; then he proposed that she teach catechism to the English-speaking children. Miss Slocombe accepted this assignment joyfully and devoted her-

self entirely to the beautiful task of preparing children for their First Communion. She extricated herself from earthly things and gradually her worldly attire was replaced by greater simplicity. She dressed so simply that in ridicule, she was called "the little widow." Her grandeur of soul made her soar above vanity which she dreaded all her life. With a firm step, she advanced boldly toward the goal she had in mind: To belong to God, and to God alone!

For a long time, Miss Slocombe had desired to give herself to works of charity; believing herself unworthy to embrace the religious state, she did not dare to speak to her director about it. Finally, she decided to reveal her desire to him. Father Larkin advised her to pray in order to know God's will and he delayed his response for a few days.

During this time, hell let loose against her. Discouragement invaded her soul and the poor girl knew not what to do. How could she aspire to such a sublime vocation, she who was so poor in virtue, so full of wretchedness? She exposed her fears to her director and asked him if it would not be better to return to England.

The good priest easily detected the wiles of the devil. Looking at her he said: "And who will answer for your vocation before God?" At these words, Miss Slocombe was transformed. If God was calling her, he would give her the grace, and with this assurance, she resolutely entered our community on July 28, 1840.

All would contribute to sustain her efforts. Besides the wise advice of Father Romain Larré, p.s.s., the new postulant found in Mother Dorothée Beaubien, an experienced Superior, in her companions, the comfort of friendships inspired by the same ideal. At first God would allow this chosen one to experience complete surrender. The twenty year old postulant felt interior peace which is "the gift par excellence of God to man, as abandonment is the gift par excellence of man to

God," says Mgr. Gay. But, in order that the novice would be totally his, Jesus would not spare her suffering.

Gifted with an upright spirit, sincere, well-informed, having an uncommon simplicity and refined sentiments, Sister Slocombe gave herself irrevocably to God on July 16, 1842.

The young professed Sister was sent to Châteauguay. At the manor, she became the companion of Sister Julie Deschamps, bursar. The two understood one another and under God's watchful eye they strove to practise virtue. They could be likened to Martha and Mary who served Christ according to their talents. Everything seemed to favor their project of attaining the highest perfection.

Despite her attractions for a hidden life, Sister Slocombe was serviceable to others. During the epidemic of 1847, she took care of the victims of the plague. She contracted the illness during which she saw several of her companions die at her side. Having recovered, she returned to the Manor to help the poor, accompanying her services and her alms with this gracious smile which set hearts at ease. Along with the material bread, Sister Slocombe gave everyone timely advice as food for their soul.

Poor children were the object of her preference. She attracted them, instructed them, gave them clothing and prepared them for First Communion with the zeal of an apostle.

One day, Sister Slocombe was alone on the beach, praying as she contemplated the sky. Suddenly, she heard in the distance, the sound of loud voices. She stopped and listened, then noticed a number of lumbermen coming down the river. They were swearing and blaspheming because the current was carrying their logs away. Sister Slocombe came forward, and in a soft tone, extended the invitation: "Friends, come on the island and rest awhile. Come and refresh yourselves. This is God's island. Our Master is so good." And these woods-

men who had been swearing, felt moved and replied: "Thank you Sister, you are very kind!"

Sister Slocombe's stay at the Manor was nearing its end. God was preparing her for other work when, at the annual retreat of 1851, preached by Bishop Bourget, she took the following resolution: "February 8: To be a person of sacrifice so as not to voluntarily drift away to useless thoughts and to drive them away as soon as I become aware of them."

Father Michel Faillon, p.s.s., who had come to Montreal in 1849 as a visitor of Sulpician institutions, came to appreciate the rare virtue of the young Sister. On March 19, 1851, he wrote to Mother Coullée:

I repeat the request that I made to you to name an assistant for your Mistress of Novices. I expect that you will arrange to withdraw Sister Slocombe from Châteauguay in order to place her as a helper in the novitiate. The Lord seems to have destined her to become one of the main pillars of the Institute. She possesses all the qualities required for such a post, and the dispositions essential to be a good and perfect Mistress of Novices. I believe that among all your Sisters, none is more apt to fill this office. God greatly blessed your house by directing this person toward your community. She will maintain its original spirit. I shall be happy indeed, when you tell me that you have placed her in the novitiate.

The advice came from too high a source to be neglected. Furthermore, it was in accordance with the wishes of our Superiors. On April 18, 1851, Sister Slocombe was named sub-mistress in the novitiate. She was the first in the Institute to occupy this office.

After two years of devotedness, the chapter of 1853 named her Mistress of novices. Gifted with a great discernment, rare patience, solid virtue and engaged in an intensive process of spiritual growth, Mother Slocombe directed the novitiate

wisely for ten years and led one hundred and two Sisters to their vows.

The novices often asked their good Mistress for a meditative word suited to their personal needs. To one she wrote, "The true religious wishes God alone to witness her suffering and pain. She speaks of it only to the one who was given her as comforter and guide. The true religious is above human respect. Never does the fear of incurring the blame or contempt of her Sisters force her to omit what God or religion require of her."

One remembers the gentle and considerate manner in which this dear Mother led her novices to the universal detachment which perfection requires. One of them had received a silver thimble to which she was greatly attached. The prudent Mistress noticed it but without mentioning it, she artfully suggested the spirit of detachment. Then one day, the novice admitted to her Mistress that the thimble was a source of interior turmoil and she generously gave it up. Such an act merited a reward. Putting her hand into her pocket, the dear Mother withdrew her own thimble and gave it to the novice. One can understand the joy of this good novice, who, as she said "would have given a hundred silver thimbles in exchange."

The kind Mistress' maternal solicitude knew no bounds. She omitted nothing which could contribute to the spiritual advancement of her dear novices. She wrote to a young Sister, "You tell me, my dear child, that in your mission, there is no lack of sacrifices. So much the better. Have you never heard it said that sacrifices are the wood that feed the fire of love? If that is true, we should indeed wish that some would arise at every hour, at every moment in order to increase our merit and especially our love, knowing that our love for God throughout eternity, will be proportionate to the love we shall have had during our lifetime!"

Good Mother Slocombe was familiar with sacrifice. Let us read this note written by her: "On Good Friday, April 18, 1851, my Divine Master entrusted me with his cross by placing me in the novitiate as submistress. On Wednesday of Holy Week, March 23, 1853, he allowed them to hold Council against me by making me Councillor. I had but one step to take to arrive on cavalry when I was crucified October 3, 1853 by being appointed director of novices."

Without suspecting it, Mother Slocombe was advancing toward "the CONSUMMATION." In 1863, at the quinquennial election, she received the title of Superior General. "Thy will be done. I had desired a rest but come what may, let us go ahead and embrace the cross wholeheartedly!"

Having accepted the cross of responsibility, Mother Slocombe would try to realize the wish conceived at her election. "Be a true mother!" Bishop Bourget had told her. She would be a mother in the full sense of the term, by her religious spirit, her sincere love for the community, her dignity, her kindness, and especially her refinement. Let us not seek elsewhere the explanation of her influence with the clergy, Sisters, lay people and poor.

Because Mother Slocombe exhibited a truly religious spirit toward her subordinates, because she loved them and treated them maternally, leaving them their own initiative and intervening only when necessary, she had their entire trust.

To folks from the outside, to all who approached her, but preferably to the little ones, the poor and lowly, to whomever sought support through moral or even material help, she appeared as one of those persons given to earth so that man would not doubt of God's goodness; as one of those exceptional beings who are an honor both to nature and to grace.

Faith is the powerful resort of this worthy Mother's spiritual life. Belief in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity lit up her soul with lively splendor. On the feast of the Blessed Trinity

she wrote to one of her spiritual daughters in these terms: "Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! This is no doubt your song for the day, and you will repeat it often throughout the week, will you not? Did you properly celebrate the Feast of the Eternal Father? Did you thank him for all the favors he has lavished upon you, especially that of making you his child, the spouse of his divine Son?"

What ineffable peacefulness one experiences at the thought that God is our Father, that we are his children! The mind is bewildered when it tries to fathom this truth which is so comforting for any Christian and for us in particular, daughters of our beloved Mother d'Youville."

Under the protection of Mother Slocombe, everyone lived happily, surrounded by a religious love which was communicative. Unity of heart and of soul! Such was the watchword of the ninth Superior General who left no stone unturned in order to facilitate this family spirit.

It is through charity that God reveals himself to people, not by coercion and might. Knowing that a simple word, even a look is enough to cause pain or joy, she exercised great charity in all her dealings.

Faithful to the principle that one must forget oneself and place oneself in the position of the other in order to help him effectively, Mother Slocombe experienced, so to say the heartbeats of others, the aspirations of their heart. There was not a family event, a joy or pain she did not share, even with the missionaries. A few extracts from her correspondence, preserved by our Sisters, demonstrate the interest which the dear Mother had in her religious family and the trusting respect her Sisters showed her. They are simple, come from the heart and are replete with common sense and faith.

October 21, 1866

My dear child,

I thank God for the Christian sentiments which in his kindness, he inspired in you on the occasion of the heavy

cross that you received from his paternal hand. Yes, you are right when you say that on such occasions, only faith can comfort and strengthen one enough to allow one to submit with resignation to the heavenly Father's adorable will. But also, how powerful faith is in helping us to endure what would undoubtedly overpower us to make us lose courage and strength. What thanksgiving we should render to God each day for having given us this divine faith! What honor it is to belong to the family of God!

December 1, 1870

My dear Sister,

Advent is a beautiful time to be on retreat with the Incarnate Word in the womb of the most holy Virgin. What a mystery! What marvel of humility!

Try to be well recollected and very spiritual from now till Christmas so as to prepare a beautiful crib for Our Lord, where he will be pleased to dwell. I have not yet utilized what, in charity, you sent to protect me against the cold. I would have scruples in getting used to something I could do without. Would that not be contrary to poverty? I fear that my daughter would go to purgatory along with her mother. Let us be careful, and especially, by our voluntary privations, let us supply warmth for the Child of Bethlehem.

Christmas 1854

My dear Sister,

Ask the Child Jesus, for all of us, a participation of his divine virtues so that we may be children according to God, allowing ourselves to be led with entire surrender by our Superiors.

O how I love this spirit of simplicity. This childlike faith which I desire to possess in its fullness. Please obtain this grace for me through your prayers and sacrifices.

If only we resembled more closely our Sulpician Fathers, this virtue would be our distinctive characteristic. Most of

these priests are remarkable for it — Father Rousselot among others. He is really childlike in the sense indicated in the Holy Bible. Let us try to imitate them a little by passing no comments on the decisions of our Superiors. The spirit of simplicity does not allow it.

All Saints 1864

My dear Sisters,

Do you not feel like going for a little trip to heaven today to see our Heavenly Father, our divine Savior, our kind and loving Mother, St. Joseph and all the saints. What joy that would be! Oh how long is our exile! When will we be allowed to be among the blessed souls who see God face to face, who love him with undivided hearts, who praise him constantly?

We would like to possess the reward of saints without having worked as they did. Let us remember that heaven is only for the victorious, so let us get to work and carry the Divine Master's cross boldly, since it leads us onto the royal path.

Continue working to acquire the spirit of sacrifice, remaining entirely detached and always disposed to do the will of our Heavenly Father, no matter what obstacle you may have to overcome or what distaste you may experience for what is required of you. Do you know this proverb: Privation is better than possession? I believe it is my fault if my Sisters are not more advanced in the practice of self-abnegation.

And so I often repeat MEA CULPA, but that does not remedy the situation. May Divine Goodness be merciful to me for all my failings!

Dear Sister, do not be content with requesting the spirit of sacrifice for yourself alone, request it also for

Your poor mother in J.C.

In preparation for the feast of the Triumph of the Cross:

Greetings dear Sister!

The feast of the Triumph is near. Have you beautiful bouquets of crosses to present to Jesus? Gather them all and bring them along with you for I am eager to see my dear one walking with a firm step in the path of saints who exclaimed: To suffer or to die! To suffer always, never to die!

What am I saying my dear? Your Mother who is speaking to you, is herself too far from these sentiments, but let us hope that Our Lord will grant me the grace some day to delight in the cross. Request this for your poor Mother.

Mother Slocombe had a great veneration for the past. Therefore, she often recalled the memory of our early Mothers encouraging the Sisters to imitate the virtues of the dear deceased. She surrounded our dear senior Sisters with special attentions. She wrote, "We must abound in loving conduct toward those who have long served the community." Her respect for our traditions gave to her authority an irresistible influence.

Mother Slocombe also invited her community to follow the advice of St. Paul: Love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor and respect (Rom. 12:10) and here, example always preceded teaching.

An author has written, "The government of communities cannot be more perfect than when it is inspired by God's government. It is exercised without reproach, in imitation of Providence who watches over all, and sees to all, giving each the impression that he is personally loved. It is then like maternal love; each one has his share and everyone has it all."

Such was authority in the hands of Mother Slocombe. She was inspired by the spirit of the Gospel of which the Church lives. Consequently, words and gracious behavior rendered possible and durable these relationships and disclosures which make for unity of hearts within the unity of religious life.

Several among us may be led to establish a striking contrast between our ex-Superior General and her successor. Yet, by the will to maintain the observances and the virtues of religious life in full, these two persons resembled and completed each other and lived in the same spirit.

As it has already been established, Mother Slocombe seems to have been sent by God to create an atmosphere of supernatural charity alongside of Mother Deschamps whose zeal was so energetic and so fruitful. It was Mary alongside of Martha.

This Mother whom we viewed, not without reason, as being lenient towards every weakness, would be a "pillar of the Institute" according to a prediction of Father Faillon. Despite her respect of persons, her desire to make allowances for possibilities more than of needs, her firm equilibrium, the secret of her great patience, she did not allow the rule, the customs or the vows to be modified.

On various occasions, Mother Slocombe stressed the spirit of charity and the unity which Mother d'Youville had so strongly recommended. However small a failing toward charity might be, it never found favor in the eyes of Mother Slocombe.

June 26, 1870

Beware, dear Sister, of the ill humor and impatience that arise within you towards the persons about you. Be careful not to give in to what your imagination can portray as being imperfect in their conduct. Each and everyone of us have our faults and others must tolerate us. Then, let us tolerate others, let us excuse them and let us love them. Let us not forget this word of our Savior: "All will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another (Jn. 13:35)." This is the true sign of progress in the path of perfection...

And remember this: when we have forgiven, we must forget the whole affair and not speak about the past again. Would we feel comfortable if God remembered our sins?

Consider the great consequence of forgiveness: Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. After that, would I dare look coldly at a person who had displeased me, since I expect that God will look at me with mercy?

June 8, 1868

My dear Sister,

I thank God for giving you during your retreat, the grace, among other graces, of making you understand how easy it is to acquire merit in your function as Superior. Yes, if you put to account as you should, all the means of sanctification which you receive, you shall soon be rich for heaven. But you must surrender your will entirely in order to conform to God's will in all things.

I understand the difficulty you must sometimes experience, but could this not be because you think too much about Sister....and not enough about God for whom you must do everything and suffer everything? The means to succeed is to forget oneself, while being closely united to Our Lord, trusting that he will not fail us if we seek to secure his glory.

Come now, cease lamenting, rejoice that you have so many occasions of practicing self-abnegation. Be good to your Sisters, love them all and be loved by them all in order to help them more effectively to go to God and to perform their duties. Never ask of them anything beyond their strength, remembering that they don't have your temperament. This is an important point...remind them when need be, that "one does much when one's love for God is great."

Finally, dear Sister, request the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially that of wisdom and remain attentive and docile under his inspiration. Ask these graces for your poor Mother in Jesus Christ.

Indeed our Mother knew how to make one see, not a corner of blue sky, but the God of this sky, so near to us when he tests us!

My dear Sister,

If I did not somewhat know the spiritual value of the pain you are experiencing, my heart would naturally lead me to pity you for having to go through such hard times, but you can be sure that God is granting you his greatest favors by allowing you to journey over a dark and arid path.

I know full well that it is difficult to be convinced of this, but nevertheless, it is true. Such paths, so painful to nature, sanctify the person who undergoes the pain with patience and submission to the will of God. They become easy to bear when one remembers that God wishes to detach us from self, which is always in opposition to his divine will, from this love of self that seeks itself in all things, even in the service of God.

Therefore, I do not advise you to request deliverance from this arid state, but to abandon yourself to all which God wills or allows. That is the only way to experience peace, "this peace that surpasses all perception."

In her relationships with religious and civil authorities, Mother sought to win sympathy and goodwill for her Community. Convinced that these are won better by good relationships than by complaints and counter-accusations, she kept to herself the grief which is intrinsic to administration. Filial, trusting, subordinated toward her major Superiors, Mother Slocombe nevertheless remained reserved and discreet toward them. In his visits to the community Bishop Bourget would say, "You can confide your secrets to your Mother General. She is a safe with a double lock!"

As Superior General, Mother Slocombe continued to sing at religious functions. The midnight Mass of 1865 retains an echo of her beautiful voice. Father Léon Villeneuve, P.S.S. said a low Mass. "The little Mother", as Father Arsène Beaudoin, p.s.s. called her, sang the Pater with an enchanting voice. At communion time Mother Slocombe took young Betsy O'Reilly by the hand and led her to the banquet table for the first time. With her ever condescending kindness, she placed the

child at her side. Near her adoptive mother, the orphan girl savored the sweet joy of Jesus' first visit in the Eucharist.

Mother Slocombe excelled in the fine arts: drawing and embroidery. The embroidered piece which was used at the crib of the Child Jesus from 1865 to 1940 was her work. A pocket handkerchief presented to Princess Louise on her visit to Montreal with the Marquis de Lorne, had been embroidered by Mother. It was also her capable hand which adorned the shrine of our beloved Foundress.

Neither did the culinary arts have any secrets for this devoted Superior. On the eve of great feasts, she could be seen in the kitchen, helping the cooks, and our senior Sisters reported that the cakes and biscuits prepared by her were indeed delicious!

The children of our orphanages, the students from our schools were the object of her solicitude. One day, while visiting our mission at Côte-des-Neiges, Mother Slocombe took an interest in each one of the students. The open and intelligent countenance of a small girl drew her attention. Mother Slocombe kissed her on the forehead saying: "I lay a claim on you." This kiss from the kind Mother imprinted like a seal on the heart of the adolescent. The voice of the Superior constantly rang in her ears so that when she had completed her studies, Miss Margaret McKenna requested her admission to the novitiate. She obtained it and became a Sister of Charity.

To our poor, the very fact of seeing our Superior General was a cause for joy. They felt so keenly the solicitude of this true Mother. She believed that if she had neglected the least of her children, she would come under the anathema of St. Paul: "If anyone does not take care of his relatives, he is worse than an infidel." (1 TM 5:8)

Vigilant and attentive, Mother often recommended to the Superiors and department heads to act with tact and prudence toward their charges for in trying to bring happiness

one could cause discontent. Is bringing happiness not doing good?

How could Mother Slocombe be attentive to the needs of so many different people, manage such serious concerns, and at the same time, attend to details with such exquisite tenderness? How in one word, can she keep such perfect control of herself and such deep recollection in all this external activity? It is that in addition to remarkable natural gifts, Mother combined the resources of an intense interior life. Prayer indeed held the principal role in her religious life and she was convinced that in order to exercise a truly fruitful influence, one must be in constant union with the Lord. She liked to recall to her Sisters great supernatural principles.

She wrote that "it is in proportion to our union with God that we are truly successful in ministering to people. Take an interest in them as a mother would, without being absorbed by your cares, your worries, or your difficulties. Help them by your advice and your experience, do not allow them to languish and to suffer. Let us remember that life is given only for our sanctification and for the glory of God."

One day, the Sisters at recreation were wondering what would be the quickest way of getting rid of their faults, Mother answered: "It would be to have our eyes constantly set on Jesus. If we are tempted with pride, let us look at Jesus' humility. If we wish to repress anger, think of the meekness of Jesus before his executioners. If we must write or speak with someone, let us cast a glance toward God which means: Help me, since I am doing this for you. Let us just look at him as if to oblige him to act through us." Then she added: "To maintain silence about all that is going on within us is also one good way. By silence, temptation is dispelled, the human spirit is humbled and God speaks. God's voice rewards us indeed for having kept silence for love of Him."

Mother often recommended meditation, not only a meditation of half an hour or an hour, but constant meditation, that

is a spirit of meditation — and that is very easy. One has only to remain with Jesus, always with Him, wherever we are, with Him alone, through faith and trust.

Recalling the comforting words of Our Lord, she said, “when we love him, he and his Father come within us and establish their abode with us.” Mother Slocombe erected within herself a little sanctuary which she called “the abode of faith.” She entered it frequently to meet her Beloved. This explained her serenity in all circumstances, her patience in trials, her respect for her Sisters which she always treated as spouses of Jesus, her unbiased charity which rendered family life so sweet.

It was undoubtedly there that Mother learned the sublime art of thanksgiving. When her heart was filled with God, it overflowed, consequently “Deo Gratias” was often on her lips.

It was through thanksgiving that Mother, never questioning the ways of God, remained abandoned to his good pleasure.

December 29, 1866 she wrote:

Sisters, I wish you perfect submission to the will of God. Total abandonment to his good pleasure is necessary at all times, especially in the present circumstances. We have no reason not to abandon ourselves to him who can do all things. To question his ways would be to forget his benefits, his mercy, his infinite kindness. Never should we offend him thus. Since we belong to God, we must thank him for everything, including trust and surrender. Let us resolve to live in him without any reservations. Then, what fear would there be?

Do not contrive however, to live without crosses, for the cross is necessary everywhere and if there were no crosses in your mission, I would hasten to recall you all, convinced as I am that where there are no crosses, Jesus is not present either...

We have followed our Mother in her youth, in her relation-

ships with her religious family, in her ascent toward God. Let us now observe her in the expansion of our works through the nine years of her administration. We shall discover other insights, perhaps also some shadows!...but with Mother, we shall say: The night and the day glorify the Lord.

CHAPTER VII

1863 — 1866

It has been said that the Superior General is a custodian; she must govern and act according to the Constitutions which she guards, interprets and transmits as a sacred trust.

As she took office, Mother Jane Slocombe seemed to say: "I shall maintain." And so, she inaugurated her mandate by vigilant attention to decisions of the Chapter, the first ever to be held in our Institute. Some of the stipulations were: the recitation in Latin of prayers before and after meals according to the Roman Breviary, the recitation of the litany of the Blessed Virgin on Saturdays and the practice of making a small cross as we head our letters.

ST. JOSEPH CHAPEL

During the Chapter, the capitulars interrupted the sessions to attend the blessing of St. Joseph Chapel on rue Cathédrale.

His Grace, Bishop Bourget had long entertained the desire of erecting a temple to St. Joseph and to make it a place of pilgrimage. On November 7, 1860, one of our Sisters from St. Joseph's Home, with a permission from her Superior, set out to raise funds for the realization of Bishop Bourget's dream. She began a list of subscribers and raffled a cariole she had received as a gift. But with such modest means, the project would move slowly! Our Sisters realized this and decided to appeal to Mr. Olivier Berthelet, who usually supplied the Home. They exposed the project to him on his birthday, May 27, 1861 and entrusted it to his generosity. The benefactor re-

plied, "Ask St. Joseph to remove the obstacles, and have faith." On his lips, this response was equivalent to a promise.

In fact, on December 23 of the same year, Mr. Berthelet presented to our Superiors, the plans for the future chapel. Mr. B. Lamontagne would be the architect and Mr. David Perreault the contractor. The project would progress rapidly. On Wednesday April 2, 1862, digging began for the foundation. On June 15, Father Alexis Truteau, the Vicar General, blessed the cornerstone. At one point, work was suspended in order to present to Mr. Berthelet, in the very precinct of the future chapel, a medal sent to him by His Holiness, Pius IX.

On October 15, the new temple awaited the solemn dedication. Before the ceremony which was set for eight o'clock in the morning and would last till one o'clock, Bishop Bourget called upon Mr. Berthelet. The latter made his way through the crowd, holding by the hand his little granddaughter, Thérèse Larocque. The venerable bishop then delivered a moving eulogy of the humble benefactor. Then addressing little Thérèse, he reminded her that he had himself baptized her in Paris, and that he had obtained for her, the favor of having the mantle of the great St. Thérèse of Avila on her shoulders for a moment. The scene moved people to tears. Following this ceremony, Father Alexis Truteau celebrated Mass, while Bishop Bourget reserved for himself the pleasure of presiding at the first Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

After this, the Church of St. Joseph was open for public worship. It immediately became a place of pilgrimage. In time, many events took place there. It would be impossible to recall them all. Let us not however, allow Bishop Bourget's zeal for this sanctuary to go unnoticed.

The day following the dedication and through the octave, the noble bishop would celebrate Mass there. At each pastoral retreat, His Grace would himself lead his clergy on a pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Church and would dedicate himself to the saint, along with his priests and his flock. On January 20,

1869 before going to Rome to attend the Vatican Council, Bishop Bourget went there to place his journey under the protection of St. Joseph. The Chronicles note that many mothers attended with their children in order to have them blessed by the beloved bishop. "I bless your children so that they may grow up in the faith," he said.

Bishop Edouard Fabre, bishop elect of 1867, also loved St. Joseph's Sanctuary. There he ordained two priests and sometimes returned as a pilgrim.

Later, Bishop Paul Bruchési could say he had always been a fervent witness to the faith of his father. Almost every year, His Grace would preside at the services through the month honoring the holy guardian of Jesus and he would deliver eloquent messages as would their excellencies Bishop Gauthier and Bishop Georges Lepailleur, Monsignors Adélarde Arbour and Emile Chartier. Fathers Chaillé, Napoléon Roy, Chabot and Raoul Drouin from the Archbishopric, were also faithful chaplains at the beloved sanctuary. In addition, let us mention the following devoted collaborators of former times: Fathers Pierre-Louis Billaudèle, Antoine Giband, Louis Colin, Pierre Martineau, Alexandre Deschamps, Désiré Chevrier and Jean Gaudin. The latter devoted himself at the sanctuary through almost twenty-five years.

Fostered by such high-ranking figures, devotion to St. Joseph flourished. Pilgrimages became numerous, and many ex-votos bore witness to extraordinary favors. The first pilgrimage was made by the children from St. Joseph's Orphanage. They carried the statue processionaly through Saint-Jacques and rue de la Cathédrale where they sang at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Each year, our community went as a body to render homage to our saintly Protector, to entrust to him our spiritual and temporal interests and to solicit special favors.

In March 1930, this pilgrimage took place for the last time. The threat of expropriation which had hovered over the sanctuary for months, became a reality when the bill of sale was signed on March 31.

In view of the approaching demolition of the sanctuary, the remains of Mr. Berthelet, the beloved founder were transferred to the crypt at our Mother House.

On December 10, the dear little church of St. Joseph was like a victim prepared for immolation. All hearts were saddened by the sacrifice. Monsignor Laurent Etienne Cousineau, attended by Fathers Raoul Drouin and Jacques Papineau celebrated a solemn high Mass at eight o'clock. Monsignor Georges-Marie Lepailleur made a touching homily, the text of which is retained in our annals. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was presided by Father René Labelle, the Provincial Superior of the Sulpicians. He was attended by Fathers Aurèle Allard and Yvon Charon, both Sulpicians.

From 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. the members of Nocturnal Adoration had their turn. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament again took place, this time presided by His Excellency Bishop Alphonse-Emmanuel Deschamps, while the pupils from the Ecole Professionnelle provided the singing. It was 9:35 p.m. when the monstrance was removed from its Thabor for the last time. The wreckers would be along in the morning.

A word remains to be said about the statue of St. Joseph which could be called "miraculous".

In 1857, Father Michel-Etienne Faillon ordered from France, a statue of St. Joseph for the Mother House of the Grey Nuns. The vessel which carried it having been shipwrecked, the beloved Sulpician ordered another one which arrived in November of the same year. Then, on May 17, 1858, on the wharf of McGill Street, a box was found, addressed to the Grey Nuns. It contained the first statue which had been ordered. No one ever discovered how it had reached its destina-

tion. It was cleaned and then installed in the sanctuary on rue de la Cathédrale. Since then, it has drawn the devout faithful who owe remarkable blessings to the saint. Today, this statue is still above the main altar at the Institute of Nazareth located at Côte Saint-Michel.

TERTIARIES OF ST. FRANCIS.

In this year of 1863, Mother Slocombe invited Bishop Bourget to come and celebrate the 92nd anniversary of the death of our beloved foundress. His Grace condescended and spent the day at the General Hospital. He celebrated the community Mass, gave a conference on the life and death of Mother d'Youville, and in his visit to the Community, suggested ways by which our Sisters could make amends for the blasphemy spread by Renan in his recent book entitled: *Vie de Jésus*.

Mother Slocombe, wishing to encourage our lay helpers who wished to remain at the Mother House, asked the bishop if he would not receive them as tertiary members of St. Francis. Thirty-eight, wearing a brown cape and a silver cross, were enrolled. Sister Elmiere Thibodeau-Brault was named director of this association.

QUARTERS FOR THE NOVITIATE

Mother Jane Slocombe would now direct her zeal to the novitiate. In doing so however, she would only comply with pontifical directives by providing special quarters for the novices, apart from those of the professed Sisters. On the feast of the Holy Innocents December 28, 1863 our novices were installed in their novitiate.

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

If Mother Slocombe's heart was open to all adversity, she also heard the complaint of Jesus hurting from man's ingrati-

tude, and she responded by enrolling her community in the Apostleship of Prayer on February 25, 1864.

Father Désiré Roussel, p.s.s., having learned of this initiative, came to offer Mother a statue of the Sacred Heart. She accepted it gratefully and invited the benefactor to give her religious family a conference on prayer and the powerful part it plays in the community.

DEATH OF FATHER JOSEPH CARRIÈRES

News of the death of Father Carrières, Superior General of the Sulpicians, arrived on April 25, 1864, causing a painful surprise for our priests; pain which indeed was shared by the Grey Nuns.

Before his election in 1850, Father Carrières had been the correspondent of Father Thavenet, p.s.s., for the liquidation of the stocks of Canadian Communities. While passing through Montreal, he had come to celebrate Mass in our chapel, had visited the institution and had chatted with our Mothers. The latter conveyed to him their gratitude for his services. Since then, this beloved priest had always continued, with our Community, a correspondence which our archives have respectfully preserved.

Frequent supplications rose toward heaven for the soul of this worthy Superior, this zealous servant of God and of the Church. His successor, Father Caval, was elected in 1864.

A DISPENSARY AT THE MOTHER HOUSE

The year 1864 would be marked by the opening of a dispensary at the Mother House; another enterprise undertaken at the instigation of a Sulpician, Father Léon Villeneuve, then the general chaplain to the poor.

Thanks to her skillfulness and her foresight, Mother Slocombe quickly organized the various rooms required and soon the Sisters took up their duties. On June 9, Bishop Bour-

get presided at the first meeting of the doctors. They were seven in number. It was decided that each day at a set time, one of them would come in turn to allow the poor to benefit by their knowledge and skills. They would distribute necessary medication... without charge, since Father Villeneuve would assume the costs. For eight years, this dispensary was the meeting place of all the needy sick of the area, but when the Mother House was transferred to Guy Street in 1871, the dispensary was installed at our St. Joseph Institute.

BISHOP BOURGET IN ROME

On November 14, 1864, the bells of our City announced the departure of our chief pastor for the Eternal City. For the fifth time, His Grace was going to pay his respects and those of his people to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius IX. Having come to the Mother House to obtain for himself the assistance of our prayers, the Bishop condescended to take along a copy of our Constitutions drawn up according to the new directives of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars. The desires, the hopes and the prayers of the Community would, for thirteen months, rise toward the Eternal Father for the intentions of the diocese and of our Community.

THE APPROBATION OF OUR INSTITUTE

Finally, on December 20, 1865, the bells of Ville-Marie pealed again, this time to announce the return of Bishop Bourget. Two of our Mothers hastened to welcome him. "You are the first to greet my arrival," his Grace said. "Probably the first also to invite Your Grace to come and rest at our place," said Mother Slocombe. He replied "I willingly accept." On December 23, at approximately 6:00 a.m., His Grace was expected. At his arrival, the Sisters and the poor formed double rows along his path. The chapel was magnificently decorated, the organ sounded, the choir responded. Attended by Fathers Bonnissant and Rousselot, the prelate advanced,

bestowing blessings as he went. Mass began. At the end Bishop Bourget announced the great favor which he brought back from Rome... Our Holy Father the Pope approves the Institute of the Grey Nuns of Montreal. The Choir intoned the Te Deum. The whole nave responded in powerful chorus.

The homage of this day was a burst of spontaneous and joyous gratitude to Jesus, to His Holiness Pius IX, to Mother d'Youville, to the Sulpicians and to Bishop Bourget. On this day, the old General Hospital, vibrated like a great heart of stone with all the joyous hearts sheltered under its roof.

May the holy bishop be assured of the eternal gratitude of the Grey Nuns: those of yesterday, those of today and those of tomorrow!

DECREE

Approbation of the Institute of the Grey Nuns of Montreal

In 1738 the pious Institute of the "Sisters of Charity", commonly called Grey Nuns, came into existence in Canada, in the town of Montreal. They make simple vows and are under the leadership of a Superior General. Apart from their own sanctification, the goal of these Sisters is the care of the sick in hospitals, of orphan girls who are abandoned or endangered whom they care for in hospices as well as the instruction of young girls in the basic truths of the Catholic faith and their training in manual works. With time, this pious Institute has spread to several dioceses with great advantage to the faith, such that in 1862, it was highly praised and recommended by the Apostolic See. But recently, through the Bishop of Montreal, who came to Rome, the Superior General has presented to the Most Holy Father, Pope Pius IX a petition in which she earnestly requested the approval of the pious Insti-

tute and its Constitutions. His Holiness, in an audience granted to the undersigned, pro-secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on July 21, 1865, having taken into consideration the letters of recommendation of the various bishops, has approved and confirmed as he does by the present decree approves and confirms said Institute as a Congregation with simple vows under the leadership of a Superior General, except for the jurisdiction of bishops, according to the prescriptions of the Holy Canons and the Apostolic Constitutions. His Holiness defers the approbation of the Constitutions to a more opportune time and for the time being, has ordered that certain remarks be transmitted.

Given in Rome, at the secretariat of the said Congregation of Bishops and Regulars on the fifth day of August 1865.

Card. Quaglia, Prefect.

PLACE OF THE SEAL

Stanislaus Svegliati, pro-sec.

Pro apographis J.O. Paré, Ch. Sec.

When our Mothers considered that we owe largely to the Sulpicians this approbation of the Holy See, their souls were filled with gratitude.

Who could estimate what enlightenment a priest can bring to a religious family, what strength and zeal he can convey! How much more powerful yet do not these elements of supernatural energy become when they come from a source, from a society whose members live by the same principles, observe the same traditions, are vivified by the same spirit! Such was the role which the beloved Society of the Sulpicians fulfilled in favor of our Community over a span of two centuries.

Renewed by the Holy See in its attachment to the old Sulpician trunk upon which it had been grafted from its origin, the Institute reached its full expansion.

RELICS OF ST. PLACID

Bishop Bourget had another joy in store for us. During his stay in Rome, His Grace had sent to his religious communities, the bodies of five martyrs. We received that of St. Placid, a young Benedictine monk martyred with several companions on October 5, 544 by Saracen Pirates.

On December 29, 1865, Mother Slocombe received the blessed martyr in her room. Our Sisters made a beautiful reliquary, and the following year, on the day on which all relics were displayed, it was solemnly enthroned. Four Sisters carried the little saint processionally on a cart decked with lilies and roses and laid him beneath the altar of Our Lady of Sorrows.

During the ceremony, a woman suffering from an eye ailment, cried out in the crowd: "If I can see the saint, I shall be healed." Despite her desire, she had to wait till the procession was over. She then approached the reliquary and prayed with trusting fervor. After her prayer, she felt relieved and left happy, but her gratitude redoubled when her complete healing was undeniably proven. Other favors were also obtained and the faithful came in large numbers to mark their gratitude to St. Placid by venerating his precious remains.

DEATH OF FATHER GRANET, PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

On February 9, 1866, God called to himself kind Father Dominique Granet, the eleventh Provincial Superior of the Sulpicians in Montreal. This genuine priest had wished that everyone would rejoice at his death as being the deliverance of a prisoner. He had once said to a confrere who stood watch by him, "Friend, when you learn of my death, please recite the Te Deum."

Father Granet was a saintly and learned priest, an obliging confrere, a wise counsellor, a discreet confidant. Born at Espalem in France on August 24, 1810, he came to Canada on

September 27, 1843. He was assigned to the Theological Seminary where he taught for thirteen years; during which the veneration and esteem of his confreres, led to his appointment as Superior. "I have only become the servant of a greater number of people," he said.

Although there would be so many beautiful things to say about this priest, we shall limit ourselves to speaking here only of his love for the poor. "I shall make it a rule to receive graciously all the poor and the afflicted," he had said; and he welcomed them all with paternal kindness!

To one of our Sisters whose duty it was to assist them, he wrote: "Consider, in the poor which you visit, the person of Our Adorable Lord who deigned to take upon Himself all our corporal and spiritual poverty. When you meet a poor person, picture to yourself Jesus Christ covered with dust, sweat and blood!"

As the Superior of our Community, Father Granet visited the poor, the sick and the orphans faithfully each month. This visit brought real joy. He was expected with eagerness, and everyone watched for his arrival. The very thought that the kind Father Granet would soon pass by helped everyone to forget his woes. He went through the wards consoling and encouraging the poor, leaving them filled with renewed courage to endure their hardships with patience, and deeply moved by his kindness.

The charity of this beloved Superior was inexhaustible. No one approached him without receiving some assistance. If someone reproached him for being too lavish of himself, he would reply smilingly, "I shall try to amend myself!" but his compassionate heart prevailed over his resolutions.

His charity did not allow him to shirk sacrifice. In July of 1847, while the seminarians were on vacation, Father Granet went to the parish to help his confreres in their ministry. Five priests from the Seminary had just fallen victims to typhus.

His Superior said to him, "Friend, you speak English. Your services would be useful at the sheds. They are asking for priests there."

The man of God immediately took the holy oils and acted upon the suggestion. As they saw him passing by, profoundly recollected, his confreres said to each other: "See how eagerly he goes to his death." He remained with the sick through the worst part of the epidemic; then, when the seminarians returned, he resumed his duties as professor. Several days later, he was struck with the scourge, but eventually, God restored his health.

As retreat master for several retreats, the beloved Superior stressed the interior life of Mary.

One evening in the month of May, he remarked: "In Mary, there are two distinct lives: one exterior which consists in ordinary actions to which Mary subjected herself as we do, and the other interior, which is none other than the realization of Mary's sentiments and affections toward God. Nothing is more beautiful, more delightful to the angels than the interior life of Mary. The Eternal Father has placed in her, as in a sacred vessel, immense blessings for the sanctification of this august Virgin, and great favors for the salvation of all; the Son of God chose her for his resting place, his abode. The Holy Spirit dwells in her as in a sacred temple. All the angels delight in contemplating the beauty of the daughter of the King of kings. The fruit of contemplation of Mary's soul must result in conformity of our dispositions with those of Mary. Father Olier was chosen by God to promote devotion to Mary's interior life. The Grey Nuns must be followers of Father Olier more than any other religious, study and reproduce her holy dispositions..."

Father Granet's strong constitution had already several times been shaken by serious illnesses. The first attack of paralysis dated back to 1857. In 1863, a second one occurred which compelled him to curtail his activity. During the year

1865 however, his health appeared to improve. The ardent priest wished to resume the duties of his ministry and to preach the annual retreat for the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. A few days later, he suffered a third relapse from which he would not recover.

Through long months of suffering, Father Granet gave the example of the virtues he had practised all his life: faith, mortification, and patience. To those who inquired if his medication was difficult to take, he would reply with a smile: "It could be better-tasting."

Several days before the opening of the jubilee, the beloved patient speaking with one of his confreres, asked: "What do you think of my condition? Do you think I will last until the jubilee?"... to which his friend replied, "We don't believe you will, Father. According to all probability, God will call you to celebrate in heaven."

"Oh, thank you Father, you have just told me what no one else has dared to tell me. A Christian must not be afraid of death. He must be able to face it squarely."

On November 20, he had a violent attack. Father Billaudèle administered the last rites of the Church to the patient. He felt somewhat relieved and the next day was able to address these words to his confreres: "My dear confreres, may you always preserve the spirit of our good and beloved Father Olier. Let us always remain his worthy children. The Blessed Virgin, who has preserved this house, will not abandon Montreal. May you always live in the spirit of poverty and obedience in such a way that, as Fénelon once said, you may have all the merit of the vow without having made it. As I bid you adieu, I wish only to say to you the words which John spoke to the early Christians: "My children, love one another."

On Sunday, February 4, Father Granet experienced a general chill which was the symptom of one last attack. On February 9, at 5:10 p.m., he expired in the arms of his confreres at

age fifty-six and in the thirty first year of his priesthood. Twenty-three of these had been spent in Canada.

The body of the deceased lay in state for six days in the private chapel of the Seminary. The Sisters and their Superiors visited the remains and bore witness of their filial piety and deep gratitude.

The funeral ceremony took place on February 15, at Notre Dame Church where a numerous congregation was in attendance. The final prayers were said by Father Villeneuve, while Bishop Bourget presided at the service. Present were: Bishop Horan of Kingston, eight vicars-general, the chapter of Montreal, the Rector of Laval University, the Superiors of the Religious Orders and of all the educational institutions of the city, of the diocese and of neighboring dioceses, as well as the chaplains of religious communities and more than two hundred priests, apart from the seminarians. Places of honor were occupied by government officials, the Mayor of the City, magistrates, national societies, the most distinguished citizens of the English and Irish societies of our city. One would have believed that Church and State had come together to bear witness of their regret and gratitude to this holy priest whose whole life had been dedicated to the service of the Church and of Canada which he had loved like a second home land.

For our Mothers, there remained one last duty of gratitude to fulfill: They accomplished it on the 19th of the same month by having a solemn funeral service celebrated for the repose of the soul of the beloved Superior. Attendance at the service by 40 Sulpicians and members of the clergy expressed a family bereavement as did the numerous palms around the catafalque and the pious singing. But death is never without hope for Jesus said: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, in order that they may behold my glory."

CHAPTER VIII

1866 — 1867

Mother Jane Slocombe's zeal would radiate farther than St. Albert and farther than Ile-à-la-Crosse. No initiative, even if it came from the farthest place in the world, would leave her indifferent. The rugged but beautiful apostolate of the distant missions enthused her; consequently, she yielded to the request of Bishop Henri Faraud, Titular Bishop of Anemour, who desired to have Grey Nuns for his vicariate of Athabaska — Mackenzie. Before we follow them, let us tell the story of this great missionary bishop.

BISHOP HENRI FARAUD, O.M.I.

In 1793, in the village of Sérignan, in France, there lived a noble family who possessed a small fortune and enjoyed great consideration. The father, Jean-César Faurye was 74. He had two sons and three daughters of whom one was a Sister in the Convent of the Blessed Sacrament at Bollène. The two sons were called into the army. Shortly afterward, the eldest daughter was married. Only the elderly man, the mother and the youngest daughter remained at home.

On an order of the Revolutionary Tribunal, César Faurye was arrested, taken from his home and imprisoned at Orange. On the day following the arrest, an eighteen year old girl came to the jailer. "I wish to see citizen César Faurye," she said. "Who are you young lady?" asked the jailer.

"I am his daughter, Madeleine," she replied. "I have some supplies for him."

"Your father is in solitary confinement and you cannot see him; but give me the supplies and I shall deliver them to him," the jailer said. "O thank you citizen," replied the young girl. "Tell my father that every day I shall bring him supplies. Every day I shall come, until he is returned to us. That will be soon, will it not?" The jailer did not reply and Madeleine returned to her mother. Thereafter, she was seen each day, on the road from Sérignan to Orange, carrying a basket of supplies for her father.

Further trials were still awaiting the Faurye family. One night as mother and daughter were praying together, they heard a sudden knock at their door. The elderly woman was frightened. Madeleine ran to the door. "Who is there?" she inquired.

"It is I, Henriette... open quickly" replied a feeble voice.

Madeleine recognized her sister, the nun from the Convent in Bollène.

"Our Convent has just been closed," the latter explained. "All our Sisters have dispersed. Yesterday, they wanted me to swear allegiance. I refused. I know the fate that awaits me now. God's will be done!"

Several days later, she was imprisoned in the Clastres Prison in Orange.

From that time, Madeleine Faurye had to bring to Orange supplies for two each day. She was not disheartened by the obstacles she encountered.

A fortnight later, Henriette Faurye along with two Sisters and Father Lusignan, a young priest, appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal. "Come now, Henriette," said the judge, "take the oath and tomorrow you will be with your mother."

"I made a vow to God," she replied; "I will make no other."

For a moment, the young priest appeared to weaken.

"Have courage!" the Sister told him. "The gates of heaven are opening to receive us."

There was only a short distance from the Revolutionary Tribunal to the guillotine. That day the executioner was undoubtedly eager to complete his infernal business for it was hardly midday and already the victims were on their way to the scaffold. They marched along singing the Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

The singing attracted the attention of the prisoners. Suddenly a bald head appeared at the dormer window of one of the cells and a cry of pain was heard. It was César Faurye, Henriette's father who had just seen his daughter going to her death.

The prisoners drew him away from this horrible scene and the old man, overwhelmed with grief, fainted.

"Come, Henriette," said the hangman, "you still have time. Take the required oath and tonight you will dine with us."

"Tonight, I shall dine with the angels," the martyr answered with a solemn voice, and she ascended the steps to the scaffold.

At this moment, there was a commotion in the crowd which opened a pathway and suddenly, a young girl ran to the base of the scaffold. "Henriette!" she cried.

It was Madeleine. The victim heard the voice of her sister. She appeared transformed, her brow appeared to be enshrined in light and raising her eyes heavenward, she cried: "Farewell Madeleine! Embrace Mother. I shall see you in heaven where I shall await you."

Madeleine Faurye, the young girl who had just witnessed the martyrdom of her sister, as well as her great virtue and heroism, would one day be the mother of an apostle. She would give the child the name of his martyr aunt, and he, experiencing this generous blood flowing through his veins,

would also offer his life in sacrifice for the victory of the faith. This child was Henri Faraud.

Henri Faraud, son of Xavier Faraud and of Madeleine Faurye, was born at Gigondas Vaucluse, on June 17, 1823.

He loved sports with a passion, willingly leaving his books in order to romp through the mountains or to climb trees. His mother, taking this need of activity for unrestrained behavior, said to him one day: "Son, if you continue to behave this way, you will never come to anything good."

These words, said Bishop Faraud, impressed me deeply and led to deep reflection. Several days later, I said to my mother: "I have not forgotten your words. I want to do something with my life. I want to become a man."

"If that is the case," she answered, "since you have been touched by grace, dedicate your life to the One who died for us. Know that you were not yet born when I already had a presentiment that you would become a priest. On the day of your birth, I offered you secretly to God. Come then, son, today I wish to dedicate you to Him in a solemn way."

My mother then led me to the church. She had me kneel beside her at the altar, and taking one of my hands in hers, she prayed. As she was praying, I felt by the pressure of her hand, the intensity of my mother's prayer. Each outburst of this beautiful person was communicated to me by an additional clasp; then I heard her whisper: "My God, I offer you my child, my Henri. Accept him as a sacrifice for your glory. My dear Henriette, holy martyr, be his protector in heaven; give him your strength, your piety, your virtues, your courage. O Mary, accept him as your child."

"As I heard these words interspersed with sobs, I felt my soul being bonded to that of my mother and I understood the enormity of the sacrifice.

When we left the church, I had become another being. I had just received a second baptism, the baptism of my mother's tears."

Henri Faraud became a missionary. While still only a deacon, he left for his distant mission and it was only a year later, on May 8, 1847, that he was ordained to the priesthood in St. Boniface by Bishop Provencher.

The following year, he was in Ile-à-la-Crosse. On August 24, 1849 he wrote that the boats from the Athabaska district had arrived bringing him a letter. This letter was delivered to him by an agent of the Hudson Bay Company. Tears had washed away almost half of the writing. "My eldest brother who was tenderhearted and very attached to me was notifying me that we no longer have our mother. This mother who loved us so dearly has passed away...

I scanned the letter without shedding a tear but my soul was filled with sadness. I was obsessed by a thought. It is I who have caused her death. O my God! Your plans are admirable! You shed your blood to wash away our iniquities; you require of us tears and sacrifice; how could we refuse them?

She who, alone after God, had illumined my soul with the pure radiance of her love; she who, alone after God, had filled my life, my mother was gone! Henceforth, only God could replace her. I would look only to heaven.

From this day forth, I felt I was more than ever a missionary, since I could now truly say God alone! I belong to God alone, since nothing binds me to earth. I can live and die without joy and without sadness. I shall experience the happiness of being united to God without the fear that my love for him will be hindered by any earthly affection.

The deep wound caused in my soul by the death of my dear mother never did heal over. One can take a resolution but one's heart nevertheless obeys nature. Since that day a veil of sadness constantly obscures my existence. Some people claim that missionaries who forsake their family and their country in order to devote their whole lives for the salvation

of non-believers have no heart, and that religion suppresses all human sentiment in them..."

Father Faraud revealed himself to be a tireless and heroic missionary. Alone, and often forsaken by his guides, he travelled great distances in order to win people to God. In 1848, he was at Ile-à-la-Crosse, then in 1849, he founded the Mission of the Nativity on Lake Athabaska. In 1852 his zeal led him as far as Slave Lake. In May of 1862, districts of Athabaska and Mackenzie were established as an apostolic vicariate, with Reverend Father Faraud as its first titular. He was consecrated on November 30, 1863 by Bishop Guibert, O.M.I., the Archbishop of Tours, who later became the cardinal Archbishop of Paris.

FORT PROVIDENCE

The first act of this dauntless missionary had been, as we have said, to secure the devoted services of the Grey Nuns. He had obtained this favor on the conditions agreed upon between Bishop Taché and our Superior General. "Together, we shall pray, we shall work and we shall fast."

The foundresses for the Mackenzie region left Montreal on September 17, 1866. On this memorable day Bishop Taché, three Oblate priests, Father Jean-Baptiste Thibeault, the Vicar General of St. Boniface and Father Georges Dugas came to celebrate Mass in our chapel for the intentions of the missionaries. The day was spent in immediate preparations for the trip. When the day began to decline, it soon was time for the departure. There were moving farewells. The missionaries went to the chapel for the itinerary prayers presided by Father Bonnissant. Six carriages were waiting in the alley way. The six missionaries boarded, along with Mother Slocombe and eleven of their companions. It was dark. A few lanterns hanging on the trees provided a dim light for the Sisters, old folks, relatives and friends. There was silent emotion during the final farewell, and the carriages rolled away toward the station.

No sooner were the missionaries on the train than Bishop Bourget, escorted by thirty young men in military uniform, approached them, blessed them and said, "Go to your sacrifice Sisters and await your reward in heaven." Seeing our Mother General there, His Grace congratulated and thanked her for the joy she occasioned him by sending Sisters from his diocese to work for the glory of God and the salvation of souls in the far northern wilderness.

The locomotive began to move, a final signal was given and the train sped forward leaving behind the weeping relatives. The Sisters however, maintained their smile.

If Lacordaire's observation that the moral value of persons is measured by their capacity for sacrifice holds true, our missionaries to the Mackenzie must be very courageous indeed!

The trip by train between Montreal and St. Paul, Minnesota, was relatively easy, but there remained the second part of the journey to St. Boniface, which had to be travelled by Red River carts. Since such a voyage has already been described in our history, we shall only say that our travellers arrived in St. Boniface on October 13 and spent the winter with our Sisters.

They were eager however, for the day of their departure. They knew that Bishop Faraud had travelled the seven hundred kilometers from Lake Athabaska to Lac-La-Biche where he awaited them, and that he would accompany them himself, from Lac-La-Biche to Providence. They therefore lamented various mishaps which unduly delayed their departure.

Bishop Taché wrote: "The whole prairie had suffered a fire that spring and the oxen would not travel without eating. They had to wait till the grass grew again. Furthermore, the weather was exceptionally bad and the roads were more inaccessible than ever. A single caravan lost two hundred and fifty heads of oxen or horses, all of which died of misery and from mosquito bites."

The Red River to Lac-La-Biche was a long way by dirt roads, with oxen and rugged carts via Portage-la-Prairie, Qu'Appelle, Carlton, and Fort Pitt, a route fraught with many streams and rivulets which had to be crossed in various ways.

Let us include here, the account of the trip as related by Sister Adéline Audet-Lapointe. We offer it as a homage of our admiration and our gratitude to all our valiant missionaries of the Arctic regions both of the past and of the present.

DIARY OF THE TRAVELS OF SISTERS

Lapointe, Brunelle, Michon, Michel-des-Saints and Ward

FROM ST. BONIFACE TO THE MACKENZIE

We left St. Boniface on June 8, 1867 under a shower of heavenly blessings, for it poured all day. It was so bad that we had a hard time to pull out of the clay and mud. Sister Ward especially, needed a strong arm to pull her out.

This torrential rain held us back for three days at St. François-Xavier and it was still raining when we left. Progress was laborious as you can well imagine, and rest-stops were unpleasant. Often, at nightfall, we arrived at a low-lying, marshy place and had to prepare our beds on the bare ground. That would have been bad enough in itself, but our bedding, exposed to the rain all day, could hardly protect us from dampness through the night. We had to forget about comfort. It would have appeared natural that such a state of affairs would be harmful to our health; but thanks be to God for whom we were sacrificing ourselves, he kept us like the apple of his eye. Not one of us became even slightly ill.

It appeared a trifle to us to suffer from the inconvenience of the rain and sometimes of the cold, for in this country, weather changes are frequent; but we necessarily experienced long delays. Streams became great rivers and

brooks became impetuous currents. Unable to find a fordable place, and having no boat or canoe in this wilderness with which to cross, we sometimes experienced a delay of two or three days in places where we could have travelled through in a few minutes on a good day. However, it was interesting to see how our guides managed in these difficulties. In a few short moments, our carts wrapped in large specially-treated skins, were launched on the river and became transport boats. Ropes were fastened to each extremity and the men on both shores towed them in turn. After the cargo, the Sisters passed with great precaution for any faulty move could have caused us to take a bath in the cold muddy water.

Let us admit that we would have fared poorly in these different events if Divine Providence had not provided us with the help of Fathers A. Lacombe and Leduc, O.M.I. as fellow travellers. God, who knows their devotion to us, will reward them.

To describe for you one of these crossings is to narrate them all. In the course of this journey which lasted from June 8 to July 31, we made more than a hundred crossings, great and small. You can thereby imagine the unpleasantness.

It was already July 30 and according to plans, we should have arrived at Lac-La-Biche by the 15th at the latest. News received at Fort Pitt, informed us that Bishop Faraud was waiting for us there since June 25. We could have made a useless journey, for we supposed that the Company boats having already gone, the bishop would have been in the sad obligation of going along. Yet, we were hoping to arrive in Lac-La-Biche the following day. For this reason, we rose at one o'clock in the morning, and at three o'clock we were on our way. We were so eager to arrive that we would have liked to fly; but we were crossing a large stretch of forest land through winding roads where, because of deep and muddy ditches, we could advance only at a snail's pace. Thus, the whole morning went

by. We had just taken a light lunch. Back in our carts, we were advancing slowly, in gloomy silence, with heads bowed, wondering if we would ever arrive, when suddenly, emerging from a dark curve, we saw two horsemen riding at full speed. Because of their military appearance and their dress, we almost took them at first for enemies. But, what a pleasant surprise! They were none other than our bishop and Reverend Vègreville who as a last resource, were setting out to search for us, determined not to return till they had found us. Instantly, we disembarked and knelt before our beloved pastor to receive his blessing. Soon afterward, we were exchanging greetings with our Sisters in Lac-La-Biche who had shared the bishop's concern about our long delay.

A few days of rest in such pleasant company would have been beneficial, even necessary after such a journey; but those who arrive late, must make up time.

On August 3 therefore, we were up at three o'clock. After the solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, we said farewell to our Sisters and set sail. From the first night, we had plentiful rain, but we had a good tent, we did not get wet. On the following day, the wind having dispelled the clouds, we sailed pleasantly on a narrow stretch of the river which was bordered by trees gilded by the rising sun. At eight o'clock, the Bishop celebrated Mass and gave us the Bread of life. Thus strengthened, we were then able like Elijah, to travel forty days and forty nights, without stopping.

Alas, despite our faith, since the water was too low, the guide advised us that the passengers would have to disembark. The bishop who directed the march through the forest traced out a path for us through the tall grass, which saturated by the previous rain, wet our skirts, making them so heavy that we could walk only with great difficulty. This slow pace allowed us to advance only six miles that day. At the guide's invitation, we resumed our places in the boats, having had

enough of the walk. Strength does not always respond to courage. We were exhausted!

On the following day, forgetting the trials of the previous day, we were chatting and enjoying ourselves together when suddenly there was a cry: "Stop, you can go no further!" There was another difficulty ahead. From this point to the mouth of the Athabaska River about sixty miles down stream, there were many small rocky rapids where the water was too low to allow navigation with full cargoes. What were we to do? The easiest thing would have been to go down with half loads, then return for the other half; but the tired oarsmen declared openly that if they went down stream, they would not return, for they had had enough of the long delay. Then there remained only two alternatives, both equally painful: either to leave half of our load which had cost us such expense, fatigue and worry, or else make up our minds to walk. We were loathe to opt for the first; we tried the second. There was no longer question of journeying two or three hours through the wet prairie as we had done the first time, but two or three days, now through thick forest, then along steep banks, sinking in the mire at each step, crossing streams and getting lost in endless thickets and briers.

The difficulties and the obstacles were not for us alone, for the bishop preceded us with hatchet in hand, selecting the less difficult paths, chopping down the branches in our way, making bridges across ravines. Insufficiently hardened to walking, we were really exhausted. However, we walked all morning, covering about fifteen miles including the detours. Having completely lost sight of the river, we did not know if the voyageurs were ahead or behind. Be it as it may, worn out, we stopped to rest. We lit a huge fire and soon after, we heard our folks yelling, struggling and pulling their boats along with difficulty. Despite our weak courage, we had however, been the first to arrive.

The men stopped, had something to eat and prepared to leave again. Since Sister Ward could not walk anymore, I suggested that they take her aboard. They consented on condition that she would pray to the Great Spirit for easy sailing. Sister Ward had no sooner embarked than the boat sailed freely almost without obstacles. This was very good for the voyageurs, but we who were coming behind with hurried step through the brush, could not even follow them with our eyes. By dint of much yelling, we were heard, and the boat stopped. We had walked another six miles. Whether they wished to or not, the group had to receive us. The men had to carry the baggage on their shoulders so that in two or three hours, we had travelled hardly a half mile. Since all were tired, we camped a little earlier than usual.

Sleep refreshes and night sometimes brings happiness. All through this night, we had a pelting rain. Lightning flashed across the sky and thunder shook everything about us. In the morning, we rose with stiff legs and fevered limbs. God however, had provided for the needs of his children, for the night storm had caused the water to rise temporarily, so that after inspection, our guide said we could all embark. From then on, the boat floated freely most of the time and, in the more difficult places, the men easily succeeded in freeing it. Although we were obliged to walk from time to time, these stretches were never beyond our strength.

One day, we arrived at Grand Rapids, a place where huge rocks formed an island on the Athabaska River which, thus divided, shoots its water forth in staggering cascades. The very sight of these falls makes one shudder. It was impossible to pass there! We first had to land on the island where the current divides. Our guide was able to moor the barge between two huge rocks. The whole crew having landed, the men carried the baggage on their shoulders to the other end of the island, a distance of a half-mile. Now, the men had to tow the boat but they could not budge it. Then solemnly, Bishop

Faraud came to invite us to lend a hand. They hitched us, two by two, with collars and — undoubtedly with God's help — the boat was towed to the other end of the island where it was reloaded to continue the journey. Can you imagine five Grey Nuns hitched up? What a beautiful sight!

One day we climbed a hill in order to pick wild berries which grew there in abundance. While we were eating them with much delight, the boat rushed into a rapid. We had no sooner seen it than already striking violently against a rock between wind and water, the steel keel broke into pieces with a dismal noise and shook the barge violently. We were filled with fear. This alarming incident shattered all our boast of courage. It was however, our last trial on the Athabaska River.

From McMurray on, we slept in the barge rather than camping on shore. The Bishop stretched out among the bundles, with part of a stove for his mattress and a box for a pillow. The space between decks had been reserved for us, but as it was neither sufficiently long nor wide, we laid in a disorderly manner with the feet of one serving as a pillow for another.

On August 13, we saw the vast surface of the beautiful Lake Athabaska dotted with small islands covered with green trees. We relaxed in the hope of reaching the Mission of the Nativity, the oldest of the Northern Vicariate. Pushed along by a favorable wind, we arrived to the sound of repeated discharges of musketry.

Need I tell you that we were the object of a close observation? The Natives, having never seen Sisters, asked inquisitively if we said Mass, if we heard confessions... One of them knelt to receive our blessing.

On arriving at this mission, we became responsible for altar care. Bishop Clut, Auxiliary of Bishop Faraud (Bishop of Arindèle), was to be consecrated on August 15, 1867. Fathers Eynard and Tissier, O.M.I. performed the role of assistant bishops and the consecrator's servant was Brother Salasse.

However, the ceremony was so touching that it will forever be engraved in our memory. We would have remained there several days but the terrible voice of the guide was heard: "All aboard...! All aboard...!" and we left.

Soon, drawn by the majestic Slave River, we entered it as into a new world. No more rocks, no more steep shores but a body of water almost as great as the St. Lawrence, flowing freely and noiselessly through forests. Days appeared short amid this beauty. One day's travel and we were at the falls where the water, intercepted in its course by enormous peaks, divides into a thousand streams, rises churning and falls with a din to the bottom of the waterfall. The sixteen-mile rapids at Fort Smith are the last obstacles to navigation on the way to the Arctic Ocean. In approaching these terrible abysses, we were gripped by terror. Fortunately, our guide who had passed here more than fifty times, launched his boat with a sure hand. We however, had to make four portages.

On the following day we arrived at Salt River, at the home of the elderly Beaulieu. He was a Montagnais Métis, who by his kind nature, won the esteem and affection of the Natives. We were moved, seeing these poor children of the forests assembled there to await us. They were gathered in their small chapel, attending with angelic piety, the Mass celebrated by their bishop. As they had expressed the desire of hearing the Sisters sing, we gave a performance, but after the homily, they delighted us by a beautiful hymn of their own in their dialect. We were filled with admiration by their singing in perfect accord. We would have liked to take a few days of rest here, but the cry, "All aboard! All aboard!" was heard again.

We travelled so well that after two nights and two days, we reached the Mission of St. Joseph on the Great Slave Lake. Father Gascon, O.M.I., who had been alone for years, received us with open arms into his poor hovel. His tearful gaze moved from the Bishop to us and from us to the Bishop. He appeared not to believe what he was seeing. He was soon

convinced that we were real. He would have liked to keep us several days, but the Bishop, wishing to take advantage of the favorable weather, hastened the departure.

The old priest, by his prayers and his tears, obtained a change of weather, as St. Scolastica once had. A violent wind stirred the lake to a fury and compelled us to stop for two days. Then the voice of the guide calling us aboard sounded more gentle...

Great Slave Lake is a veritable interior sea, and the winds rule it; our progress was slow, very slow, intermingled with compulsory stops. On August 27, we travelled with a doubtful wind. Toward nightfall, it abated... so that the hope of arriving sooner made us decide to spend the night on the boat. Alas! the wind changed direction, the sky became cloudy, rain fell and our boat ran aground on a rock that was between wind and water. It was impossible to rest...

The morning star had hardly appeared when our guide knew where he was. He awakened the oarsmen, moored the boat and went for breakfast on a small island at the entrance to the Mackenzie River. THANKS BE TO GOD! In a few more hours, we would be home. Those hours appeared long as it was only at three o'clock in the afternoon that we caught sight of the flag waving over the Bishop's residence. Soon, the scenery became more visible and we saw many people moving about on the shore, and firing guns to welcome us. We intoned a solemn MAGNIFICAT.

It was with a hymn to the Queen of Heaven that Reverend Grouard, O.M.I., Brother Alexis, Brother Boisramé and the Natives welcomed us to this foreign land so eagerly desired and which would be our homeland, our sepulchre!

We entered the church to thank Jesus for the protection he had visibly granted us during this long and perilous journey which had just come to such a happy end.

Since our arrival, we are happy. We must accept many sacrifices but that is what we expected and so that does not surprise us.

Farewell, beloved Mother. This paper, more fortunate than we your missionaries, will go back home. We shall follow it in spirit, or rather, we shall get there before it since we will travel more rapidly.

Farewell dear Sisters of the Mother House. We shall probably not see each other again on this land of exile. Please grant the missionaries of the Far-North a daily remembrance in your prayers to Jesus and to our Venerable Foundress.

Thus, we were expanding toward the North Pole in 1867.

Our missionaries did indeed arrive in Fort Providence despite Bishop Grouard's comment that the enterprise was foolhardy. On learning that the Grey Nuns would go to the Mackenzie he had said: "What audacity! How can women come to this wilderness and live with Indians whose civilization has hardly begun! How will they even be able to make the journey? How will they ever live through the rugged winters... without bread? We men can subsist by killing a rabbit or a muskrat... but Sisters!!! Why, we know of explorers well equipped by their governments, who even ate their hired help."

Our Sisters first assessed the field of action offered to their courage and their abnegation. They found a good number of Chipewyans, Loucheux, Dog-ribs, Hare, Yellow-Knife and Slaves, still immersed in the darkness of paganism and idolatry.

Among them, women and children were treated with barbarity. Newborns were often killed and even eaten. A mother, looking disdainfully at her newborn daughter said to her, "Your father has abandoned me, so I shall not bother nursing you!" She then took her out of her cabin, wrapped her in a large skin, choked her and threw her into the bush. Another

woman said to her small child, "Your father is dead. Who will feed you? I have enough problems of my own." Then, digging a hole in the snow, she buried the child and went on her way.

The Faith has greatly changed these barbaric customs, but nevertheless, they have not disappeared completely. One may wonder how the missionaries went about civilizing these folks of the wilds. They began by attracting them by providing food and clothing, then teaching and training them. It was an arduous task. There were no precedents in education to facilitate it. They had to teach the Native that work does not degrade a person, that times of difficulty as well as times of pleasure can be offered to God, that Christians appreciate the Cross. They especially had to help the poor Natives, take their interests at heart, share their distress. One Native said to a priest: "You people are our friends because you do not deceive us and you live among us as brothers." Indeed, that was what the missionaries did, but no one will ever know what difficulties and privations they had to endure!

In these arctic regions, winter lasts seven or eight months and the mercury often drops to minus 60 degrees. To afford protection against the rigors of the cold, there were yet, in all the missions, only wood-burning stoves. One Sister was said to have dragged to the convent, by herself, trunks of trees which the Oblate Brother had felled in the forest. When the logs were ready, the same Sister rose hourly to feed and supervise the fire. Despite this, water had turned to ice by morning and snow was used to wash on rising.

In the dining room, there was little more comfort. There was never any bread or milk but only the alternation between dry fish and caribou. They were fortunate yet, if the autumn catch had been plentiful enough so that they did not have to submit to rationing. In the Providence Mission alone, the personnel consumed an average of 40,000 fish a year. As to the caribou, the fresh meat was not too unpleasant to the taste, but in order to preserve it, it had to be dried like fish.

In summer, a few wild berries, — raspberries and cranberries — supplemented the daily ration, but they had to be earned by hard work! The picking had to be done two or three miles away, after going through the forest, brushland, thorns and thickets, tormented by mosquitoes and this toward nightfall, when the Sisters were already exhausted by the daily labor. However, this supplementary food helped them to recover through the night. Another missionary stated: "I often ate the leaves of rose bushes to delude my stomach. In winter, we had to fast without alleviation. Sometimes, the torment of hunger kept me awake for entire nights. Being the cook, I was often tempted to go and eat my fill without the knowledge of others; but to encroach upon the morrow's portion would mean imposing still greater privation on my Sisters. I struggled till morning therefore when the Eucharistic Bread gave me the strength to suffer another day."

Another very difficult privation was the "fast of correspondence". Until recent years the postal service was available only two or three times a year in these areas. Imagine the anxiety of a missionary who having learned by letter of the serious illness of her father or mother, then had to wait four or five months for further news. She wavered between fear and hope.

This foundation had existed for twenty-six years and was progressing when Mother Stubinger spoke thus of it in her report: "One's heart is stirred, relaxes, and is stirred again in such circumstances. One must experience it in order to understand. At first sight, the health of our Sisters appeared good enough; but thereafter, I discovered the contrary. The courage, generosity and joyfulness of our missionaries is admirable even in the dining room where they are compelled to practise great mortification. Two dishes are invariably offered them three times a day: fish and potatoes. Only in exceptional cases is a rice dessert served, with dried apples or wild fruit. There is practically no more hunting in the area. Through the

fortnight I spent here, ten wild geese were killed. Even fish is lacking. The rivers and the lakes are very low. To get the supplies for the winter it is necessary to go forty miles away. The supply must consist of at least 21,000 fish. That is enough to survive but not enough to have our fill. To top it all, grasshoppers have appeared. They have destroyed almost all of the vegetable garden. Gooseberries, currant bushes, strawberries and raspberry plants were all eaten away in ten days, as were the vegetables — the onions, the cabbage and the turnips. All means were taken to get rid of them but without success. My heart breaks each day as I see this devastating plague rob our Sisters of the very necessities."

Long after her return to the Mother House, Mother Stubinger was sometimes sad in the refectory and even wept as she remembered the privations of our missionary Sisters.

In 1885, Sister Ward wrote:

The potato crop is very small. The barley field has been entirely devastated by grasshoppers, as has the wheat. We had sown a very small quantity since the crop had been damaged by frost, but we were able to rescue a few sheaves. The ice interrupted the fishing, yet, we eat fish three times a day... not a single piece of meat. We are observing an anticipated lent... What else! and it shall last a long time. We are not suffering however, for we eat our fish with such a good appetite that we run the risk of dying of old age. The garden vegetables had the same fate as the wheat and the barley. Our dear Sister Brunelle had the consolation of salvaging a single carrot after lavishing almost maternal care on her garden. Only the onions were left because the grasshoppers found them too unpleasant.

And what about the caterpillars? All our seeding was completed by approximately May 24, 1879. We were rejoicing that all was finished so early, when Father Lecorre came to tell us that the caterpillars were in our barley field. They came out at about ten in the evening and disappeared into the earth at sunrise. They devoured all the barley in both fields.

No more barley meant no more soup, no coffee for the year ahead. Barley served both for making soup and a beverage, without sugar of course. Sugar is still a luxury item in the North. It was to this soup that Father Superior at Providence was referring when he wrote the following note in his diary on August 21, 1903: "There is no more dried fish and the river can supply only one meal a day. We must live on soup."

Sacrifices give the missionary the happiness of assisting daily in the education of the Native Children. The joy of the missionaries, it has been said, does not burst forth from the frozen earth, nor from the breath of storms. The following thought of one of our missionaries carried us to the true height, the true source of joyous courage. She writes: "From a human point of view, educating forty children would appear little compared to the prosperous works of our other missions. Yet, reflecting on the worth of a soul, we value highly the little good that we are able to do to those who are entrusted to us in this poor country and who, without missionaries, would be deprived of the knowledge of truth, or immersed in error. The worth of a human being! Such is the motive for action."

Our missionaries insisted on giving the Native children a good education so that they would later be able to convey the knowledge of the faith to their brothers. From the social point of view, their apostolate bore good fruit. Some of the pupils from Fort Providence in the Mackenzie, did credit to the mission by their conduct and their exemplary life.

In the Mackenzie as elsewhere, the sick who lived in scattered locations about the Fort were not neglected. Each day a Sister took along, under her cape, medication, surgical blades, bandages, slings, hot water bottles, and went through the snow from cabin to cabin, from hut to hut, ministering to each need, with the smile of charity.

Let us extract the following few lines from the biography of one of our missionaries:

“In this land of exile and of privation, Sister Marie-Anne Lemaire had a loving and generous heart. Because of her great skill recognized by the Government, she was frequently called to patients and had to walk two or three days in order to perform a surgical operation. Never did she consider her health, as we shall see by the following incident.

Sister Lemaire had been in bed for a week with inflammatory rheumatism when a Native came to get her for his sick wife. Wondering what to do, she consulted Bishop Joussard who approved her desire to be helpful. The sled was brought into the house and Sister Lemaire was carefully installed. Then, forgetting her pain, she left, secure in the hands of Providence. Upon her return, another life had been saved.”

As for us, let us thank God for having required of our Institute so many heroic sacrifices. Let us rejoice. Let us ask him to bless the works of our missionaries and to send many generous followers. Let us also recall that simple, obscure heroism is neither the easiest nor the least noble. Only faith inspires, distinguishes, and explains it.

THE PROTECTORY AT LAWRENCE

Returning from the Arctic regions, let us consider the devotion, perhaps less outstanding but not less meritorious, of the Grey Nuns in a centre of more advanced civilization.

In 1867, Mother Jane Slocombe accepted the foundation of a mission at Lawrence, Mass. (U.S.A.) proposed by Reverend H.D. Taft, o.p. pastor at Immaculate Conception parish in this city.

It has been said that obstacles serve as a challenge for noble souls. Courageous persons would not hesitate therefore, at the prospect of founding a mission in poverty. Mother faced this difficulty valiantly. She set the foundation for the early weeks of the following year. Therefore, on January 29, 1868, Sisters Mary-Ann Brennan, Superior, Estelle Lanthier,

Emérance Caron-Turgeon, Ann-Jane Moffatt and Marie-Anne Bousquet left to take the direction of the orphanage known as the Protectory of Mary Immaculate.

The kind Father Taaft, gravely ill, wished to be taken to the closest window of the "little red house" next to the orphanage in order to greet the arrival of the Sisters. He said, "Now I can sing my Nunc Dimittis. My greatest wish has been realized. This work, directed by the Sisters of Charity will most certainly bear fruit." He died shortly thereafter.

As early as this January 29, twenty-three orphans had been admitted. On February 9, the house was blessed by His Grace John J. Williams, bishop of Boston. The ceremony which lasted three hours took place before a sympathetic assembly and in the presence of Mother Jane Slocombe who had come to Lawrence for the event. The Protectory was a solid four storey brick building measuring 114 ft. x 40 ft. (large for the time). Our Sisters would be responsible for internal administration; a committee under the name of "Catholic friends," would manage temporal affairs, while the Augustinians would provide the ministry and would, at all times, zealously promote the work.

Like all prosperous institutions, the Protectory at Lawrence developed with time. In 1901, the construction of a wing allowed it to increase the number of its dependents, to harbor elderly women and invalids. For some time, even postulants were seen circulating in the wards, as they obtained an early experience of religious life before going to the Mother House.

In 1917 the teaching of home economics was inaugurated. Then our dear orphans received the advantage of attending high school at the Sisters of Notre-Dame de Namur, where quite often, they earned the first prizes. In short, the Protectory of Mary Immaculate was not only the most prosperous of our educational institutions but one of the better adapted to child training.

The 1941 statistics indicate that 7261 children had been registered since the foundation, as well as 4131 elderly or invalid women.

BETHLEHEM CONVENT

Bethlehem Convent in Montreal was another foundation attributed to the initiative of Mother Jane Slocombe. This institution honors a distinguished, kind and generous man, the Honorable Charles-S raphin Rodier, Member of the Legislative Assembly, ex-mayor of Montreal. He had the honor of welcoming to his house the Prince of Wales who later became King Edward VII, the Prince of Joinville, and Prince Alfred of England.

Mr. Rodier was Commissioner of the Havre from 1841 to 1849, president at the Headquarters for Peace Sessions, Director of the Banque Jacques Cartier, Commissioner for indemnities from 1837 to 1838.

When this fervent Christian asked the Grey Nuns to accept the administration of his work, the building on Richmond block did not yet exist. The work began on the same spot, so to say, but in two adjacent houses, very modest in appearance but rich by their religious past. From 1843 to 1851 the Jesuit Fathers who had returned to Canada, had lived there.

Our Sisters Julie-Louise Fournier-Painchaud, the Superior, Delphine Labelle and Rachel Lecompte occupied these houses on August 1, 1868. The chronicler at the time wrote, "The Benefactor has great hopes for his work. For the time being, our Sisters care for the orphans and serve the poor."

We must admit that after seventy years, the objective has remained the same and this is good, since the poor and the orphans shall always remain the better part of our family heritage. Ever since the stone convent was constructed in 1871, Bethlehem has well deserved to be called a boarding-school both because of its educational program and because

of the success of its students. The early orphanage developed as did our other fields of endeavor. Service to the poor remains ever a priority and knowledge and charity go hand in hand in Bethlehem to this day.

Indeed the kind Mr. Rodier had reason to hold high hopes for this Convent, not noisy success but a work that would be both lasting and fruitful.

CHAPTER IX

1868 — 1872

Our second General Chapter opened on October 5, 1868. Bishop Ignace Bourget had delegated to preside over it, Father Joseph-Alexandre Baile, Provincial Superior of the Sulpicians and our own Ecclesiastical Superior. At the beginning of the sessions, the Council members were as follows:

Reverend Mother Jane Slocombe, Superior General
Mother Julie Deschamps, first Assistant
Mother Elisabeth McMullen, second Assistant
Mother Elizabeth Dupuis, Mistress of Novices

The reelection of beloved Mother Jane Slocombe was a joy to the entire community. During her first term of administration, she had indeed fully realized Bishop Bourget's desire that she "be a real mother". Convinced of her incapacity however, she wrote to the Sisters:

"Since you have reelected me despite my unworthiness, you must cooperate with me for the good of the Institute. We all have an influence in one way or another. Above all, let us show by our actions, that we understand our sublime vocation as Sisters of Charity."

"In fact, we must praise God and thank Him for using us to do some good within the Church. The Mother House requires a spiritual vitality strengthened by faith".

Indeed, our Institute was growing, very slowly, but steadily and Divine Providence would, in this very year, 1868, call it to two new fields of apostolate: St-Jean and Chambly, P.Q.

ST-JEAN HOSPITAL

"Built on the Richelieu River of which it is the gem, the town of St-Jean was predestined to become a centre of great importance," wrote a historian. "The advantages which the network of railways now gives it, were already assured in early times. Indigenous tribes led their expeditions against enemies along that route. It had therefore been called 'Iroquois River'. Through there also, came attacks from New England against New France."

The city of St-Jean in 1932 numbered three French Canadian parishes. St-Jean, the oldest, was detached from St-Luc in 1828. Canonically erected in 1831, it became the episcopal see of Bishop Anastase Forget, the first bishop of the Diocese of St-Jean-de-Quebec in 1934. The two other parishes, Notre Dame Auxiliatrice and St-Edmond, date respectively to 1906 and to 1930. Being an important industrial centre, this city was proud of its thirty factories and of its population of 12,500. Most of these people were deeply attached to their faith and glowing with charity.

It is in this historic framework, amid this warm-hearted population that on December 10, 1868, our Sisters Zoé Beaudry, Superior, Marie-Julie Gaudry, Aglaé Lamy-Caron and Philomène Cardinal went to dedicate themselves. Mother Jane Slocombe personally installed her Sisters who had been requested by the pastor Father Fortunat Aubry and by Mrs. Jean-Baptiste Tugault who had donated a first installment of \$12,000 toward the establishment of this hospital.

The three church bells gave notice of the arrival of the foundresses. The pastor, Father Laberge, the Mayor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Langelier, and Mr. and Mrs. Monette welcomed them at the station. After a brief visit to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, they were taken by carriage to the hospital where women of the parish had prepared a fine meal for them. The Pastor was the guest of honor and Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame were also present. As they visit-

ed the house, the newcomers pictured the zeal and the skill they would have to deploy in order to render the place suitable; but work had never frustrated the Grey Nuns in the past.

On the following day, December 11, the faithful assembled at the church for a religious celebration. A Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit was sung in thanksgiving for the coming of the Sisters. It was preceded by the VENI CREATOR. After the Gospel, the pastor, commented the words of Psalm 118:24: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." The well-wishing of the day was brought to a climax with the blessing of the house, and the solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

On May 11, 1869, our Sisters welcomed the greatest guest of all — Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. He came to dwell with his spouses and his dearest friends, the poor and the sick. The pastors of all the neighboring parishes attended with great feeling, this Eucharistic ceremony. On May 13, the chronicles recorded the first Mass and the organization of the ward for the aged. Now, our Sisters were launched into their work; teaching children, assisting the poor, visiting the sick in their homes and organizing the hospital.

The kindergarten was later assigned to teaching Sisters, but the poor and the sick never forgot the path to the hospital.

Since the vast construction of 1922, the combined work of dear Mother Elodie Mailloux, Treasurer General, of Mr. Alphonse Piché, the architect and of Mr. Alphonse Deschamps, the contractor, the institution increased and improved its various services. In addition to surgery and general medicine, a department for tubercular patients was opened as well as facilities for the aged of both sexes with a total accommodation of 250 beds. Visiting and assisting of the poor in their homes was also very well organized. The School of Nursing dates back to 1923.

THE HOME IN CHAMBLY

If we continue to move along the banks of the Richelieu River, we come to Chambly whose parishioners also desired to have an institution of charity. Their kind pastor, Father Amable Thibault, made the request to our Mothers, pointing out the material advantages of the foundation. A rich spinster, Clemence Sabattée was offering a 40 ft., two-storey house with an annex. Apart from the 30 acre property on which her house was built, the future mission would encompass 12 acres of prairie land and a capital of 1000 louis in stocks. For his part, Eusèbe Fréchette was promising 500 louis. Although the beginnings appeared reassuring from the human point of view, it was for the glory of God as well as the good of souls that Mother Slocombe and her Council accepted the foundation. The foundresses would be Sisters Rose Coutlée and Antoinette Lemay.

April 22, 1869 marked the beginning of this institution. From this day, down through generations, St. Joseph's Hospice received elderly women and children. The destitute were always assured of the unalterable devotedness of the Grey Nuns. Like most of our missions, Chambly also served the poor in their homes.

The Home in Chambly experienced many material woes; it went through "fire and water" but the work continued and the living conditions of many were improved as a result of the ministry of the Sisters.

THE PONTIFICAL GUARDS

Mother Jane Slocombe, who had a profound attachment for the Church, would gladly adopt the cause of its venerable leader. The departure for Rome, of three hundred Canadian papal guards, drew her staunch support. Although the Mother House was involved in considerable expenditure due to the imminent transfer to Mont Ste-Croix, our Mother contributed, as generously as possible, to the organization of

Peter's Pence in Montreal. By the following letter dated July 18, 1869, we see another aspect of her generosity toward the Holy See:

My dear Papal Guard Etienne,

I received with pleasure your kind letter of June 1 in which you express your gratitude for what our community has done for you who are so dear to us, especially since you are at the service of our Holy Father, the Pope. I am not surprised that you are so happy among the pontifical guards despite all the privations you must endure, for I think there is no greater joy than to sacrifice oneself for the Lord and his Holy Church.

Believe that you are more fortunate than if you were a king or emperor, for you are indeed. I pray the Lord to keep you in these good dispositions, to lavish his blessings upon you, and to bring you back home if it is his holy will.

I would like to be of greater assistance, however; through Father Larue, p.s.s., who is in Rome, to whom I am writing and whom I urge you to see, you will receive the help that I cannot give...

On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of beloved Pius IX's pontificate, our Mother desired that prayers be more numerous and more fervent for him. A special homage was addressed to him.

For his part, Bishop Bourget issued a beautiful circular recalling to all the faithful, the duty of concerning themselves with the afflictions of the Church and the entire world. It had an impact on the entire congregation.

THE BOARDING SCHOOL IN WINNIPEG

Ever since his promotion to the episcopate, Bishop Taché had fostered education. Schools had sprung up on the east shore of the Red River and along the Assiniboine, but the Catholics of Fort Garry (Winnipeg) had none as yet.

On May 1, 1869, with the authorization of our Superiors, His Grace delegated Sisters Theresa McDonnell — Ste-Thérèse and McDougall as teachers to children of this locality. Because of certain difficulties with the landlord, the Bishop bought the property and celebrated the first Mass there on June 15, 1869. At the same time, he appointed Father J. McCarthy, o.m.i., to serve Fort Garry and to reside in Saint Boniface.

In 1873, the Convent chapel was too small. Bishop Taché had a church and rectory built. The latter was at ground level and became the permanent residence of the Oblates, Fathers Albert Lacombe and Beaudin.

The Church, on the upper level, was blessed in 1874. On the same day, the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary replaced the Grey Nuns at St. Mary's Boarding School.

RESIGNATION OF MOTHER JULIE DESCHAMPS, ASSISTANT GENERAL

We recall that at the time of her reelection, Mother Slocombe "had expected to be visited by the Cross". The following would strike at the depth of her heart. On August 24, 1869 her dear assistant, burdened with physical infirmities, begged the Council to accept her resignation. After having been her beloved Superior, Mother Julie Deschamps had become her right arm, her close advisor, and now, she would fail her at a time when her experience appeared indispensable for the work concerning Mont Sainte-Croix. But such was God's will! Trained to lift her heart above creatures and events, above anything which could trouble her peace, Mother Slocombe accepted this cross, and under the presidency of Father Alexis Truteau, the Administrator of the diocese, the Council proceeded with the election of a replacement. Sister Ursule Charlebois, then Superior at St. Joseph's Home, became the Assistant General by acclamation.

SAINT BONIFACE HOSPITAL

The history of Saint Boniface Hospital falls in place here, since the chronicles mention its foundation as dating from August 5, 1871.

For a quarter century, that is since their arrival, our Sisters had been caring for the sick in Saint Boniface; but the year 1871 marked the inauguration of the first regular hospital — a tiny hospital with only four beds! This was sufficient for the time. The following year, it was incorporated and officially recognized under the name "The Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital of Saint Boniface."

For over eighty years, the hospital has progressed and expanded with the help from above. It now contains some 500 beds and is classed among the renowned hospitals of Canada. The following are important dates in its history:

The purchase of property from Mr. Henry J. Clarke, ex-Prime Minister of Canada.

1886 — Second extension.

1893 — New construction which brought the bed capacity to 126. On the twenty-second anniversary of its foundation, the hospital already numbered 28,844 patients.

1894 — Dr. Conklin, the first interne was received. At this time, Dr. Fergusson, renowned in Europe as well as in America, was performing most of his surgery at St. Boniface Hospital. At the instigation of this eminent surgeon, an operating room was set up with an observation balcony and thirty-two students attended its inauguration.

1897 — The Nursing School was opened to train lay nurses.

1899 — Fourth expansion of the hospital. An annex called "St. Roch" was established for contagious diseases.

1905 — The south wing was reconstructed on a larger scale. St. Boniface Hospital would now number 300 beds.

1912 — Reinstallation of the Laboratories, X-ray, laundry, power house and hydraulic system.

1916 — Demolished in 1914, the main wing was rebuilt larger and more modern, impressive with its stone facade and its architectural lines, it was blessed in 1916.

1914 - 1918 — During the "World War" 14,000 wounded soldiers were treated at St. Boniface Hospital.

1922 — Contagious cases were transferred to a new building which was more spacious and more modern, where one hundred patients could be accommodated at once. This is now the St. Roch Hospital.

1924 — A regular pharmacy was set up.

1925 — St. Boniface Hospital was recognized by the University of Manitoba as a "Teaching Hospital".

1928 — The Nurses' Residence was built and 170 students occupied comfortable and convenient quarters.

1938 — A dispensary was built adjacent to the hospital.

And so the little house of 1871 had become the largest hospital of our Institute.

THE PROJECTED GENERAL HOSPITAL AT MONT STE-CROIX

Chapter IV of this book mentioned that our Community had bought the land of Mont Ste-Croix in view of building the Mother House there. For lack of funds, this project was long delayed; but on December 18, 1868, Mother Jane Slocombe could write to Father Michel Etienne Faillon, p.s.s:

Finally, I have the pleasure of announcing that we have definitely decided to build our new Hospital on the site of the Red Cross. Our pecuniary means will not allow us to conduct the project with all the rapidity we would desire, but at least, we are beginning to have the stone gathered and hauled.

For funds we are counting on Divine Providence of whom St. Joseph is the treasurer. To this intent, a lamp is kept burning all day before his statue.

The interest you have always shown us, Reverend Father, allows us to count on the help of your prayers.

We are all sad at the thought of leaving the home of our early foundresses, but we cannot remain any longer because of lack of space. Good order and the welfare of the poor require this necessary change.

I hope that soon I will have the joy of making known that the work has begun and is progressing. Of course, I am expecting many trials, difficulties and annoyances of all sorts; but should we not expect to find the cross at Mont Ste-Croix? Will the structure be solid if it is not founded on the cross? I am therefore resigned and accept this in advance and am abandoned.

I beg you, dear Father, to recommend this affair to the Eternal Father and to our beloved Mother d'Youville, and I implore you not to forget our spiritual needs that are also very great.

Your humble and grateful daughter in Christ,
Sister Slocombe

Begun on April 28, 1869, the new General Hospital was completed in the fall of 1871 and the blessing was set for October 6.

THE RED CROSS

Let us trace briefly the origin of the red cross erected on the Mont Ste-Croix property.

It was erected in 1752 to mark the burial place of a criminal. At this time, justice was applied by cruel punishment. A murderer had undergone the torture of the wheel and his body had been buried on the public highway facing the house of his victims, which stood facing our present chapel.

This highway eventually became Dorchester Street. Later, it had to be widened and the red cross was moved on to the neighboring site, which then became known as "Field of the Red Cross," or "Mont Ste-Croix" for it was situated on a mound. When our Institute bought this property, the cross was repaired and painted, then moved to the southeast corner (Guy and Dorchester) where it has remained until this day.

TRANSFER OF THE MOTHER HOUSE TO MONT STE-CROIX

Let us recall now, the solemn blessing of our new home.

Two hundred invitations had been extended for this celebration. His Excellency Bishop Alexandre Taché, o.m.i., who happened to be in Montreal, including our dear Sulpicians, the Jesuits and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Brothers of Christian Doctrine, two Grey Nuns of St. Hyacinthe, five from Quebec, seven from the Congregation of Notre Dame, two each of the Presentation, of Providence, of Holy Cross, of St. Anne and of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary shared our joy.

It belonged to our beloved Pastor, Bishop Ignace Bourget to preside at the ceremony. He was attended by Father Victor Rousselot, p.s.s. and Father Louis-David Charland. After the singing of the Veni Creator, His Grace delivered the following sermon:

"Sisters,

For more than a century, the cross planted by Mother d'Youville, watered by her sweat and that of her worthy companions, has been for you, the sweetest place in the world. Little by little, the buildings constructed by this Mother had become insufficient. The family had increased extraordinarily, the works were grouped around the cross. From the foundlings to the elderly, every distress had found shelter there and had found compassionate hearts to soothe their pain, skillful

hands to dress their wounds some of which were indeed hideous and repulsive.

These works have become so numerous, that they have obliged you to leave your birthplace, and today, you must bid it farewell. This farewell is cruel to your hearts because it is painful for you dear Sisters, to leave this place sanctified by your foundress and your Sisters, — this place where so many sacrifices were made, where so many sublime virtues were practiced.

But be consoled dear Sisters, the blessings which you experienced there you will experience again on this mountain, and the cross planted by your Mothers, will be transferred here. Your missions have spread out far away from the place you are leaving. They were branches of the main trunk, branches which have become blessed trees, which in turn, give up some of their branches so that they may take root elsewhere.

Today, the whole tree is being transplanted and you would not have consented to leave this house if you had not been certain of finding the cross here; the same cross watered by Mother d'Youville, surrounded by her works with the advantage that these will be done with greater perfection. This day may be considered as one of new birth for the community. Like the eagle, your youth will be renewed, you will soar by your virtues and your accomplishments.

The cross of Jesus Christ by which you have grown, shall inflame your hearts with greater charity; you shall make a new start; you shall make new and even more generous sacrifices. Endangered infants will find more space here. The orphans and the handicapped, the feeble elderly shall inhabit the palace of charity. You, my dear Sisters, daughters of Calvary, the blood of Christ which was shed upon you will make you attack work boldly, withstand fatigue, endure privations with love, joy and perseverance.

The blood of Jesus, which in a moment will flow on the altar, and which makes you defy epidemics and even death in order to accomplish the works entrusted to you, will help you to die joyfully, with a glimpse of the crown prepared for you by the Redeemer. You shall earnestly and humbly beg for blessings which will render fertile, the field entrusted to you.

By its crimes, the world is calling down vengeance from heaven. You shall be victims of love and atonement for sinners, dedicated victims for all mankind. In this way, your Institute will grow and prosper, spread its branches even to the frozen north, to take root there as elsewhere and gladden the heart of Mother d'Youville who, from above, watches lovingly over you and encourages you by the examples of virtue which she left you as a legacy. I bless all the members of your community, as well as all those who will come to join you. I bless, and I beg the Lord to bless, those of your Sisters who have gone to the Homeland ahead of you and who still wish to remain of the same family with you all."

After the address, the procession set off on its way for the blessing. Our Reverend Mother and her assistant preceded the cross. Along the way, the Litany of the Saints, the Miserere and other psalms were sung. On the return, His Grace began the Mass during which the choir sang O CRUX AVE, O COR AMORIS, SALVE REGINA.

At Lunch time, there was a place for all invited guests: the clergy in the community room, the lay people in another room, and the Sisters of other communities in the Sisters' dining room.

The day closed by a solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening, many of our Sisters returned to the old home which was almost deserted.

The following day, October 7, 1871, marked the hundred and twenty-fourth anniversary of the day on which Mother d'Youville and her companions had taken possession of the Gener-

al Hospital of the Charon Brothers. Mother Slocombe had arranged that on this day, the precious remains of our beloved foundress be transferred to our New Mother House at Mont Ste-Croix, so that she could take possession of it as she had done on October 7, 1747.

The body of our Venerable Mother was respectfully removed from the shrine and placed on a table. At one o'clock in the afternoon, the chronicles report, the remains of she who had founded our Institute, who had protected it by her heroic prudence, her vigor and her courage, left forever, the first home of our religious family.

On arrival at Mont Ste-Croix, the body, carried by Mother Slocombe, Superior General, Mother McMullen, Assistant, Sisters Elizabeth Dupuis, Catherine Fréchette, Elmire Thibodeau-Brault, Zoé Beaubien-Normant and Adeline Audet-Lapointe, was respectfully placed in the mortuary room. On a table beside this precious relic, Mother Slocombe placed the book of Constitutions and the statue of our Blessed Mother before which our Venerable Foundress had made her first commitment. The Sisters then went to the chapel where the MAGNIFICAT was sung in thanksgiving.

Brokenhearted, a few of our Sisters remained a few more days at the "old house" at Pointe-à-Callières. The furniture and clothing were moved on October 14, a Saturday; then the elderly were transferred. This departure was equally painful. The annalist has recorded it as follows:

"We are about to leave a house sanctified through one hundred and twenty-four years by the work, sacrifices and virtues of our Foundress and the Sisters who have gone before us. Our hearts are sad at leaving this cradle of our religious life, the witness of so many virtues practiced within these walls.

It is the house par excellence. It holds the memory of our consecration to Jesus, of days of joy and days of mourning, it

has witnessed the tears shed over our departed. It is before these altars that our prayers rose, that our hopes for a better life became strong."

A tree experiences pain when it is transplanted, but when the roots are strong and the sap is rich, it grows with greater energy, spreads its branches farther and can thus shelter with its shade, a greater number of poor.

Some thirty Sisters remaining at the "old house" felt very isolated amid the disorder caused by the move. Mother Slocombe stayed with them in order to attend the final Mass celebrated on October 28 during which our Sisters sang appropriate hymns.

Finally, at nine o'clock came the last farewell. The Blessed Sacrament carried by Father André Nercam, left the humble tabernacle. Our Sisters followed processionaly to the carriage that would convey it to Mont Ste-Croix. This carriage was accompanied by a second with the suffering Jesus in the person of Sr. Henriette Blondin. Mother Slocombe and Sr. Célerine Payette-Meunier, the faithful nurse was with her. Death was so imminent that Dr. Schmidt also accompanied the dying patient.

Our sisters looked attentively, then remaining alone, experienced the silence, the abandonment of this deserted place. One last time, they went to the crypt, recited a DE PROFUNDIS then left the beloved place. On arrival at Mont Ste-Croix, their first homage was to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament where each one wished to beg blessings on the new life of fervor and immolation which was about to begin for them under another roof.

The installation was, without a doubt difficult, and often hearts swelled at the thought of a recent past. Nevertheless, everyone was at the Mother House, a place dear to religious.

The Mother House is the house of the chief leader; not only of the invisible leader who is its reason for being, but

of the person who represents his love, his light and his wisdom.

The Mother House is like a lighthouse from which the guardian sees at a distance all the ships at large: fifty, sixty, as far as Aklavik; the guardian keeps sight of them all, knows their pace, their power, the color of each sail, the name of each oarsman, the heart of each pilot.

The guardian knows that the rocks and the currents of human passions are more dangerous than those of the sea. She anticipates, she instructs, she guides.

The Mother House is the guardian of traditions and customs, the great liaison agency between the Sisters who are dispersed, the one who maintains the unity which is as necessary in a religious family as it is in the Church.

All its authority, tenderness and vigilance, all the love one has for it, all the joy it gives, stem from its magnificent name. It is the Mother and it is the House.

The young grow up in its quietness, the feeble come there to seek protection, and many laborers who have given their all, come to prepare for the final voyage. The House is always open, always welcoming. It can expand without any apparent effort. Were one to come from a great distance after an absence of twenty or thirty years, one might find strange faces but warm hearts and smiles. One always has a sense of belonging.

René Bazin

Does not one recognize our own Mother House in the above description? Mother Slocombe governed it in a spirit of simplicity and charity. She was the Mother who watched over each of her children and saw that the various aptitudes of each contributed to the good of all. In her shrewdness, she adapted the means to the end, the person to the function. She possessed a supernatural charity which provided for the needs of both body and soul so that in all things, God could be glorified. She maintained traditions while adapting them to the needs of the time.

Under the vigilant eye of this perfect Mother, the disinterment of the 103 Sisters buried at Pointe-à-Callières was begun on November 22, 1871. The remains were transferred to the crypt at Mont Ste-Croix.

Once this work was completed, the entire family was reunited. Apart from the deceased, it numbered 214 professed Sisters, 23 novices, 20 postulants and 26 missions. One may think this was very little after one hundred thirty-three years of existence, when newer communities were developing so rapidly. Indeed, religious communities in Canada were progressing normally in the 20th century, within a well organized Church, and certainly, one must praise God for this; but ours was born "in a mission land", during a century of wars, and was shackled, so to say, from its infancy, in order to suppress its growth. The Charter of Louis XV had specified "Twelve administrators", therefore, twelve professed Sisters only. Later, the autonomy of our Sister Communities had slowed our recruitment by multiplying the Grey Nun novitiates.

But looking back in time, these providential circumstances are not regrettable. The very slow beginning which His Excellency Bishop Ildebrando Antoniutti, then Apostolic Delegate once called "our century of foundation" yielded us a solid and profound formation. It created for us a spirit and traditions which will ever remain the surest guarantee of our survival and of our fervor.

Finally, this year of 1871, already memorable for us, was to end with a unique celebration: the hundredth anniversary of the death of our Venerable Mother d'Youville. As early as December 21, her remains were brought to the mortuary room. On the following day, His Grace Bishop Larocque celebrated a service for all our deceased Sisters. Twelve priests attended it. Then December 23 dawned. Apart from our missionaries, three of our Sisters from St. Hyacinthe, ten Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame and four Sisters of Providence came

to share with us this day of thanksgiving which began with a religious profession. Bishop Alexandre Taché, o.m.i. grand-nephew of our beloved Foundress presided, assisted by Fathers Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant and André Nercam. The newly professed were our Sisters Henriette Grandmont, Athalida Prévost-Ste. Elizabeth, Hermine Allard-Saint Charles and Sophie Clément.

In the course of the religious ceremony, the Bishop delivered a beautiful address on the anniversary of the day. It was a hymn of thanksgiving to God who had so visibly blessed our Institute; a homage of admiration of the Mother who was a docile instrument of Providence in the work of our foundation, a hymn of thanksgiving to our benefactors, the Sulpicians, whose solicitude toward us has never failed.

Masses were celebrated repeatedly until ten o'clock, then His Grace went to the novitiate where the assembled community acclaimed him by a homage of congratulations on the occasion of his recent title as Archbishop. The choir had hardly finished singing the LAUDATE when Bishop Ignace Bourget entered, accompanied by Fathers Jules-Claude Delavigne, Tanguay and Aubry. This was the culmination of the celebration. Our guests partook of a banquet, then the day ended with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament presided by Father Alexandre Baile, the Superior of the Sulpicians.

DEATH OF MOTHER SLOCOMBE

The fatigue and excessive labor caused by the installation at Mont Ste-Croix had altered the health of our Mother General. This change of locale had brought about for her several difficulties. Debts had to be contracted, and the goodwill of neighboring property owners had to be secured for they looked unfavorably on the installation of a House of Charity in their aristocratic district.

It was to overcome this prejudice that the peaceful Mother modified the original plan by giving the main entrance a

more elaborate appearance. The sandstone porch with its massive pillars which appear very ordinary today, but were almost luxurious at that time, appeased the malcontent.

Indeed, many other worries befell our Mother. She spent a great deal of time with the architect and the contractor on the construction site. These men said of her: "This Sister who has the soul of a contemplative, also has the ability of a businessman. She can figure out the contrivance of a door lock even to the more important negotiations." She knew all the employees: the gardeners who stood as she went by, the painters who greeted her from the top of their ladders, the hired help who were sure of a smile, a kind word of encouragement.

It is this Mother, who was so sympathetic, whom one could not but love and wish to follow, this Mother whose every act proclaimed the EXCELSIOR, it was this Mother whom the Eternal Father would take away!

The hour of separation was approaching; but until the very end, Mother Jane Slocombe spent herself for God and for her Sisters. She constructed the material edifice at the same time as that of which the Church speaks on the feast of the Dedication: living stones, carved and polished by her maternal hand, and so closely bonded by her charity!

It was the spring of 1872. The time of the annual retreat had come and our Mother increased her devotedness toward her Sisters. Despite her physical suffering, she insisted on seeing them all. These retreatants were fortunate for they received the final recommendations of their incomparable Superior. They would keep them as her last testament and as their immediate preparation for the sacrifice.

The state of her health deteriorated. The doctor diagnosed an obstruction of the liver and after the most urgent care, her assistant advised the patient to go to Châteauguay for a time, accompanied by her nurse. Mother Slocombe soon returned however, in order to follow the Corpus Christi procession

and her energy succeeded in calming fears. Alas! on the feast of the Sacred Heart, a new crisis occurred. The pain became unbearable. The doctor was called and came in haste. He was so alarmed that he called in consultation two colleagues who confirmed his diagnosis: the patient was dying.

All hearts were filled with anguish. Mother Assistant General offered stipends for eleven Masses in honor of Our Lady of Pity. The employees paid five, while the Secretary General notified all our missions. Bishop Bourget who was also notified, visited the dear patient and gave her Holy Communion himself after speaking these few words to her:

“Sister, Our Lord is visiting you as he used to visit Martha and Mary. He brings you healing and the graces necessary to submit to his holy will. This kind Savior comes with the same power which brought Lazarus back to life. He has given you so many blessings; he has come to you so often; receive him with trust and with love.”

After the CONFITEOR, our Mother made customary amends in the following fashion: “I beg your pardon Sisters, for any sorrow I may have caused you. If ever I have caused you any pain, it was not with the intention of doing so, but for your greater good. I thank the Community for having received me and for the kindness shown me...” The beloved Mother could say no more: her Sisters were sobbing.

A short time later, the doctor returned to the bedside of his patient but said not a word. It was she, who seeing his concern asked him:

- How do you find me, doctor?
- Very ill, Sister!
- Shall I die? How many days do you give me?
- It is not a matter of days any more, but of hours only!”

Deeply moved, the doctor retired without saying another word while Mother Slocombe murmured: “My God, Your will be done!”

Preparations were made for administering the Sacrament of the sick. The Sisters from the missions arrived in dismay. Father Baile, our kind Superior, began the prayers but the responses of those present were interspersed with tears. Mother gazing at the Sisters, exhorted them to control their emotions and to answer the liturgical prayers, then having received the unctions, she said to them: "Sisters, today I give you a great lesson. One must always be ready for death. Help me to thank God for all the blessings he has given me since birth! Indeed, I owe great thanksgiving! Jesus has been so good, so good to me!"

The doctor came once more to see the dying patient.

— Doctor, it will not be long now, I think?

— It is almost over!

— God be praised! Thank you doctor for your kindness to me.

The doctor could not contain himself; he left sobbing as he muttered: "What an admirable woman!"

Father Nercam then came to give one last absolution. Before leaving, he said: "Mother, I shall give you my blessing;" — "And my dear Sisters, bless them too, Father, that God may grant them the grace to do better than I have done."

"Yes", Father responded, "I shall bless them in your name and for you, Mother. After having been the servant and spouse of Our Lord here below, you are now going to heaven to love him and to possess him." "Oh!" she replied, joining her hands, "I am a poor servant, a useless servant."

She then took her crucifix and raising it high enough for all to see, she said: "this is my hope, my only support! I now have only him; only he remains..." She looked lovingly at it saying: "My good Master!"

At this moment, the supper bell was ringing, but none of the Sisters wished to leave. In respect for the rule, Mother

fixed her dying eyes on each and said: "Good night Sisters; pray to God that we may see each other again!"

The Sisters retired in obedience, but returned an hour later. The dying patient remained peaceful, calm and brave, without a complaint. Around her bed, there was a religious silence. From time to time, Father Nercam said invocations which Mother shared.

Time had come for evening prayer. The Sisters indicated to Mother that they were beside her. She opened her eyes but did not speak... Ten minutes later, the dying patient gazed at all the Sisters. This was her last look; her respiration weakened. Father Nercam raised his hand in absolution and Jesus received the soul of our beloved Mother. She expired on June 22, 1872 at age 52 in the 33rd year of her religious life.

We shall not attempt to describe the grief experienced by our Sisters. Very deep sentiments cannot be described. The Sisters mourned her however, as mourn those who believe in the future resurrection: Among religious, the farewell is never final!

The Assistant General, on official visitation in the west, would learn the devastating news there. In her absence, Mother Elisabeth McMullen, the second Assistant, would advise the Sisters by telegram and by circular letter of the death of the deeply regretted Superior:

"From the early days of her admission into this house, until the last day of her religious life, our dear Mother was for all the Sisters, a perfect model of all the virtues found in a Spouse of Christ. To all the gifts of her soul, were added precious qualities of mind and heart. God had undoubtedly prepared her to be one of the main supports of our Institute. Twelve years after her profession, she became Mistress of Novices and discharged her duties to the entire satisfaction and advantage of the Community who could do no better than to choose her for the important position of Superior

General of the Institute. Indeed, we would have been happy to have, for many more years, this Superior whose zeal and devotedness were not wanting in any way! But we were not worthy of enjoying our beloved Mother any longer. She was ready for heaven. The Divine Master sent the angel of death, leaving the Sisters only the beautiful example of her virtues and the comforting hope that this kind Mother would, from above, watch over them with maternal solicitude, until each one in turn, would go to join her."

Our bereavement elicited much sympathy and earnest praise. His Grace, Bishop Ignace Bourget, was the first to share it. Other testimonies followed, such as that of Father Joseph-Alexandre Baile, Superior of the Sulpicians, who claimed to be "struck at heart" by the passing of our Superior General.

"Your Mother has done immense good to her Community, but perhaps you were counting too much on her. God took her from you so that you would depend more on his Providence."

Father Woods wrote: "You have lost a Mother. Mother Slocombe is one of these persons whom one meets but once and remembers forever."

Father André Nercam in turn affirmed that, "As there is only one Mother d'Youville, so there is only one Mother Slocombe."

Finally, "La Minerve," a journal of the time, announced the painful news in these terms:

"With great sorrow, we have learned of the death of Reverend Mother Slocombe, the Superior General of the Grey Nuns, who passed away at their General Hospital in Montreal on June 22 at the age of 52.

Gifted with a cultured mind, a generous heart, exquisite refinement, Mother Slocombe was loved and venerated not

only by the members of her religious family and by the poor of the Hospital, but also by the Montreal public. All recognize in her the ideal Sister of Charity. Mother Slocombe was governing her community with the wisdom and zeal of a genuine superior when death came rather suddenly to rob her from the affection of her Sisters. Regrets are unanimous and testimonials of sympathy are abounding at the Mother House of the Grey Nuns."

The funeral was set for June 25. Father Baile, the Superior of the Sulpicians, officiated, attended by Fathers Alexandre Deschamps and Gendreau. Father Arsène Barbarin, p.s.s., along with members of the choir from Notre Dame, provided the singing. Fifty priests were in attendance, representing the Bishop's residence, the Sulpicians, the Jesuits, the Oblates, the pastors of various missions.

All the religious communities in the city were represented: forty Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, delegations from St. Hyacinthe and Quebec, the Sisters of Providence, of St. Anne, of Mercy, of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, of the Presentation from St. Hyacinthe, as well as delegations from the Sisters of Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal and of Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

In the nave, the elite of the Montreal society were also present. Our provisional chapel could not contain the large attendance.

When the funeral train wended its way toward St. Joseph's Home where the remains of our Mother were to rest temporarily, the moment was a solemn one; tears flowed abundantly.

"Wisdom and kindness are in all her works; everyone extols her because the fear of God is in her heart and she speaks with compassion." — Proverbs 31:26,30

SHANNONVILLE

The Community was still absorbed in acute pain when a telegram from Mr. Bridges asked for eight Sisters of Charity to go to Shannonville, Ontario in order to care for the wounded.

On June 21, five cars of the Pacific Grand Trunk had derailed, causing the boiler to explode. Many passengers were scalded, some wounded, others killed. Taken to a deserted school house in Belleville, fifty-two of the wounded had waited six days for first aid.

Mother McMullen, after consulting our Ecclesiastical Superior, assembled the Sisters and addressed these words to them: "Our Mother Slocombe, too soon gone, often told us not to spare ourselves in the service of the suffering members of Christ's body. A new occasion has come up of imitating her great charity. Let us seize it."

Our Sisters Elmire Brault, Madeleine Pagnuelo-Dalpée, Julie Casgrain-Baby, Eulalie Perrin, Justine Séguin-Quesnel, Jane Page and Lucie McBean left on the evening of the 27th for Belleville. On arrival, they went to greet the pastor who introduced them to the wounded. On seeing them, the latter exclaimed: "How happy we are to have you as nurses! Come and speak to us of God, and prepare us for death."

The women of the place, most of them non Catholic, had until then exhibited self-sacrifice worthy of praise by providing food and clothing; but the wounds had not been dressed and gangrene had set in.

Our Sisters did their best to disinfect the wounds. The fine dispositions of these good people, mostly French Canadian laborers employed by the Grand Trunk, encouraged their zeal by kind words. "If you had come sooner," they said, "the others would not have died, eaten by worms."

Eventually, the Mother House had to send help in the persons of Sisters Marie-Louise Berthelet, Mary Kennedy, Ernes-

tine Collette-Marie de la Présentation and Henriette Grandmont. Our nurses had the comfort of healing the wounds of all their patients except one who died.

On August 2, their mission was completed. One of them wrote: "May God bless this act of self-sacrifice on the part of the Community and apply it to the soul of our beloved Mother Slocombe, May God grant her a greater degree of glory."

THE RETURN OF MOTHER URSULE CHARLEBOIS

Another painful return, in view of circumstances, was that of Mother Ursule Charlebois, our Assistant General. Having left on April 24, 1871 to visit our missions in the west, it was in St. Boniface that she learned of the death of her Superior General. She was being called back to Montreal. As early as June 29, she left Manitoba accompanied by Sister Mathilde Hamel. On July 9, for the first time, Mother Charlebois crossed the threshold of the Mother House at Mont Ste-Croix.

What a homecoming! Not to see again the Mother who had been the strength and glory of the Community! The Assistant and the Sisters could hardly exchange even a few words in this first interview. They expressed their regrets with tears.

Overwhelmed by such an unexpected loss, the Community nevertheless, had to think of electing a new superior.

Mother Assistant and the Administrators set the next General Chapter for August 20. In the interval, all the Sisters were to recite each day, the VENI SANCTE and the AVE MARIA, and to live in such a way as to draw God's blessings on the Institute.

CHAPTER X

1871 — 1873

The General Chapter necessitated by the nomination of a new Superior General took place on August 26, 1872 under the presidency of His Excellency Bishop Bourget, assisted by Fathers Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant and André Nercam, both Sulpicians.

The outcome of the voting was as follows:
Reverend Mother Elizabeth Dupuis, Superior General
Mother Ursule Charlebois, 1st Assistant General
Mother Elisabeth McMullen, 2nd Assistant General
Sister Suzanne Versailles, Mistress of Novices

For the first time, a third Assistant was added in the person of Mother Honorine Pinsonnault.

Mother Elizabeth Dupuis assumed her function. In order to acquaint ourselves with God's elect, let us review her past as pharmacist, local Superior and Mistress of Novices. She was small in stature, had a religious bearing, a fragile but energetic constitution and an austere appearance. Those who would see her in action would better understand her kind nature, her industrious character, her devotion to duty and her zeal for setting good example. But first of all, let us look back to her early years.

Our Mother was born at St. Roch, Quebec and baptized there on October 19, 1831.

At the home of her parents, Jean Dupuis and Angélique Goyette, faith was a legacy and benevolence a tradition. Con-

sequently, at age ten, the young girl, taking her younger sister by the hand, would go regularly to the General Hospital in Quebec to serve the poor at table on Sundays and feast days. The simplicity of their innocent compassion, it appears, always found touching things to say to the poor.

Their charity undoubtedly delighted the heart of Jesus, and since it is through the cross that he draws souls to himself, he sent them one which was heavy, even crushing. At a time when happiness and security reigned in the home, the children lost both their beloved parents. A terrible void surrounded them, but Divine Providence raised up a devoted protector in the person of Mr. Dufresne, their guardian.

Did the grace-filled enlightenment of the trial teach the two orphans the emptiness of worldly things? It would appear so since from that time, they thought only of religious life. Elizabeth wanted to follow Mother d'Youville. She was drawn by charity. Taking advantage of a trip to Montreal, she requested admission to our Institute and was admitted on June 26, 1849. Several years later, her younger sister would become a Sister of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.

The flexible and docile character of Sister Elizabeth Dupuis allowed her to adapt quickly to the program of the novitiate. She gave evidence of a fervor that would last throughout her religious life. Having understood that the spirit of faith ennobles the humblest tasks, she trained herself to recollection and prayer and progressed constantly in the ways of self-denial and of sacrifice. Consequently, on the day of her profession, she was ready and most happy to dedicate herself irrevocably. Grateful to God for her vocation, she was also thankful to the Community for admitting her into its ranks on the morning of August 28, 1851.

From then on, Sister Elizabeth Dupuis revealed herself to be a true Sister of Charity. Pleasant and sociable, always calm, she became a pharmacist excelling in the art of coating her pills with sincere sympathy. Her daily visit to the sick brought

genuine comfort, as shown by her patience and concern for their oft-repeated complaints. Does it not bring relief to tell of one's pain? Her compassion however, did not remain sterile. She dispensed her care generously without taking fatigue into account. With equal solicitude she guarded the health of the novices and many of them owed their perseverance to her vigilance.

After seven years of caring for the health of bodies, Sister Elizabeth Dupuis would be constituted guardian of the moral well-being. She became Superior at Hospice Saint-Henri. In this new task, her love of duty made her equally generous and faithful. She directed her house rather by example than by words. She was always first in the observance of the Rule, first at prayer, first at work, but also at recreation where she encouraged everyone to be cheerful.

After the charge of Superiorship came the tranquility of the novitiate along with the tremendous responsibility of training young recruits. To fashion them according to the model of our beloved Mother d'Youville became her only ambition. She knew how to adapt her guidance to each individual, insisting always on the importance of one's prayer life. Besides union with God, she stressed the love of work, love of poverty and faithfulness in little things. By her attention to details, Mother Dupuis held the secret to orderliness and exquisite cleanliness. She taught her novices how to set the furniture, how to preserve books, how to close doors noiselessly. Skilled in training the novices, she knew that "the smallest thing well done brings about perfection of the whole."

She used to say "a religious house which is not shining with cleanliness is not worthy of its name." But it was especially in the chapel that she was attentive to details. Gait, movements, genuflections, all should express faith and adoration.

On August 26, 1872, Mother Elizabeth Dupuis was elected Superior General. Let us examine her attitude regarding this high-ranking and enormous responsibility. Mother knew that

“the worth of a religious family is measured not by the number of its subjects, nor by the multiplicity or the success of its works, but by the virtue, the holiness of its members, their spirit of faith, of charity, and of supernatural self-devotion.” Consequently, she wished to maintain in the Institute, the flame of supernatural life which her predecessors had lit. Her administration would be characterized by wisdom and prudence, by fortitude and kindness according to the spirit of our beloved Mother d’Youville, a spirit of charity so well expressed in her first circular:

My dear Sisters:

From the time that the Lord called me to succeed our dear Mother Slocombe, I have wanted to thank you for the prayers you addressed to God for me. But the long sessions of our General Chapter prevented me from fulfilling this duty which I had at heart. I therefore thank you today dear Sisters and I am sure that you will continue the prayers of which I have such a great need.

On August 26, a day that will be forever memorable for the Institute and for me in particular, I though unworthy, became your Mother. Many among you were yet unaware of my election, yet I was already loving you not only as my Sisters in religion, but as my daughters in the Lord.

In accepting the responsibility which the Lord, by his adorable will, has just placed on my weak shoulders, despite the inclination to find the burden too heavy, my heart refuses to believe that my dear daughters will be an encumbrance to me. By so believing, I would be misjudging your filial piety, your comforting testimonies of good will, and the respect you have expressed in my regard, either by letter or by spoken words. Nevertheless, I feel the burden of my responsibility and my unworthiness to succeed the one whom death has just snatched from us. If only our kind Mother would from above, bequeath me the inheritance of her virtues and qualities as in bygone times, Elijah willed to his disciple his mysterious mantle, emblem of his virtues!

I commission you, dear Sisters, to obtain for me by your prayers, the realization of my dearest wish so that following the example of our sorely missed Mother Slocombe, I may direct our Institute with wisdom and prudence, fortitude and kindness. I will not add that you ought also to request that like her, I may love you all in the Lord, for I believe this sentiment is very vivid and sincere in me. I would even add that if I love those who are near me, I love still more, those who by obedience are far away from the Mother House.

Pray also to our beloved Foundress that I may govern in her spirit, the Institute which she established with such great care and thus maintain it at the height of its mission as did our predecessors so far.

Dear Sisters, I reiterate the assurance of my complete devotedness to you and of my sincere affection, and in the love of Jesus and Mary, I remain,

Your devoted Mother,
Sister Dupuis

Our new Superior General considered the work of the Sisters of Charity as a divine mandate to be exercised with respect and fidelity; as an art above all others, "the art of managing people," as a gift which each Sister should request of God as she endeavors to obtain it.

"This work," she said, "is not the task of one individual; it is a collective project whose success depends on the efforts of every member of the community sharing a part in the action, the responsibility and the success." She added: "We can do nothing without the help of God; let us act and pray; no action is fruitful without prayer."

After prayer, there must be unity of minds, unity of efforts toward the same end. This is the COR UNUM so strongly recommended by our Foundress. In one word, it is the sacred heritage which all our Superiors General have cherished as their own ultimate will in order to implement it as their program.

Mother Dupuis followed this program in every detail: with self-control even in the most difficult circumstances; never a tone of irritation in her voice, never any undue haste in her movements, so intently did she consider herself to be the intermediary of God's will which she sought to discover in prayer.

Following the example of the saints, Mother considered meditation to be the most important exercise of religious life. Has it not been written that, "without meditation religious life is meaningless?" The multitude of one's tasks is no excuse to dispense with meditation; on the contrary, it is a reason to pray more intently. The more business one has to deal with, the more one should experience the need for peace, recollection and the more one needs God's help. She liked to repeat, "Let us allow the planning of our enterprises, and the decision to act, to mature before God."

Mother Dupuis attached great importance to our spiritual exercises, which are true nourishment for the soul. To perform them well is to increase from day to day the supernatural light and strength against the enemies of our salvation; while to neglect them, would be to evade the influence of the Holy Spirit.

This kind Mother used to wish her Sisters love of our holy rule and their exact observance. She wrote: "May the fear of offending, or the desire to please never incline us to transgress them. The rule is a pledge which we must transmit intact to those who will succeed us. But let us observe it for supernatural motives: to increase our merit, to bear witness, to manifest to God our love. Let us remember that the least important of the rule as well as the most important are an expression of God's will. Who would not wish to give God this homage of our will united to his, and who would dare transgress his law and despise his grace?"

The more one looks at heaven, the more one understands things of earth! The love of the poor also had an important

place in her heart. She never grew weary of urging her Sisters to compassion toward the suffering members of Jesus Christ. "Love your title of ward mother as the most glorious you can have and may your joy consist in fulfilling your duties," she would tell them. "As you enter the ward, imbue yourselves with the thought that Christ is present in every one of the poor. They are suffering members of Jesus Christ whom you are caring for; what an honor! Your mission, at times so repulsive to nature, is precious in the eyes of faith. Let us live by faith; let us be people of faith."

All the Sisters were the object of Mother's constant solicitude but the sick had a special claim on her compassion. She took pleasure in visiting them, in comforting them and giving them relief, and she did this all the more successfully because she knew, through experience, the difficulties of illness. She spared no effort to restore health. But if God appeared to require sacrifice from her dear Sisters, Mother would not surrender the care of preparing them for death. Seated at their bedside, she would speak to them gently, and when death had snatched them from her motherly affection, she would offer to God the most fervent prayers, would recommend them without delay to the prayers of the community, taking advantage of devotions established by the Church.

How devoted our Mother was to the Church! How happy she was to call herself "a daughter of the Church!" She always showed a deep respect for even the slightest detail of divine worship, for each rubric of the liturgy!

Her habitual recollection did not prevent her from being friendly, courteous, forgetful of self and condescending to the needs of her Sisters. Her individual exhortations penetrated to one's very depth imparting a spirit of faith, trust and surrender, of which she herself was imbued. Though Mother observed silence scrupulously, she was always disposed to allow generous time to comfort those of her daugh-

ters experiencing difficulties. What kind attention she showed toward the young Sisters in order to facilitate their first steps in the rugged path of self denial!

Gratitude was another remarkable virtue of Mother Dupuis. It expressed all the exquisite kindness which she showed to everyone who rendered her any service.

DEATH OF MR. OLIVIER BERTHELET

Let us record here the testimonies of gratitude of our early Sisters to the memory of the Honorable Olivier Berthelet, who died on September 26, 1872, one month after the election of our Superior General. It was indeed a cherished task to render homage to his rare benevolence. Our chronicles of 1872 reproduce this article which first appeared in "La Minerve".

"There has just disappeared from our society, a man who cannot be named without recalling the memory of the great deeds of charity which filled his long career and who has rendered great service to the Church. His memory will long be held in veneration in all the charitable Institutions of our city which have lost in him, a benefactor of untiring kindness. Mr. Olivier Berthelet, Commander of Pius IX, spent his long life in doing good, in assisting every affliction, every distress. One was certain to find him wherever there was good to be done, wherever there was some distress to relieve.

This great citizen for whom all the poor of Montreal and all those who admired his illustrious life were grieving, was born in Montreal in 1799 of Mr. Pierre Berthelet and of Miss Viger of Boucherville. For some time, he engaged in commerce and increased the handsome fortune which his father had left him. About 1832, the citizens of Montreal elected him as their representative in the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada. Later, in 1838, Lord Gosford selected him to serve on the Special Council, an invitation which he declined.

It could be said that for the past twenty years, Mr. Berthelet had dedicated himself endlessly to charitable works immortalized in the history of the religious institutions of Montreal. His charity extended even beyond the ordinary circle of good works and reflected his love, for his faith and for his country. Such were the noble sentiments which inspired him to serve so noble a cause."

His acts of benevolence to the various communities of Montreal were countless. Among others, our old St. Joseph's Orphanage and its chapel were built thanks to his generosity.

Before this throng, filled with admiration and gratitude, the mortal remains of this virtuous man received signs of esteem to which we united our own appreciation.

The funeral rites for Mr. Olivier Berthelet were celebrated on September 28, 1872 at Notre Dame Church. Our community was represented by forty Grey Nuns, and a large group of orphans. On October 3, St. Joseph's Orphanage rendered a proper tribute to its benefactor. Father Alexandre Baile celebrated the Requiem Mass with His Excellency Bishop Bourget and many Sulpician priests in attendance. Our Sisters provided the singing. With great trust they prayed for his eternal repose and eternal light.

After chanting the LIBERA, the Bishop recited the prayers of the Church over the grave of Mr. Berthelet, which had been dug beneath the sanctuary of St. Joseph's Chapel on rue de la Cathédrale. At the time of expropriation from this site, his mortal remains were transferred to our crypt at the Mother House.

BISHOP BOURGET'S JUBILEE

The year 1872 was marked by the jubilee of Bishop Bourget's priestly ordination. The beautiful celebration took place at Notre Dame Church on October 29; but knowing that the religious communities could not all participate, the Bishop

visited each institution. This was how, at 2:00 p.m., on October 16, 1872, we had the honor of receiving the beloved jubilarian.

As he mounted the steps at our entrance, His Grace could already read our welcome message: "BENEDICTUS QUI VENIT IN NOMINE DOMINI!" (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!) The bishop walked along the parlor hallway between two rows of orphans bearing 'arms'... Following the illustrious visitor, one could see His Excellency's coat of arms under the first archway and read the words: Greetings to our Pastor and also, the words ELEGI EUM DOMINUS AD SACRIFICANDEM SIBI could be read... The Lord chose him to offer him a sacrifice.

The personnel of all our missions were lined up along his path forming a guard of honor. Near the corridor to the infirmary, the senior members of the Community seemed to say: CORONA DIGNITATIS SENECTUS, (Old age is a crown of glory — Prov. 16:31). The Bishop later observed other moving words: DEUS DEDIT HONOREM SENECTUTIS (God has given you the glory of old age). A crown hanging in the novitiate indicated the place of meeting. Long rows of Sisters were already waiting there. From this vantage point the jubilarian would see all those who had greeted him along the way.

Mother General led the beloved prelate to the place prepared for him. A triangle was featured against a white background, evoking the devotion to the Eternal Father which the Sisters had received from their foundress. The gold figures 1822 — 1872 accompanied this message: Our thanks to the Eternal Father for the half century of priestly life accorded to our Shepherd and Father! The dazzling whiteness of lilies surrounded this inscription and the following words: TU ES SACERDOS IN AETERNUM (You are a priest forever) expressed the greatness of the priesthood. His Excellency's dignified bearing justified the words underscored by two palms above his throne: PLENUS DIERUM IN DOMINO (He has fullness of life in the Lord).

Accompanying His Excellency were Father Alexis Truteau, Vicar-General, Canon Etienne-Hypolite Hicks, Fathers Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant, André Nercam, and Damien-Henri Tambareau, all Sulpicians, Fathers Ferdinand Frédéric-Marie Lapointe and Théodore Fleck, Jesuits, Father Jean-Baptiste Allard, a missionary and Fathers Poulin, Primeau, Pelletier and Dufresne.

Before this great Bishop, hero of this jubilee, whose closest friends were the poor, the handicapped, the friendless, Mother Dupuis and her Assistant advanced respectfully, to offer him the homage of our Community along with a monetary gift.

Bishop Bourget appeared moved by these demonstrations of respect and after thanking our Superiors, he said in a firm and resounding voice: "I have always greatly loved the Community of the Grey Nuns!" This testimony of approval from the Bishop toward the Community which he had known for fifty years, drew tears of gratitude.

Each category of our charges then went before the Bishop. Our dedicated Franciscan volunteers were first to pass silently before him, offering two decorated candles as a symbol of their work. The kind bishop congratulated them for their dedication and their humility.

Then the old men came forward. The youngest of them addressed the bishop and expressed the joy of all, while another presented the bishop with a surplice. He said, "Your Grace, you have provided clothing for so many poor in your life, now allow one of the poor to offer you this garment."

"Thank you kind gentlemen, for your offering and for your wishes," said the bishop. "You are here, in the vestibule of heaven as you await your admission before the throne of God." The elderly women then came forward while an orphan girl interpreted their sentiments. They congratulated the bishop for his long priestly career, wishing it to be longer

still and they generously offered their own life to the Lord that his might be extended.

The Bishop responded with a heart full of emotion, expressing once again, his gratitude, and he added: "I have often attributed to your prayers the success of my many undertakings". They returned to their place after he had blessed them.

The little ones from the Crèche, carried by our Franciscan Tertiaries and employees, could not speak, but their presence reminded the bishop of the 17,903 babies sheltered since Mother d'Youville had received the first one. Here, more than ever, the compassionate bishop appeared visibly moved. "Once," he said, "the daughters of Mother d'Youville were alarmed about this work. The Government refused to continue the support it had previously given. They contrived among themselves. They weighed the meager resources of the house against what would be required for the sustenance of these poor little ones." They said: "We cannot feed them, but we will keep them and we will fast." As he said this, the bishop looked at our senior Sisters, and overcome with emotion, his tears flowed... tears of admiration for heroic dedication. He blessed the little ones, then older orphans came forward. One of them said: "We would like to kiss your feet for coming to us. In gratitude, Your Excellency, deign to accept the beautifully embroidered chasuble which has been entrusted to us for you." The bishop blessed them as he thanked them for the offering and for their kind words. They made room for the older orphan girls who stated they were happy to take their place in the group forming the wreath of gratitude and filial love which the General Hospital owes to the shepherd whose whole life has been one of dedication and fatherly care. "In return," they declared, "we shall beg the Child Jesus, whose image we offer, to bestow his blessing on the temple which our Bishop is erecting for his glory." His Excellency accepted it with eagerness and said: "I congratu-

late you for the thought you had of offering me a replica of the child Jesus. I am in such great need of light and strength. As I look at it, I shall be reminded where to seek it and of whom to request it."

Here now occurred a double presentation by the children. Figuring the papal guards and garibaldians they spoke this message:

"Your Excellency,

Here are garibaldians which your papal guards have conquered, and even converted as you will see. On your knees garibaldians! Shout "Long live Pius IX!" (They shout Long live Pius IX.) Shout, "Long live our bishop, the father of the papal guards!" (They repeat this cry.) If our bishop later needs papal guards, His Excellency may find some in our present regiment."

The bishop's features lit up and appeared transformed. He smiled kindly and touchingly responded, "The memory of our papal guards is always before me. Believe me, the nation which has stood ready to defend God's cause with its blood, shall be blessed. The families who have not refused to sacrifice their sons for this noble cause will indeed be blessed."

In the distance, an orchestra was heard. It was the blind students of Nazareth offering their floral tribute enhanced by a harmonious background. Then came the host of children from our various houses. One of them was happy to repeat what he had learned — that Jesus had said, "Everyone must resemble little children!"

The orphans from St. Patrick's had their message relayed by a very young speaker who addressed the bishop in English. "The Irish children are grateful for finding in a strange land, spiritual fathers who, like the kind Bishop Bourget, love them and treat them with tenderness." His Grace replied, "Like

your ancestors, remain firm in your faith and you will be worthy sons of St. Patrick."

A delegation from St. Joseph's Home expressed happiness at living close to the Bishop's residence and thanked His Grace for his many kindnesses. The Bishop acknowledged them as his closest flock and urged them to always sing God's praises beautifully in their lovely chapel of which he was so fond.

THE LONG PARADE CAME TO AN END

Before leaving the assembly hall, the Bishop reviewed the various parts of this great manifestation. He had kind words for the daughters of Mother d'Youville and ended with this exhortation: "Let us love our faith which offers relief to all suffering, undertakes all good, accomplishes great works."

Having extended a final blessing, he left our Mother House while his flock remained filled with emotion, blessing God for giving them such a saintly bishop.

The jubilee festivities continued. On October 29, at Notre Dame Church, the bishop celebrated a solemn mass at which each religious community, society, and guild was represented. A few Grey Nuns attended on behalf of the Community.

The year 1872 was soon to disappear leaving behind it memories of this glorious jubilee which had been so well celebrated thanks to the solicitude of Father Truteau, the Vicar General. Toward mid-November, the latter sent as a souvenir to the Community, a collection of the Bishop's letters as well as a photograph of His Grace. Our Sisters were very touched by this attention.

On December 28, a notice was circulated announcing the death of Father Truteau. Our beloved bishop was particularly affected. Our Sisters in sympathy attended his funeral on January 2, 1873 and offered fervent prayers for the deceased.

OUR MANUAL OF PIETY

During the year 1873, each member of the Institute received the precious gift of our own "Manual of Devotions" drawn up by dear Father Mathurin Bonnissant, p.s.s.

The Sisters were urged not to limit themselves to practising their Rule externally. They must especially be guided by its spirit.

"This spirit of the rule, which alone gives life to the holiest of its works, tends sometimes to be more neglected than the external acts" said the author in the preface. For example, one may respect the rules of silence and of modesty and pay little attention to interior recollection which is the primary goal. One would feel guilty for omitting service to the poor, yet not always have the spirit of faith and of charity wherein lies the merit of the action. These omissions deprive God of the glory due to him and deprive the Sisters of much of their merit.

Our manual proposed to intensify purity of intention. In addition to the prayers and practices which are customary in our Institute, it contains advice and instructions on the way to perform them well.

The following is the letter of thanks addressed by the Community to Father Bonnissant after the precious Manual was distributed:

General Hospital, Montreal
January 27, 1873

Reverend and dear Father,

From the very day on which our Reverend Mother distributed the Manual of Devotions made especially for our Institute, we have been able to appreciate it, to savor it and to discover that it has exceeded our expectations.

The care with which you have drawn up this precious work has been keenly perceived by those for whom it was made, and we wish to express our sincere gratitude for this new proof of the friendliness and concern that you have

shown our Institute. We shall never forget your humble charity and dedication.

This Manual, resulting from your work and fatherly concern, in which we find all our religious obligations, shall be for us what the Breviary is to the priest. It shall follow us everywhere, help us in the practice of the virtues of our state, and encourage us in difficult times.

We hope, Reverend Father, that this bread for the soul, which you have served us, will be profitable to us all and that God will receive all the glory which you had intended to give him by accomplishing this task.

Dear Father, by our fidelity and fervor, may we obtain that you remain with us a long time yet, for the benefit of our dear Community and for that of each one of us in particular. This is what we shall attempt to deserve.

Please accept the sincere gratitude of those who are happy to be,

Your respectful and obedient daughters in J.C.

The Grey Nuns

It was decided at the General Chapter, that this Manual would be read in common once a year. But a fervent Grey Nun should make it her constant companion and be eager to draw from it, the true spirit of Mother d'Youville.

CONSECRATION OF BISHOP FABRE

1873 was to record another event important for the diocese of Montreal. On April 23, a circular gave notice that on May 1, Father Edouard-Charles Fabre, chancellor would be consecrated coadjutor to Bishop Bourget, with right of succession to the episcopal see of Montreal. After thirty-six years of labor and responsibility, our beloved Shepherd had requested of Rome this support, now necessary because of his advanced age and infirmities.

News of this election was received with enthusiasm and revealed the love which the future bishop had won for him-

self from the faithful of the diocese. He was consecrated in the church of the Jesuits under the title of Bishop of Gratianopolis. Six Sisters represented the Community.

An outline of his priestly career will help us to appreciate the qualities of the new bishop.

Bishop Fabre belonged to a family which was essentially religious and patriotic. His father, Edouard-Raymond Fabre was a good and virtuous citizen. His mother, born Luce Perreault, deserved the honor of being the mother of a bishop.

Edouard's vocation became apparent in childhood. At age nine, he entered college at St. Hyacinthe and succeeded brilliantly in his studies. In 1843, he left for Paris where he spent eighteen months with an uncle amid a distinguished society. The pleasures of Parisian life and the allurements of the world, so dangerous for a young man of seventeen, did not stifle God's call to his service. The following was extracted from a letter he wrote to his mother on June 24, 1844 to advise her of his intention to become a priest:

My dear Mother,

... this week, we shall celebrate the feast of St. John the Baptist. I hope that in a few years, I shall be able to celebrate Holy Mass for the welfare of our country, for the unity of Canadians and to obtain all the blessings which we must request on such a day.

Dear Mother, you see that I wish to speak to you of something which is very important. To know and to follow one's vocation are two things that are essential for happiness in this life and especially in eternity.

Your maternal heart will acknowledge this more than ever. I have always loved the priestly state. When I was at St. Hyacinthe, it was thought that if I saw the world I would possibly change my mind. Well, I have been in Paris for fifteen months. I think I have seen as much of the world as one can decently see. I went to the theatre six times. Far from taking a liking to it, I discovered that any good Cathol-

ic should never go. I attended several social events and heard all sorts of conversations. Despite this, my dispositions have not altered. I am convinced that God allowed me to know the world in order that I could later direct others. Please join me in requesting this favor. Make my father understand that if God has allowed him to raise four children, he must not think it excessive for this same God to request one of them for his service in the priesthood. And yourself, would you not be happy to attend a Mass celebrated by your eldest son?

One can imagine the emotion experienced by Mrs. Fabre before such a disclosure. As for Mr. Fabre, who had only wanted to test his son's vocation, he gladly bowed to the obvious. He was happy to note in his son these deep sentiments which he appreciated.

On October 18, 1844, the young man entered the seminary at Issy where his confrères were young men destined to honor the French episcopate, such as Mgr. de la Tour d'Auvergne, Archbishop of Bourges; Mgr. Lavigerie, bishop of Alger; Mgr. Hugonin, bishop of Bayeux; Mgr. Thomas, bishop of La Rochelle; Mgr. Soubiranne, bishop of Sébaste and Mgr. Leuilleu, bishop of Carcassonne, an intimate friend of Bishop Fabre who was appointed with him at the same consistory.

CHAPTER XI

1874 — 1877

In 1874, a particularly impressive foundation was recorded in our history, the second of missions in the Mackenzie. That year, Bishop Clut, o.m.i., coadjutor to Bishop Faraud, having spent the winter at the mission of The Nativity in Athabaska, learned that a Protestant minister would definitely come there soon to open a school. Error would then warp the minds of the Natives even before they could be opened to the true light of the Gospel. Long did the Bishop pray and reflect, seeking a way to ward off the danger. Sisters! he thought. We must have Sisters to open a Catholic school. But at such a distance, how could any be obtained from Montreal in less than a year? Bishop Faraud who was in France at the time was still in a position to intervene. Bishop Clut took it upon himself to call two Sisters from Fort Providence. They would be borrowed only until the Superior General could be contacted to obtain a consequent authorization. Despite the fact that the Apostle used all his persuasive eloquence, the Superior in Providence remained perplexed. To found a mission without the approval of the major Superiors was a serious violation of our holy Rule. Bishop Clut insisted, and pleaded while poor Sister Adeline Lapointe hesitated between the desire for apostolic conquest and the fear of incurring sanctions of the General Administration. What hours of anguish she underwent! How far she was from all moral support! Finally, on the advice of Father Pierre-Emile Grouard, the pastor and Oblate Superior at Fort Providence, it was decided that the Superior herself, accompanied by Sister Saint-Michel-

des-Saints and by Domitilde Letendre, would leave at the first opportunity.

On June 30, all three boarded a barge destined for Athabaska. Father Grouard, seriously ill, also embarked for France in the hope of recovering his health. On his way through Montreal, the future bishop took it upon himself to give notice of the new foundations and to plead its cause. It took twenty days to travel the 480 miles which separated Providence from Athabaska by crossing Great Slave Lake and following the Slave River to the head of Lake Athabaska where stood the mission of the Nativity, today known as Chipewyan. Eager to welcome the foundresses, Bishop Clut and Father Laity could offer them only a shed with open cracks on all sides.

On the evening of July 19, 1874, the convent of the Holy Angels was founded, but would it survive? Trusting in Divine Providence, our Sisters thought only of their installation for the moment. How could they make this hovel into a home even the least bit inhabitable? Resolutely, they used a pitch fork, then a shovel, and finally a broom. The rest may be explained without commentary. A week later, the school opened its doors to some fifteen Chipewyan and Cree children of which only two were boarders, undoubtedly because the four walls could not accommodate any more. Meanwhile, news of the foundation having reached Montreal had met with great disapproval. Mother Elizabeth Dupuis wrote to Sister Lapointe: "You have acted against our Constitutions." The expected blame was accepted with due humility; but it took great submission indeed to bow before the irrevocable decision: "Return to Fort Providence"! Winter was approaching. It was impossible for women to travel in this country during this season. The departure was forcibly delayed till spring, while at the Mother House, a letter from Bishop Faraud and supplications from Father Grouard interceded for the new mission. The latter promised: "If I must get down on my knees, I shall not return until I have received authorization." The indomita-

ble missionary heroism finally vanquished the General Council and on October 21, 1874, Mother Dupuis signed the official document of foundation; furthermore she promised two more recruits for the following spring.

Sister Lapointe indeed experienced great relief and joy! The isolation, the hunger, the deprivation matter little now. Their sacrifices now bore the approval of obedience and God's blessing dwelt upon the little convent of Holy Angels.

The winter was spent awaiting the future companions, Sisters Valentine Brochu and Alphonsine Fournier, along with Virginie Bernier who later became an auxiliary Sister under the name of Sr. Bruno. One knows how tedious and exhausting travels were in the remote northern regions at this period. Having left Montreal in early spring, Sister Fournier wrote after several long stages:

July 26 — "This morning we left Ile-à-la-Crosse where we had waited three weeks sharing both the poverty and the warm hospitality of our Sisters. The farewells were painful. Our hearts swelled and tears flowed. On the other hand, we were happy to be on our way again toward our far distant mission.

July 27 — We arose at three o'clock in the morning. Fortunately, our guide awakened us a half-hour early. Having cried, "Arise everyone!" we all embarked, and so today, we crossed Clear Lake and Bull Lake.

July 28 — We arose at 2:30 in the morning. We lost no time. The caravan had to cross the La Loche River and Lake before nightfall.

August 2 — A new difficulty arose on our path this morning. It was impossible to find carts to carry our luggage and we were approaching an eighteen mile portage. Yet, we had to move on! Leaving our baggage to God's Providence, we loaded our handbags in the only cart available, and by four in the morning, we began the eighteen mile trek through the

woods. By ten o'clock, our legs could no longer carry us. We rested a while and then continued our journey. About three o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at the end of the portage, exhausted.

August 3 — We had great difficulty getting up, for our legs and our whole body were stiff and sore. We had a new disappointment as we were setting out. There was no place for the Sisters on the barge. The guides left us to camp on the shore amid some two hundred natives whose vermin made us shudder with repugnance. Day and night, they danced and beat their drums, while we, crouching under our tents, trembled with fear.

August 8 — Finally we left, crossing new portages, for the water was too shallow for the barges. We travelled between two mountains which cut the wind. The heat was torrid. Sister Brochu groaned, I taunted her, but I groaned as well. Dear Athabaska, you are so far away!

August 10 — We had a difficult rapid to jump. The first barge crossed it easily enough; ours followed; then the third struck ours violently. The men lost control of the manoeuvre and the barge bounced rapidly in every direction. After frightening jolts, it ran aground on reefs. Never had I experienced such great fear!"

The diary continues mostly in pleasant tones but often in tragic ones until finally on August 13, they approached the end of their exile, the picturesque shores of Lake Athabaska which measures over one hundred and fifty miles across and is situated in northern Alberta some 485 miles from Edmonton. The Mission of the Nativity, founded in 1847 by Father Alexandre Taché, o.m.i., who later became the bishop of St. Boniface, was prospering slowly under the direction of Father Laity, o.m.i., when our Sisters arrived. They brought from Montreal the appointment of Sr. St. Michel-des-Saints as Superior of the Convent. The small community became organized and each one received her specific assignment. Sis-

ter Valentine Brochu became housemother for the ten little girls; Sister Alphonsine Fournier took on the classroom as well as the care of the eight boys; Sr. Virginie Bernier became the cook. As for Sr. Adeline Lapointe, she returned to Fort Providence with Domitilde Letendre.

Who will tell of the heroism experienced in the years which followed? Jealously guarding the secret of their immolations, the pioneers of that time, as would the missionaries of later days, informed the Mother House only of the joys of their apostolate. Thus, it is that they reported that the first school inspection astonished the non-Catholics themselves. They told of a twelve-year old Indian child, Jean-Baptiste Etlec who was asked by Sr. Saint-Michel-des-Saints: "What would you do if, arriving in heaven, you found Jesus absent? — I would wait for him and when he arrived, I would say to him: 'I am coming to stay with you in your house!'" They told also about a Native whose wife had just died. His faith prompted him to comment, "I must not be sad, for she is gone to be with God."

The missionaries sometimes described heart-rending scenes. "This winter — 1888 — the famine reached its utmost limit. Our Natives were driven to boiling the leather of their dwellings in order to eat it. Those who did not even have a dwelling ate the lacings of their snow shoes and drank a broth decoction of birch bark. Exhausted hunters fell dead in the woods. Several were found half devoured by wolves. Of a camp of twenty-eight persons, eleven adults and nine children died. One woman who survived went to a neighboring camp to seek help. Trudging through the woods despite the bitter cold and the stormy weather and despite her fasting, she reached the hut of her brother-in-law after walking nine days. The latter left immediately with his two sons to go and bury the unfortunate victims. Misinformed about the location of the camp, their strength and their supplies exhausted, they walked a long time and finally reached a dwelling in which a whole family was dying. Several of these would prob-

ably have survived if they had had food, but the visitors had none themselves. These good men hewed a supply of wood, made a great fire, dug graves in the snow to bury the bodies, then touching the hands of the victims, they exhorted them to submit to the will of the Great Master. The three men set out for their own camp, but exhausted, they in turn succumbed and froze in the forest."

The narrator continues: "At the convent, Divine Providence has not yet failed us, so that if our dear Sisters in Montreal were to come and take a picnic on the rocks of the Athabaska, we could provide the feast, meager perhaps, since we do not have so much as an ounce of fat, but you would see on the menu, dried meat, dried fish and even pancakes which we make with marrow from the bones when good fortune brings us a little fresh meat." She dared to add that one of the children at the mission complained that he could not sleep, because he was hungry. Now we presume that before our Sisters would allow their dear Indian children to suffer, they must have been the first to go on ration.

The chronicles report in fact, that of all the missions of the Mackenzie district, Athabaska was the one which experienced the longest fasts, the most disastrous storms and the hardest labors. Before the construction of the first convent in 1881, and its extensions in 1898 and in 1904, the foundresses lived seven years in the shed which sheltered them "temporarily" at the time of the foundation.⁽¹⁾

The only chairs that ever were in this convent consisted of boards on props. There was only one bed where one of the Sisters slept while her companions rested either on the table, or on the floor. If the Convent of the Holy Angels appears to have been the richest in sacrifices, it was perhaps also the most fruitful in supernatural graces. In 1913, the Eternal

(1) In 1942 a solid and spacious building of brick and stone replaced the convent of 1881 which was falling to ruins.

Father gathered one of these blessed fruits, a Chipewyan child called Pierre Paquet. In 1909 while still with his family, he became gravely ill. His parents thinking he would die, promised to give him to the Oblate Fathers if he recovered. His condition improved so rapidly that recovery was considered miraculous. Pierre was then brought to the convent where he was a model of piety and of obedience. Struck anew by illness, he said:

— If I recover again, I shall become an Oblate of Mary Immaculate.

— What would you prefer, however, to die or to become an Oblate?

— I would prefer to die, because if I became an Oblate, I could still offend God.

One day, after drinking a bitter potion, he said:

— Even if it tasted worse, it would not be as bad as what Jesus was given on the cross.

In the course of a conversation with the priest, Pierre asked him: "Can one see God in Purgatory?"

— No my child, one catches a glimpse of him at judgment; then one can see him again only in heaven.

God must have yielded to this wish, for the child did indeed suffer much. Having entered into agony, he appeared to have a terrible vision which he tried to repel, then he became perfectly calm and died peacefully.

God's predilections seem to have extended over the young Pierre's family. One of his nieces who like him, was a pupil at the Convent of the Holy Angels, obtained her admission to our community. In August 1930, Madeleine Paquet arrived at the Mother House to begin her probation. Her postulancy and the first year of the novitiate went by without obstacles for the young Chipewyan novice; then in February 1932, because of an obscure state of decline, she was confined to the

infirmary. In June of that year she was operated on for sinusitis; this was an open door to the tuberculosis which was undermining her body. On September 1, Sister Madeleine Paquet pronounced her vows. She was thought to be at death's door, but the end did not come yet. She was fully possessed by Jesus who would complete his work in her before calling her to her reward. A few of her personal notes allow us to glimpse these marvels:

September 1, 1932: My profession day!

Jesus came to me with his heavy cross and he asked me if I was ready. I answered yes, do with me what you will, I am ready to suffer.

September 5 — Jesus, my joy is to love suffering. My novice companions came to see me. Despite the fact that I felt like crying, I laughed with them; for one must not show one's sadness when others are joyful.

September 15 — Courage Madeleine. Deliver yourself up to Jesus as a victim. Abandon yourself to him.

September 23 — I resolve not to look toward the door when a Sister passes, especially when the Sister is a friend.

October 30 — Feast of Christ the King. This morning, I offered myself to Jesus as a victim of love and I am sure that he has heard me.

November 19 — Self-denial is implied in religious life and I am very happy to live it out.

(No date) Sometimes all the sins of my life appear to me at once as a dark torrent within me and I cannot concentrate on God's Mercy. I feel lost. I call for help and no one responds. Then I say: this is a trial and I accept it. No one could believe what I am suffering at those times. Sadness overwhelms my soul.

These are significant notes to whoever has a knowledge of God's ways! One cannot then be surprised that after an inter-

view with the novice whom he knew very well, His Excellency Bishop Gabriel Breynat, o.m.i., said to our Mother General: "You have an angel there. In all my priestly life I have never met a person so young who had such an intimacy with God. This novice never loses the presence of God." It was undoubtedly this divine presence which radiated through her whole personality, for her delicacy of sentiment was indeed surprising for a child of the forest. With a soul filled with gratitude toward our community, this young native Sister who had become the Spouse of the King of Heaven, died on January 18, 1933.

Little George, the prodigious child still known in Chipewyan as "the child who stole God", figures alongside Pierre and Madeleine. George was a Chipewyan. He was entrusted to our Sisters at the age of ten months, after the death of his mother. The foster-child had, at a very early age, requested the joy of making his first communion. More than once, he had tugged on Mgr. Joussard's waist-band and asked: "Monseigneur, when will you give me Jesus?" The bishop had replied, "soon" and had exhorted the child to be a "good boy".

He was a good boy but the "soon" did not come soon enough. So what did the child plan? Taking advantage of a time when the Sister Sacristine was not around, George climbed up on to the altar, deliberately opened the tabernacle and took Holy Communion. Surprised by a Sister who was entering the sanctuary, the child attempted to come down. He fell but got up immediately and was radiant.

— George, why did you do that?

— Because Monseigneur did not give Jesus to George, George took him.

The cherub, thief of the Eucharist, was not to live long after this great joy. He died at age four. When his pain was intense and he was moaning quietly a Sister said to him.

— George, ask Jesus to take your pain.

— No, he answered. Jesus already has too much pain. Poor Jesus! No, no, I can't give my pain to Jesus.

And these were the last words of the little Chipewyan boy.

THE SCHOOL AT FORT TOTTEN

While in Chipewyan, the light of faith was dawning slowly, holy obedience designated Sisters Rose Clapin, Auxélie Chénier-Lajemmerais, Céline Allard and Philomène Drapeau as foundresses of a new mission. With the blessing of Bishop Grace of St. Paul, Minnesota, and protected by Major William Forbes, an agent for the Natives and godfather of the future establishment, our Sisters left Montreal on September 24, 1874 for the destination of Fort Totten in North Dakota. To settle in the United States would certainly be more pleasant than to face the rigors of the arctic regions; after an easy trip by train, the foundresses were undoubtedly to find a temperate climate, relative comfort amid a civilized population. But Totten in 1874, was a modest fort, where polygamy, paganism and all sorts of physical and moral miseries of savagery reigned.

The five-week journey was effected in the following conditions: Sister Céline Allard wrote; "In Jamestown, we had the joy of offering God a good sacrifice, that of spending two days and three nights at a hotel already occupied to capacity by some thirty men. We were installed for the night in a shed sitting on ice which the hostess had covered with sacs serving as carpets. There was no stove to protect us against the snow which came in through cracks between the boards and through the single window with broken panes. There was no bed either, except a thin mattress of hay on two boards and this was covered over with horse blankets "so that the ladies could rest." Wrapped up the best we could, yet shivering with cold, we could not sleep. The following day, the landlady had pity on us and loaned her own bed which we used in turn. The first night spent on the prairie was most painful. Fourteen travellers sheltered in a small cabin without fire or water!

After eating our frozen food supply, we had to sleep, or tremble with cold, wrapped in our blankets and laying on bare ground."

From one stop to another, from sacrifice to sacrifice, they finally reached Fort Totten. It was November 2. As it often happens, the house was not finished. The foundresses accepted the hospitality of the generous Major Forbes whose solicitude for the time being, was their only human support. On the spiritual side, our Sisters would be encouraged by the kind Father L. Bonin, a priest with an apostolic heart who had come along with them to serve as chaplain while dedicating himself to the evangelization of the Sioux.

As soon as the masons and carpenters had finished most of their work, our Sisters proceeded to make the place habitable. Sister Céline Allard wrote: "While I cleaned up the mortar, the lime and the shavings, Sister Drapeau improvised her first kitchen table: two boards placed crosswise on an empty barrel. On November 8, the chapel appeared suitable enough for the celebration of the first Mass. Strengthened henceforth by the Eucharistic Presence, we would better be able to suffer: then, after mentioning that for three weeks they had slept on the floor, the chronicler adds: "We delight in our destitution," after which she gave the description of the Convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows.

"On the ground floor, to the left is the little chapel next to which is a room 15 ft. x 25 ft. which serves as a dormitory for the community. The door to the right opens on to the parlor. The kitchen, the dining room and the laundry are set up in the next area which gives rise to ingenious arrangements. The day before wash day double rations of pork and biscuits are prepared so that on the next day, no cooking is done. Sister Drapeau's task consists in steeping the tea and everyone lends a hand with the washing. We have no pantry. Our supplies, consisting of a barrel of lard, one case of eggs and one of tea, are stored over the stairs. We have no milk, but we will

have vegetables next summer when Sr. Superior will have made her garden."

Such is heroism, forgetful of self and finding it natural to continually accept sacrifice.

Let us read on: "From November 18-20 we made our recollection the best we could amid our occupations. We had been promised Holy Mass but after vainly waiting for the priest until 7:30, we went to the chapel, and kneeling together at the foot of the altar, we renewed our vows. Nothing could have been more simple and yet it appeared very solemn. Breakfast followed and each returned to her daily task."

Indeed, the scene of four Grey Nuns in exile dedicating themselves to God for the salvation of souls was solemn in the eyes of faith and God's response would not be long in coming.

At Christmas 1874, sixty-four Sioux attended the midnight Mass and on the following January 6, the foundresses thanked God for the joy of a first baptism. Meanwhile, boys and girls won over with great patience were brought to the mission. There were already twenty-four under the direction of the Sisters.

A new centre for the apostolate was established; although it would survive and even prosper spiritually, Fort Totten would always remain "the mission of the Seven Sorrows". It would not be spared any trial. To super-human work and frequent fast would be added persecution by civic authorities and hatred of the Indians, one of whose chiefs went as far as to threaten a Sister with a tomahawk. Totten would also experience disasters of floods and of fire. In 1926 flames destroyed the convent and cost Sr. Saint-Alfred her life. Conscious of her responsibility as Superior, she had rushed into the burning building to save the children.

After this conflagration, the American government refused funds necessary for reconstruction. It was then that the

Benedictine priests serving the parish offered to take over the work. Seven miles away from the forest, on St. Michael's Indian Reserve, a large four-storey brick convent was built solely from the resources of Charity. It was placed under the patronage of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, and for eight years the "Little Flower School" has continued to subsist by miracle, counting only on the donations of its benefactors, a perpetual shower of roses which allowed 155 Indian (children) boys and girls to be clothed, housed and fed annually while they are being taught human sciences as well as the truths of our faith.

JUBILEE AND DEATH OF MOTHER MCMULLEN

On February 23, 1875 our religious family gathered around our beloved Mother Elisabeth Forbes-McMullen in respectful deference to offer congratulations and to express filial gratitude. The former Superior of our Institute had reached the fiftieth anniversary of her religious profession on that day. His Grace, Bishop Edouard Fabre, bishop of Montreal, celebrated the Mass of Thanksgiving in our Chapel. Also sharing our joy, the Sulpicians were represented by Fathers Alexandre Baile, André Nercam, Mathurin-Clair Bonnissant, Victor Rousselot, Patrick Dowd and Péladeau, who all concelebrated the Holy Sacrifice with His Grace. The celebration was very pious and loving in its simplicity. It was a time of pure filial love.

But, in the book of life, while we would like to remain at the page of love, the page of death is already before us. Six weeks after this joyful manifestation, on April 7, a Wednesday, at three o'clock in the afternoon, our beloved Mother died before the eyes of the Sisters who were disconsolate. Feeling more keenly than any other the loss of a wise, prudent and experienced counsellor, Mother Dupuis received many expressions of sympathy. The very priests who had celebrated the sacrifice of thanksgiving on her recent jubilee, returned to our chapel this time to offer a sacrifice of conciliation and to

implore mercy in favor of the dear departed one. The funeral Mass was sung by His Grace Bishop Fabre and interment took place in the crypt of our Mother House. If death is a ruthless leveler, the power of memory nevertheless escapes its clutch. It is the privilege of the Church, of religious communities in particular, to preserve intact from one generation to another, the memory of our ancestors. As long as our Institute will exist, its chronicles will preserve the memory of our reverend Mother Elisabeth Forbes — McMullen who was born on February 12, 1806, admitted to the novitiate in 1823 and appointed to govern as the Superior General on October 2, 1843.

The second volume of *Love Spans the Centuries* has already made known the noble figure of its sixth Superior. Let us only recall here a few events of her administration: the foundations at St. Boniface and Ottawa, the reorganization of service to the poor in their homes and the heroic dedication of the community during the typhus epidemic in 1847. Actions reveal the moral fibres of the person who performs them. In Mother McMullen, they revealed an apostolic spirit, compassion for the afflicted and a generosity that led her to total self-dedication.

MOTHER ROSE COUPLÉE'S DEATH

Two years later, our Sisters were mourning the death of another Mother who had been tenderly loved. After succeeding Mother McMullen as Superior and having spent her final energy as Assistant, Mother Rose Couplée also followed her into eternal rest on April 9, 1877. Her six years of administration — 1848-1853 — were highlighted by several remarkable events: the foundation of our house in Quebec, the first General Chapter of the Institute, the first edition of our Constitutions, etc.

Did not the editing of our Holy Rule consolidate our religious family in a spiritual stability which was already well established? It was necessary however for each member to contribute her fidelity. Speaking of our Holy Rule, Mother

Coutlée fondly repeated: "Is it not the touchstone of obedience and the precious cross of every moment by which religious persons are sanctified?" Obedience and regularity, such was her supreme wish for her Sisters. Consequently, after the date of her birth, profession and death: 1814, 1832, 1877, the epitaph on her tombstone could have borne these two words which are retained as a synthesis of her management and of her maternal love.

FOUNDATION OF A HOSPICE AT LONGUEUIL

While the disappearance of these remarkable women deprived our Institute of two powerful supporters, its life, constantly renewed, would blossom into many works. In 1874 the Indian missions of Chipewyan and Fort Totten had been founded. In 1876 St. Anthony's Hospice in Longueuil would open.

Founded by Charles Le Moyne in 1668 on the south bank of the St. Lawrence, across from Montreal, Longueuil is one of the oldest parishes in Canada, and the first to be placed under the patronage of St. Anthony. Through the two hundred years of its existence, it had been gifted with beautiful institutions among which were that of the Brothers of Christian Schools and that of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. It lacked however, a charitable institution. Father Georges Thibault had long sought to fill this void. Moreover, the zealous pastor wished to counteract the Methodist influence installed in his parish on the corner of Grant and St. Elizabeth Streets. In 1876, Mr. J. Goguet, a wealthy elderly gentleman of Longueuil, a notary, wished to dispose of his estate in favour of good works. On April 25, he bought the Protestant school and three days later, donated the property to Father Thibault so that a charitable institution could be established there. This was a happy solution to a double problem which till then had been insolvable.

As early as May 30th, Father Thibault came to propose to the Grey Nuns his plans for a hospice, a solid three-storey stone building measuring 72 ft. x 36 ft. The Council having accepted, repairs and renovations were undertaken immediately and on September 3, Sisters Alix Christin, Cornélie Bélanger-Séguin, Albine Dumouchel-Peltier and Marie-Anne Falardeau-St-Jean-de-la-Croix took possession of the former "Swiss School". It was first called St. Anthony's Hospital, but soon the title of Hospice prevailed, for it had become a home for both the elderly and for orphans. From the beginning, our Sisters had also organized service to the poor in their homes. Subsequent extensions allowed for the opening of a kindergarten and the sheltering of women boarders.

In the course of its existence, the Hospice opened wide its doors and its heart to the homeless poor and to the orphans who came requesting as well as material bread, a solid Christian education. May the broad and fruitful charity of Blessed Mother d'Youville always be proportioned to the distress which appeals to it!

St. Anthony's of Longueuil was the last foundation of Mother Elizabeth Dupuis' administration. On October 1, 1877, she laid down the prime burden of her responsibilities. In placing Mother Julie Deschamps at the head of our Institute once again, the fourth General Chapter gave her as assistant, this prudent, peaceful and charitable religious in whom, over a five year period, the Community had had a model and a mother.

This third volume of our family history — a treasure of sacrifices, of trials and of solace, of blessings and of graces — ends with homage of adoration and gratitude to the Eternal Father for "History is a living tapestry of facts, tapestry in which the thoughts and actions of men and of God come together, intertwine and intermingle, jostle and collide always with the final effect of creating a marvelous providential plan in which God's love for mankind is abundantly manifested" (Pius XI).

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LOVE SPANS THE CENTURIES

Volume I, by Sr. Albina Fauteux, S.G.M. unfolded the impressive story of Marguerite d'Youville's faith-filled life of universal charity and the founding of her Institute, The Sisters of Charity "Grey Nuns".

Volume II by Sr. Clémentine Drouin, S.G.M. follows the development of the Institute under the administration of four successive Superiors General which saw the birth of daughter Institutes, namely St. Hyacinthe (1840), Ottawa (1845) and Quebec (1849). The author captures the intensity with which the spirit of the Foundress was lived out in her successors.

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Marguerite d'Youville
Mother of Universal Charity