



The *Great* Canadian
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.



Projet de la *Grande* Histoire
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

**St. John's Hospital
Edson, Alberta**

**A collection of articles from the
Sisters of Service congregational publication
"Field at Home"**

Source: Courtesy of archives of the
Sisters of Service

Copyright: Public Domain

Edited by: Greg J. Humbert

Digitized: 2014

Sisters of Service

Field at Home S.O.S. Magazine

The Field at Home was the brainchild of Rev. George Daly, C.Ss.R., director of the Sisters of Service for 34 years. Two years after the founding of the community, the first issue was published in October 1924 to inform the benefactors about the work and progress of the Sisters and to solicit funds.

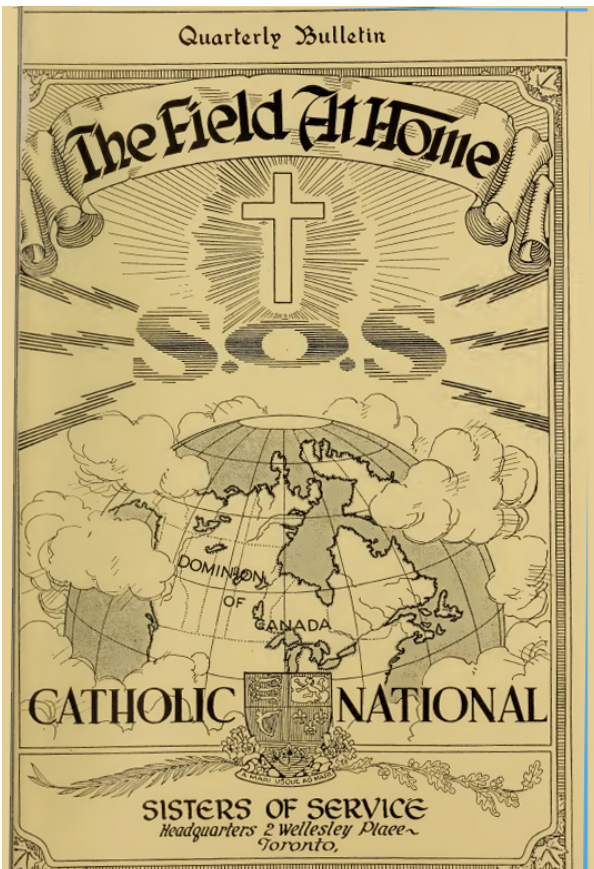
For the initial eight years, Father Daly wrote and oversaw the production of the quarterly magazine. As an author of three books and numerous articles, Fr. Daly's publishing knowledge of the power of words and illustrations shone throughout the issues. The first issues of cream-coloured seven pages reflected the community's classic simplicity with a cover of a black ink adaptation of its coat of arms.

Replacing Fr. Daly as editor, Sister Carolyn Albury assumed the responsibility for the next 20 years, continuing his five main sections: The Editorial, written by Father Daly until his death in 1956; At Headquarters; In the Mission Field; Our Benefactors and Vocations. The four successive Sister editors brought their experience and journalistic training to the magazine, which returned to the original size in 1955. The later issues reflected the contemporary and changing religious trends and celebrating the historic moments within the SOS and Canada.

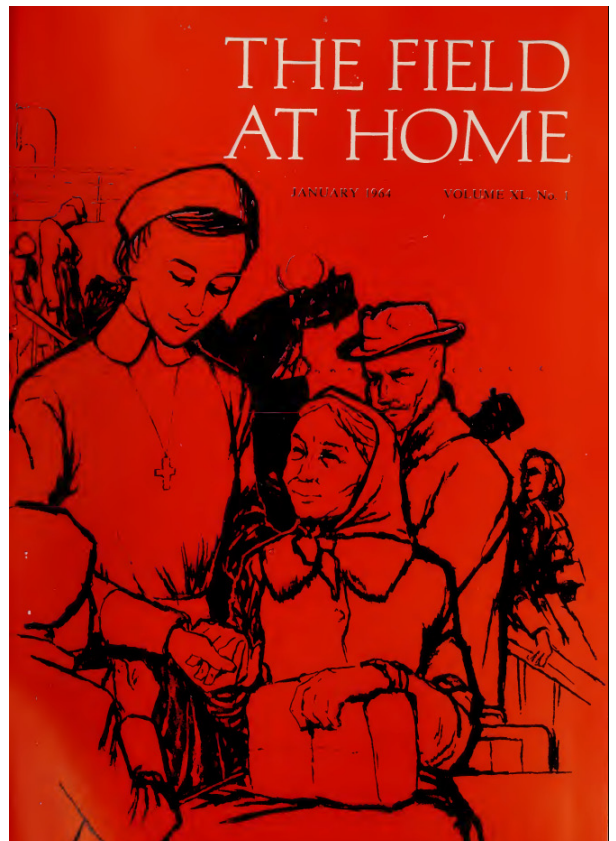
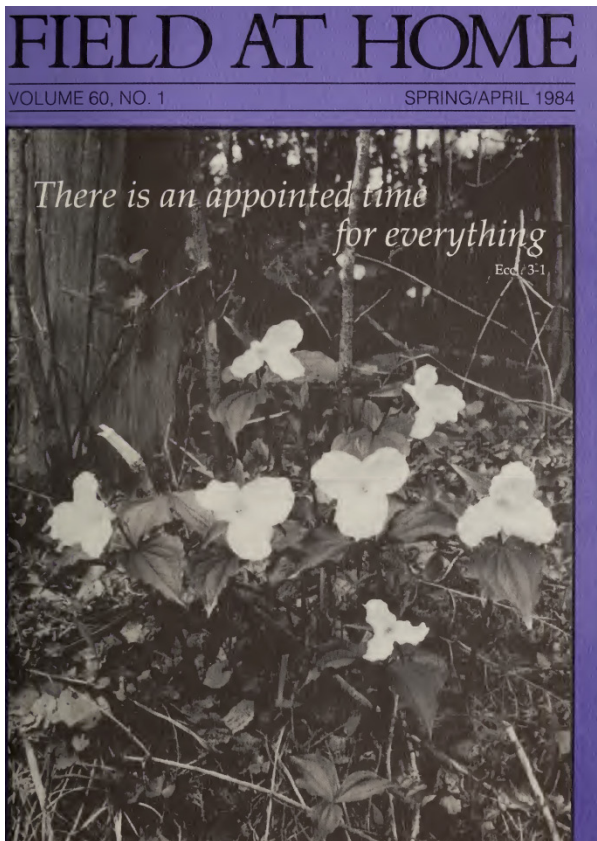
To attract interest and support, The Field at Home originally was complimentary. Copies were distributed to churches and placed in pews. Several Sisters were attracted to the community after reading the magazine. Later a yearly subscription cost \$1 a year and only increased to \$2. At its peak in the mid-1960s, the subscription list rose to 4,300.

The publication of the magazine ended in 1984.

The following are articles extracted from the magazine that made reference to St. John's Hospital in Edson, Alberta.



Examples of magazine covers through the years.



Field at Home Vol. VI, No. 2, April 1930, p9.

WHAT THE MOON SAW (With apologies to Hans Andersen)

I looked out over a little town in Western Canada and thought how peaceful and quiet it seemed as it lay there bathed in the soft light of my beams. Everything was still, save for a low breeze which lightly stirred the trees and made them whisper, or the distant whistle of a train far away. How beautiful it looked, and how calm and tranquil. The world is a very lovely place, I thought. All slept. All slept, did I say? Well, no, for as I looked again I saw away in the distance a little light, and this light appeared to be moving. I followed it with my eyes, and when it drew nearer I was able to discern a group of three men wending their way somewhat wearily over the rough road. The first man carried a lantern, and the other two bore a stretcher on which lay a man unconscious.

On they came through that still, silent night. The only noise to break the peace was the sound of their measured tread. I watched them carefully, for the sight was an unusual one, and at length they stopped before a frame building. Then the door opened for them, and they carried their burden inside. It reminded me of a scene in Italy — lowly monks bearing the bodies of the dead to burial at the dead of night. What are they doing? I wondered, for even the old, old moon can be curious sometimes; and I looked closer at the building trying to guess its secret. Hospital, I saw written over the door: St. John's Hospital. Ah! Then I understood why they were carrying their burden so carefully at a time when all men slept. There had been an accident, and they were bringing the victim to this house of healing.

Oh! blessed little Catholic Hospitals, doing God's work among the poor and needy—among those who need you most! What miracles of healing your white walls have witnessed. Poor broken bodies given relief from suffering; poor sustained prodigals brought back to the Arms of their Father. The newborn infant ushered into the world; the eyes of the dying gently closed in death. And all this done in, the Name of Him whose delight it was to lay Hands on the sick and suffering and bring them health and comfort. God bless these little Hospitals, and may God bless a thousand times that band of consecrated women who, day after day, year after year, until the very end, give of their best—their

very lives—that others may live. The One Who promised to repay a cup of cold water given in His Name will be their reward—a reward exceeding great.

I glanced down again over that little town, which lay so still and calm in the light of my silver beams, and I saw the tall pines shiver in the breeze, and the fields of ripe corn rustle with expectancy. Here a bird gave a feeble cry, and Nature seemed to be waking out of her sleep. I looked over in the eastern sky, and there a little shaft of light appeared. Dawn was coming, so I knew it was time to hide my face.

Sister Monica L. Meade, S.O.S.

Field at Home Vol. 6 No. 4, October 1930, p9.

STRANGE ARE THE WAYS OF GOD

We meet many strange things in our little country hospitals. Happenings which make us marvel and wonder at the goodness of God in dealing with souls. Not long ago a young man was sent into our Hospital at Edson suffering from a badly poisoned hand. He was a real knight of the road, who spent his time tramping from place to place trying to pick up a living as best he could. He had no money, and very few clothes, but a gleam of pride came into his eyes as he told us he came from New Brunswick. Home, however was a long way off, and the religion of his childhood was fast becoming a mere memory.

"Yes, he was a Catholic," he answered in reply to our question, and to prove his statement he showed us a rosary that he had kept always about him—the last and only link with the Church of his childhood, but a link that is very hard to break.

While he was in the hospital we washed and mended the few clothes he had, and provided him with others. His hand was healing well, and he once more began to feel a respectable citizen. Then one day we asked him if it wasn't time for him to make his peace with God. He hesitated at first, but at last grace triumphed, and he went to confession. The next day the poor prodigal met his Father in the close embrace of Holy Communion. Shortly afterwards he left the hospital feeling a new man—healed body and soul.

A Rosary—a poisoned hand—and a little country hospital had been the instruments used in bringing a strayed sheep back to the Fold.

Another case came to our Hospital some time ago, a poor woman this time, who had wandered far from her Father's House. While she was ill we tried gently to bring her back, but it was no use. She left the Hospital without making her peace with God, and we could only pray that Our dear Lord in His goodness would use some other means of bringing her back to Him.

A few weeks later a very sick patient was admitted to the Hospital, and to our surprise we found it was the same poor woman who had been with us before. Seeing that in a very short time she would be called to meet her Maker, we once more spoke to her of the merciful Saviour Who was waiting for her to come back to Him, waiting so patiently and lovingly. This time our words were not in vain. The poor soul hastened back to her Father's arms, that Father whom she was to meet so soon as a Judge.

Truly the ways of God are wonderful, and we feel so thankful to be allowed to have a little part in the work of the Good Shepherd in saving souls.

Field at Home Vol. 7 No. 3, July 1931, p 6

C.N.R. TRAIN WRECKED NEAR EDSON

"Train No. 1 Thrown from Track as Car Hits Split Rail—Five Coaches Hurlled Down Embankment—29 People Injured."

We take this account from the "Jasper Signal" of April 14th, for it tells graphically of an event which affected our little Hospital at Edson. The paper continues: "On Sunday morning last Train No. 1 had left the Edson Yards only a few minutes when the air was pierced with the shrieks of the wreck signals. The wrecking crew arrived at the shops in record time, and a relief train was made up when it was learned that No. 1 had jumped the tracks and that there might be people seriously injured.

"The Sisters of Service in charge of St. John's Hospital (Edson, won the unstinted praise of those brought to their care. As soon as they were notified by Dr. Tiffin that the injured were on their way to the hospital, the Sisters made immediate desperation to receive them, although the hospital was full at the time. . . . The hospital was a veritable hive of activity as the stretchers and cars bearing the sufferers arrived."

We now give another view of the event, and quote from a letter from the Superior of our Edson Hospital to our Sisters in Toronto—"I have no doubt that you are anxious to hear something of the wreck, so I will give you a brief sketch of what took place from our end of it. About 5.45 a.m. the night nurse came to say that Dr. T had phoned to say there had been a wreck, but did not know the number of injured we would be asked to care for. I arose in a hurry, and as the hospital was full to start with, we moved all the convalescent patients into one room and then prepared the beds for the accident victims. At 9.30 I think it was, the rush began — stretcher cases and some patients walking came up to the hospital. I really don't know how many there were altogether, as some were just X-rayed or strapped up, and then sent on by a later train. Dr. O'Hagan and two nurses from Jasper, and Dr. Braithwaite and three nurses from Edmonton, arrived. Officials and reporters were everywhere—phones ringing and people making inquiries or offering assistance; so you can imagine how busy we were."

And so days come and go in a little Western hospital. One day comparatively calm; the next, the staff called out to meet an emergency such as the foregoing. Most days, however, at Edson are busy, and the hospital has been taxed to its utmost capacity in order to accommodate the sick that come to its doors; so much so, that it has been found necessary to have a larger building, and a new hospital to contain thirty beds is now in process of construction, which we hope will be ready for occupancy some time in the Fall of the year.

Field at Home Vol. VIII, No. 1, January 1932, p 6

A NEW HOSPITAL OPENED

October 15, 1931, will go down as one of the most important dates in the history of the town of Edson, Alberta, for at 2.30 in the afternoon His Excellency H. J. O'Leary, Archbishop of Edmonton, and Mr. A. D. McMillan, Mayor of Edson, met at the Hospital, and each cut a ribbon which was drawn across the main entrance, and so officially proclaimed St. John's Hospital open to the public.

Father Landrigan, Parish Priest of Edson, was Chairman for the occasion, and introduced the various speakers, who were all eloquent in their praise of the new hospital. His Excellency outlined

INTERESTING HOSPITAL INCIDENTS

A Baby's Faith

Although we are told that a child does not reach the age of reason before seven, evidently the age of love and confidence is reached much earlier. At least this was true in the case of Ruby, a three-year old, who entered our Edson Hospital recently.

Ruby was suffering from an infection similar to lump-jaw in animals. One of the Sisters taught the child her prayers and explained that Jesus loved her and would make her face better if she asked Him. She was told also that Jesus lived in the little house on the altar in the chapel.

Some time after, the child was seen making her way to the chapel. Listening in the hall, the Sisters heard the sweet baby accents: "Little Jesus, make my sore face better. You hear me, Jesus? I ki (*sic*) if you don't. I want to go home, Jesus." Silence for a few moments. Then the baby voice was heard again—"All right, Jesus."

What did the Sacred Heart whisper to this dear little infant? "We do not know, but the sore face did get better and Ruby is home again, a proof that our loving Saviour can no more turn a deaf ear to children now than He could when He was on earth and said: "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Saved for Heaven

A six-day-old baby was brought to the hospital in a very critical condition. The Sisters discovered the infant had never been baptized as the Father, who should be a Catholic, was married outside the Church and had grown hardened in indifference. As there was no hope of recovery the baby was baptized and died soon after. It seemed as though our Lord merely brought the little one to the hospital to save it for heaven.

First Aid?

A man was brought in with a sprained ankle. It seems he had been out shooting and had shot a squirrel in a tree. The little animal was not obliging enough to fall down after being shot, so the man had climbed the tree after it. Unfortunately he lost his balance and fell to the ground, hurting his ankle. Before

the history of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson, and told of the sad condition which existed prior to their arrival. "I remember some ten years ago when I first came to Edson your hospital was in ruins, and a large number of people, probably three or four thousand, in this vicinity, were practically without hospitalization. The conditions were very sad. Children were born under conditions which were a disgrace to modern civilization; the sick had to be sent to Edmonton in order to receive proper medical attention . . . now the people of Edson have a splendid new hospital with equipment equal to any large city hospital in the country ..."

Reverend Father Daly, C.S.S.R., who was present for the opening of the hospital, also spoke of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson five years ago, and stated that though beginnings seemed so dark, the Sisters had carried on, trusting in a brighter future, and their hopes had now been realized. "So, on this great day," concluded Father Daly, "I wish to thank you all for your kindness to the Sisters of Service.

They came five years ago, and are still living among you. They are dedicating their lives to your sick; and let us never forget that life is the dearest possession we own... On behalf of the Sisters I wish to thank the doctors. They have been most unselfish in their work, and surely there is no profession wherein a man has to sacrifice himself so much as that of a doctor? . . . and then may I also thank His Excellency, to whom, after all, we owe this hospital.... He is a great Canadian, not only a great Archbishop... and I wish to thank him for coming here to-day."

Superintendent McDonald, of the Canadian National Railways, who was also present on the occasion, very pointedly marked the contrast between the present-day institution and the few spasmodic efforts that had been made in the past to establish a hospital.

Edson is a small town in Alberta on the Canadian National main line between Edmonton and Jasper, and is a centre for the Alberta coal mines. The new hospital is a thirty-bed institution, and is equipped with all modern improvements.

bringing him to the hospital his friends painted the injury with iodine, as a first aid measure. They used veterinary iodine! The result was a very bad burn, so the poor man suffered as much from the remedy as from the injury. Moral—be careful of strong iodine!

Nuptial Mass

Tragic and pathetic incidents have no monopoly in our hospitals; oftentimes we have episodes that are frankly humorous, and these keep our funny bones supple. Again, some events are simply joyous and happy, as was the Nuptial Mass celebrated recently in the chapel of Vilna Hospital. For some months the young man had been riding a distance of sixteen miles to receive instructions, as he was not a Catholic. At last he knew what was required for reception into the Church and this touching ceremony took place in the hospital chapel. The father-in-law, who is also a convert, was one of the sponsors, and this good man came the long distance, fasting, because he desired to receive Holy Communion.

The following Saturday was the wedding day. The party consisted of the bride and groom, her father, his mother, the best man and one of the neighbors. They were all so sincere and the atmosphere so devotional that every one present was truly edified.

After the ceremony a wedding breakfast, provided by the Sisters, was served. The Sisters saw that each member of the party was given rosary beads and holy pictures before leaving for the new homestead, which is situated about 20 miles from the hospital.

24 Miles With Hemorrhage

One poor woman drove 24 miles to the hospital with a hemorrhage from the nose, which had started a week before and could not be checked. The Sisters tried one remedy after another with very little success, for the woman was suffering from a disease which caused the bleeding. At least, after two large doses of hemastatic serum and a new packing, the bleeding was controlled and the woman was able to rest and take nourishment both of which she badly needed.

How Faith is Lost

A young lad admitted to the hospital said he was attending the United Church, although he should be

a Catholic. On further enquiry, the Sisters learned he went to this Church because of the Young People's Club in connection with it. He wanted to be able to go around with the other boys. His name has been sent to one of our catechetical houses, and he will now be receiving instruction in his religion. We hope he will grow to value and appreciate the Gift of Faith which heretofore has meant very little in his life.

Deadly Environment

A young girl of eighteen entered the hospital suffering from T.B. It seems the family are very poor and all crowded together in a tiny one-room house. This girl slept in the granary rather than sleep in the house under existing conditions and caught a

severe cold there; at any rate she is now in an advanced stage of tuberculosis.

She had not been to the Sacraments for over a year, not from bad will, but because there seemed to be no way. The poor child was actually beginning to wonder if one religion is not as good as another. It is very sad, but many of these people come to the same conclusion, all because they are not instructed and have so little Catholic contact and influence.

An Unwilling Guest

A woman who had to have her appendix removed brought her baby along as she had nowhere to leave him, so he was the guest of the hospital until the mother was ready to leave. Isadore—that was his name—felt very much abused at the strange turn of events in his young life and sounded his disapproval in no uncertain voice at all times and in all places. One night when he was thus giving vent to his outraged feelings, Sister tried to soothe him with a bottle of milk. But although he was nearly starved he would not take a drop. In desperation Sister had recourse to the medicine dropper, and after taking four ounces of milk in this manner he at last went to sleep, much to the satisfaction of Sister and the patients who had been so long disturbed by his howling.

Small Beginnings

Some weeks ago two of our Sisters at Vilna Hospital, set out to visit the families of the district, in the hope of gathering the children on Saturdays to be instructed in religion.

The next Saturday at ten a.m. (the time appointed for class) one boy turned up. After waiting a half hour, his sister with three other girls appeared in sight. The Sisters knew the boy and three of the girls, but as the fourth child was a stranger, Sister asked who she was and if her parents knew she had come. The information was eagerly volunteered by all the others at once: "Yes, Sister. You see, her mother he Greek Orthodox, her grandmother she Greek Orthodox; but her father he Orthodox, and her grandfather he Orthodox, and she wants to come to our Church with us."

On being asked why they came to catechism class, they said it was because they wanted to know more about God. Surely that reason could not be improved upon.

The next Saturday two more boys of 12 and 18 joined the class, also two little ones of six and eight. These last brought along with them a boy of seven and explained in all seriousness that they thought he had better be learning catechism than playing on the streets.

Sister explained a short form of the Morning Offering to the juniors, and asked them to learn it. Shortly after, they were reading from a picture book: "So before everything I do I will say with all my heart 'All for Thee'." One little fellow, with an eye for brevity interrupted the reading at this point: "You see, Sister," he pointed out, "that means works, sufferings, and all, so I'll say that instead of the long one."

Requiescat

In our last issue we printed the story of a Cree boy who was brought to the hospital for treatment after going around with a dislocated hip for three months. At that time there was some hope of his recovery. A ten pound weight was attached to his leg, and he was on his back for six weeks, but as the days dragged by, there was no improvement in the condition of the wasted body of Joe (that was his name) was prepared for death.

A few days before Sister asked the lad a question and received no answer. She, thinking he had not understood, repeated the question. Then Joe uncovered his wee brown hands in a most dignified manner, showing her his red rosary, and giving her to understand quite plainly that he could not

answer when saying his beads! How edifying to see the Faith, brought to his tribe by those zealous missionaries, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, treasured so highly by this wee lad!

One day a Cree friend came to visit Joe and asked if there was anything he wanted. "I want Holy Communion," he replied. That was his one desire, but owing to continual nausea he was not able to receive. However, during the early days in the hospital he had the happiness of receiving Communion frequently, so he was well prepared.

Unconsciousness preceded his last few days in hospital, and his sorrowing parents took him home to die, which event took place two days later. May he rest in peace!

A Valued Souvenir

For some time the Sisters had charge of an old half-breed Indian, who was very repulsive and quite helpless. However, with patient kindness, the Sisters nursed him and prayed for him and before he died they were rewarded by having him say, with evident sincerity, Acts of Contrition, Faith and Love.

On hearing of his death, his sister came in to see him, and the first thing she did was to ask for his pipe. On receiving this coveted souvenir, she sat down in the office and had a good smoke.

Field at Home Vol. XVI, No. 3, July 1940, p 9

A GLIMPSE AT THE CHILDREN'S WARD

We believe our readers will be as delighted as we are with the above snapshot of a corner of the Children's Ward in our Edson hospital.

The vision of blond loveliness sitting up so alertly is Violet—4½ years old and very shy. Yes, she can talk, but rarely does. Her smile, though, is a priceless thing, and always ready to flash a welcome.

Jane, the little one reclining so lazily in the foreground, is quite a character. Her specialty is child training and despite her scant six years, seems to be well versed in the care of babies. Violet's baby brother (also in the children's ward) is a source of great interest to Jane. She is very anxious about his welfare. One night when Sister had spent almost an hour trying to feed him, he spit out most of the feeding. Jane was watching closely and Sister said

to her: "Donald is a very bad boy. I think I shall have to spank him."

Promptly came the answer. "No, don't spank him this time, Sister. He doesn't know any better yet."

After a few days when Donald was a little better behaved she would watch the feeding process from her cot, and at the end enquire gravely: "How many ounces did he take this time?" When it was time for orange juice and he was given milk instead, she would inform the Sisters of their "mistake".

When Jane was able to walk about she used to shake Donald's crib and sing nursery rhymes to him. One of the Sisters asked Her if Donald were as nice as Dinny. (Dinny is Jane's two-year old brother at home and the apple of her eye). So it is not surprising that Jane treated this question rather scornfully. "Donald's a nice baby," she admitted, "but there isn't any baby in the whole world as nice as Dinny." A little later she volunteered the information that Dinny is the only one in her family nicer than she. (No false humility about Jane).

Jane made a visit to the chapel and on returning to the nursery told the Sisters she intended to come back to the hospital later on. Naturally they wanted to know when and why. She said: "Next year I'm coming to stay for a while to get ready for my First Communion." She seems to be looking forward eagerly to this "Big Day".

Jane thinks she will miss the hospital when she leaves but, says she: "I'll be glad to go because I'm lonesome for Dinny."

Field at Home Vol. XVIII, No. 2, July 1942, p 13-14

HOSPITAL "HAPPENINGS"

The "Irish" Patient.

Recently a boy of seventeen was admitted to one of our rural Western Hospitals. He showed symptoms of a ruptured appendix and after the usual examinations and tests the doctor decided to operate. The appendix came out and it was gangrenous. For some time the poor lad was very ill and required much nursing care. (He became known as "the Irish patient," although he was of Indian, Negro, Irish and Scotch extraction, and was very dark, almost bronze, with kinky hair. When one of our Sisters who is from the "ould-sod"

was told that he was Irish, she exclaimed: "Sure, he's straight from Africa!") As the days passed he improved considerably and appeared to be well on the way to recovery when suddenly symptoms of obstruction and general peritonitis developed. He was now extremely ill and his family were notified of his condition.

He was anointed, and Father L. stayed with him as much as he could as the poor boy derived much comfort from his presence. Then one evening the mother arrived, and the following morning the boy died. The mother was sad, indeed, but was greatly comforted by the fact that her child was so well prepared for death. It seems that another son of hers, who was not practising his religion, met with an accident some time ago and died without the Sacraments. The poor woman remained at the hospital until the necessary arrangements were made for the burial and during this time she assisted at Mass in the chapel daily, and also received the Sacraments.

Marriage Blessed and Baby Baptized.

The Sisters had learned that a young woman patient was married to a Catholic and the ceremony had not been performed by a priest. Zealous efforts were at once made to rectify this condition. Father was notified and he obtained the consent of both parties to have their marriage validated in the eyes of the Church. This was done quietly at the hospital, with the Sisters as witnesses. Some weeks later the woman returned to the hospital to visit a patient. During conversation with her the Sisters learned that the couple had a two-year-old baby, not yet baptized.

The necessity of baptism was explained to the mother and she was urged to bring the child to receive the Sacrament. A few days later both the father and mother arrived with the baby and Father baptized her. Arrangements were then made for the mother to receive a course of instruction by mail from our Catechetical House in Edmonton, and it is hoped that she will soon be received into the Church.

Impressions of Our New Recruit.

Sister Tyler, who recently received her nursing diploma from the Misericordia Hospital, Edmonton, was immediately appointed to the nursing staff of Edson Hospital. A request by us that she send us a description of some of her new experiences resulted

in a letter from which we have made the following extracts for our readers.

“It seems that I cannot give you any hospital ‘news’ without first telling you how much I appreciate being with our Sisters. After three years of training, I realize now that my ‘training’ has only begun. I hope God gives me the grace ever to be grateful for my vocation to the Sisters of Service.

“At present, I have the children’s ward and one of the men’s wards, where the patients are practically all ambulatory—cut fingers, bruised arms and torn ligaments—just enough to keep them in the hospital and not enough to render them miserable. I am getting experience now on how to approach these men about receiving the Sacraments. Most of them are willing enough, and their simplicity at times is touching. It seems that some spend just enough time here to make their peace with God before returning to the camps. I wonder if they ever feel the futility of their lives, working for a few dollars without the consolation of their religion, and very often without any family ties.

“Lyle is in the children’s ward and although he was rather a sullen little boy when he first arrived, he now greets everyone with a smile, but then, anyone would feel better if relieved by a drainage of empyema. The pleural cavity is still being irrigated three times a day, and as the drainage lessens, Lyle’s appetite and disposition seems to improve and meal time is the most important moment of the day for him. We often wheel him into the men’s ward, and their efforts to amuse him are sometimes unique.

“Sunday we attended High Mass in the Ruthenian Rite. It was very beautiful, and as we were provided with English translation and notes, we were able to appreciate it fully. We received Holy Communion under both species.

“Here at Edson we seem to be surrounded by natural beauty. One of the chief sources of interest is the Rockies, for as many times as we gaze at them past the miles of fir trees, a different panorama greets us as the light reflects on their snow-capped summits.”

At the Office Wicket

In the same mail that brought Sister Tyler’s “impressions” we were made happy by another letter, giving glimpses of hospital life as seen by the Sister in charge of the admitting office: “Since my appointment here, I have discovered that not

all the drama of hospital life comes to light in the hospital ward or in the operating room; at times it is to be found even within the limits of the admitting office.

“The ways in which I come in contact with people are by mail, telephone and personal contact at the office wicket. The office wicket is the first place that a patient ordinarily presents himself or herself, and if it so happens that it is a stretcher case, the relatives or friends make an appearance at my window—and quite often these are as sick as the patient (with worry!) and we must bear in mind always that the person presenting himself at the admitting office is not normal physically and is under a great mental strain.

“The office wicket is a frame for many an anxious, weary and distraught countenance. Now there was Jackie’s mother, whose precious two-year old was having his tonsils out, and the poor mother could feel every pain thrice as acutely as the little one (at least in imagination). It was a big event for that little lad and a real crisis in her life for the mother, even though it was only another T. & A. in hospital routine.

“Then there was the elderly gentleman who brought several bags of fruit and three bottles of coca cola for poor Mike, who was being fed intravenously, and was denied anything by mouth. This had to be explained tactfully to the good old man to prevent his feelings being hurt.

“The telephone is another means of communication used I-don’t-know-how-often daily. Mrs. Halton is on the line and wants to know: ‘What did Stanley have for supper?’ or ‘How soon can Stanley have ice cream and ginger ale?’ Mr. Gordon is phoning to find out how his wife is and after your statements that Mrs. Gordon is very well and is the mother of a beautiful little girl, there are a few inarticulate sounds at the other end and then a voice: ‘Gosh, can I come over and see it?’ Two rings again, and then, ‘Sister, the No. 2 is bringing a stretcher case from a saw mill. Please have the carriage at the ambulance entrance.’ The patient is Mr. Person; he is unconscious and remains that way for days. Then there is the town policeman on the line: ‘Sister, the Public Administrator wants a report with regard to the effects of Steve who died up there last week.’

“The mail brings some sad and some glad tales of

human lives. Mrs. Anderson writes: 'Baby is fine, thanks. He weights eleven pounds, now.' Another letter: 'I was sorry not to be able to see you in town when I promised, but mother, who is 88 years old, is sick in bed, and I have to stay with her day and night.' And from Mr. Brown: 'You might tell Sister Superior that I have a smoker stand ready to go down to the Hospital and I am going to send a cribbage board made out of a deer horn for the use of the patients in the Hospital whenever I get a chance to send it down.' ”

Field at Home Vol. XIX, No. 1, January 1943, p 8

AT EDSON HOSPITAL

Hospitality for Body and Soul

A young man with a badly fractured leg, who has been in the hospital for several months, recently had the pleasure of a visit from his mother and young sister. Their home is at such a distance that this is the first time they had the opportunity to get in to Edson. On being asked where they expected to stay, they did not seem to know, so two beds were provided for them in the hospital. The mother gladly availed herself of the privilege of assisting at Mass and receiving the Sacraments, and the little girl attended the catechism class conducted by the Sisters for the children of the settlement. One morning the son, who is now able to get out of bed, went with his mother to Mass and Communion. This young man was once a pupil in an S.O.S. vacation school.

Bitten by a Bear

One of the patients at present undergoing treatment tells of a thrilling experience with a bear. While cutting logs, this young man was suddenly attacked by a bear and two cubs. In desperation he climbed the nearest tree, but the bear also climbed the tree and seizing the man's feet in its mouth, proceeded to drag him down. Maddened with fear and pain the poor man fell out of the tree, but retained enough presence of mind to throw his coat over the bear. While the animal roiled on the ground, hopelessly tangled in the garment, he managed to run on his badly lacerated feet to the home of a neighbour, who rendered first aid and took him to the hospital. The wounds inflicted by the bear are healing nicely.

We understand bears are very bold this season. One slapped a man, and another chased a holy padre

over a high fence. In one district it was not safe for children to go to school.

Non-Catholic Assisted

Recently the Sisters were called from the chapel during Mass to prepare for an urgent operation. The patient, on being asked his religion, said he was not a Catholic. The Sister who was taking him to the operating room helped him to make the essential acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, and this evidently gave him courage to face the ordeal more confidently and calmly.

Convert Instructed

A young man patient was recently instructed in the Faith by one of our Sisters during his stay at the hospital and was received into the Church before returning to his home.

Murderer in the Hospital

A young Ukrainian with a head injury was brought in one morning in the custody of a policeman. He had just killed his father-in-law at a little place east of Edson. His wound was dressed and he was put to bed, where he remained until noon the next day, always under police surveillance. He said he was a Catholic and consented to see the priest. It was thought he committed the murder while temporarily insane.

Home Nursing Class

Of the many extra-nursing activities engaged in by our Sisters at Edson during the past year, one of the most important was the conducting of a class in Health, Home Nursing and Emergencies. This class was held for the benefit of the ladies of the town and was given by an S.O.S. registered nurse. The course consists of twelve lessons prepared by the Canadian Red Cross Society. A certificate was given to those who attended seventy five per cent of the classes. On the last evening a review was made of the most important subjects taken, after which the ladies presented Sister with a modern nursing text book in token of their appreciation and gratitude. Sister was asked to conduct another of these courses, and the second class is now in progress with a very good attendance.

A Versatile Room

There is one room in the basement of the Edson hospital which seems to be following St. Paul's

injunction to be “all things to all men.” Officially it is the laundry room, but its weekly schedule shows that it has many and varied uses.

Monday—Stacks of clothing and bed linen are put through a thorough process of washing.

Tuesday—The mangle is in use for several hours, after which sheets, pillow cases, etc., are ready for distribution wherever needed. In the evening all laundry apparatus is set aside and the room is put in order as a class room, with a picture of the Good Shepherd hung on the wall and appropriate mottoes on the blackboard.

For this is where and when the class in Health and Home Nursing is given.

Wednesday—Another large ironing is done in the daylight hours. In the evening the room is again transformed into a club room for the children of the parish.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday—The washing, mangling, and ironing are repeated.

Sunday—This very useful room takes on an air of piety befitting the holy day and accommodates the various catechism classes taught by the Sisters.

Added to all this, on various occasions worthy of celebrating the room is converted into an auditorium for the practising and producing of plays and concerts.

Field at Home Vol. XX, No. 4, October 1944, p 6-7

“THEY ALSO SERVE”

Blood Donor Clinic at Edson

How did this idea of the Blood Donor Clinic get started up here, Sister?”

“Well, like this. The doctor mentioned that he had heard that the Clinic wanted to come ; the question being—could a suitable place be found? In view of the greatness of the cause, we had no hesitation in putting the hospital at the disposal of the Clinic.

“The negotiations were opened. A date was set. The local Red Cross swung into action with gusto. A donors’ list was started. Committees were set up. The women of the town spoke of the lunch that was to be served to the donors. There was also talk of



Testing for blood types

a dinner for the staff of the Clinic itself—young lamb, mint sauce, green peas, etc. In the hospital we began to speak in terms of the recovery room, rest room, test room, donors’ room, registration room. Overnight a spirit grew into being that made it plain to be seen that since it was a question of serving the “Boys Over There”, only the best was good enough.

“The Clinic was to open on Monday. On Sunday evening the Van unexpectedly drove into town, and up to the hospital door. Things began to hum. Our visitors expressed themselves as being much pleased with the completeness of the set-up. Monday arrived and with it a cheery, efficient atmosphere. Everyone was so willing to help. Nine of the ninety donors were rejected. Out in the ‘Recovery Room’ patients, who for the most part, live busy lives visited happily with each other.

“The Clinic Staff worked steadily until four o’clock. The blood was flasked and shipped off to the station. It was carried to Edmonton by the evening train. In Edmonton it goes through its first process. Later, it is sent to Toronto, and from thence, Overseas.

“The Clinic staff stayed overnight in Edson. They left the next morning for Jasper. They are due to visit

us again in another three months. Our welcome will be as warm as ever, but we trust that the great need for plasma will have passed and peace be with us once again." The following letter was received by the Superior of Edson Hospital from Miss Huggill, the nurse in charge of the Blood Donor Clinic:

Dear Sister,

Just a short note on behalf of myself and staff to thank you for your kindness to us during our recent visit to Edson. We enjoyed so much seeing the Hospital and remarked several times at the complete adequacy of the set-up there for our clinic work. We had a small glimpse of the pictures taken and they all seem to have turned out very well. It is the first Clinic at which we have had professional pictures of the proceedings. Again many thanks and with pleasant anticipation of another visit to Edson in the not-too-distant future, I remain.

Field at Home Vol. XXI, No. 3, June 1945, p 7-8

EDSON EDITS

Baby Department

It keeps someone busy when we have seven babies in the nursery but when four of them are twins, it calls for a picture. You will have to take our word for it but one Sister is holding a pair of boys and another Sister a set of girls. One of the little girls was brought back by her frightened parents one morning apparently dead. We gave her conditional baptism with the hope that the tiny soul still lingered to receive this grace. Not to be left out, our cat, Mrs. Black, had kittens shortly afterwards—six of them. After disposing of three, the others were named—Kate, Duplicate, and Triplicate by our medico who shows himself truly great by not being above enjoying the small things in life.

Housecleaning

If you have never seen it, it looks something like this. All the movables from a ward find their place in the hall or the next room. Eight foot ladders make their appearance and are scaled by queerly bedecked creatures who usually make claim to experience in the line of wall-washing after doing a couple of dozen rooms 15' x 30' x 10'. The real side of one's character appears when a mid-morning and mid-afternoon lunch is announced. Definitely we

have no prudes in our midst for even Patch could not dispatch bread and butter and jam with greater alacrity or appreciation. "It's for increased energy, Sister," is the motto for mutual encouragement.

Cross-Grain

Perhaps this should be entitled cross-wires for what else would you call a French Canadian, who, on enquiry as to whether he was a Catholic, replied "Un 'tit peu," and followed this with a discourse which was intended to convince us that Jesus Christ was not God. The sad part of the story is that the man was dying. His disposition contrasted strongly with a dying Pentecostal woman who recited over and over with us the Acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition and who accepted so beautifully the Will of God in her regard. Often in our work the grace of God seems almost tangible and one realizes that He can be the only satisfying end of our endeavours.

Smiles

A nursing Sister was accosted in the hall the other day by a demure lass of six. "May I have a glass of water for Bud?" "Who's Bud?" said Seven New Canadians Born in Kelson Hospital Sister, failing to recognize the name of any of her patients. "Why, Bud's my old man," the young modern replied.

Granny's condition was not very good and Sister was helping her with her prayers. This was done with some difficulty, so that it was somewhat of a surprise when at the end of the orations the old lady gave a wicked wink and said, "Thanks a million."

The little girl was brought in quite ill. When she did take interest in her surroundings, she asked with concern, "Have you any bugs here?" If she had been a little older we might have explained that there were bugs and bugs!

During housecleaning season, a Sister was overheard addressing the sole inmate of the ward—a treaty Indian with the elevating name of *Yellowdirt*—"Now look here, Mr. *Yellowdirt*, if you get anything on this floor after it has been cleaned, your name will be 'Mud.'"

More Truth Than Poetry

Perhaps you do not know but Alberta has a temperamental climate. One retires at night with

the country blanketed in snow, the thermometer hovering near 30-40 degrees below zero. During the night, a wind from the West is heard rising and the morning presents one with the spectacle of snow piles melting under a torrid sun. It is the time for action. Roofs must be cared for, drains provided. Due to the shortage of help the Sisters found themselves obliged to relieve the convent roof of the heavy snow during the last "Chinook." Although it proved to be hard work, it was also something of a lark. To climb the roof by straight ladders—and wonder how you would get down again; to dodge the Snowballs that came from the most surprising places—all under a summer sun—a day like this would have inspired a Shakespeare and given him an appetite, too!

Wagon Wheels

It was our first trip of the season and it rated a four-star. Our first attempt to get over the road and into the valley by car, was frustrated by gumbo and all its relations. We had a "material" reason apart from the spiritual for wanting to reach our people in early April. You see, it was like this. Some of our good Eastern friends had shipped us out a few boxes of first class clothing, the kind you'd be glad to wear yourself if your best friend gave them to you. The greater part was ready for mid-season wear and we were anxious to distribute them. But then, the roads were bad, the river ice was menacing and the prospects of getting through were very poor.

At this point, Mr. B. came to town with a wagon load of produce. By the way, Mr. B. is a good friend of ours and always hitches his horses by our back door while he pops in to say "Hello." This time we sold him the idea of taking three of us and our clothing department back with him. It was close to 9 p.m. before we started off.

The night was God's own, starlit and clear; we were seated on sacks of flour in the bottom of a lumbering wagon and the driver Mr. B. entertained us with stories of his native land, Normandy, and we in turn countered with stories of our country experiences. He laughed so heartily that at one point of the road he failed to notice that his team had shied from the cliff beside us and was gradually making its way into the deep jagged rut on the opposite side of the road. He regained his composure and control of the team and continued his good humour with song. "We were surprised to hear him sing out in the night the "Pater Noster" and Gounod's "Ave Maria."

On our arrival at the farm, we were welcomed by a sleepy but very gracious lady, the Madame of the Monsieur who had brought her home three S.O.S. to share their roof. We had sleeping quarters in a log house apart from the family's residence. We met the family "en masse" at breakfast, including 50 chicks who had just chirped their way in via the incubator. Papa B. presided with all the little B's, assorted sizes, taking their places on either side. It was very edifying to see the tots, eyes cast down and hands joined say the grace with Mamma B. and Papa B.

After breakfast the wagon load was sorted. Bags of grain, covering the floor of the wagon, provided seats and first up had best choice. A fresh team was hitched and with Mamma B. for company, we set out through a brush trail for our next stop. The going was rough in spots, but Mr. B. had been "taking it" for 21 years and the S.O.S. are not strangers to Western swamps and brush.

We arrived at our Mission Church about noon, and were pleased to find quite a few families waiting for us. Boxes were unloaded, goods unpacked and displayed. The folks were shy at first but after a little reminiscing and friendly chatter the reserve wore off. The women found sweaters, coats, dresses, and hats they liked, while the men looked about for overalls, rubbers, caps and those articles useful for farm wear. Small groups sat around and visited, and we took the opportunity to discuss family problems, summer school prospects, Sunday Mass at the Mission and the perennial subjects, seeding and weather.

Six o'clock saw us scrambling for pullman seats on our wagon, the feed bags were taken from "Carlos" and "Dolly," and Mrs. B. climbed up beside her good man for the trip home. Our wagon was last to leave the church grounds; as we watched our friends disappear in the distance, we felt an excusable glow of satisfaction at a day happily spent in the vineyard of the Lord.

We arrived home, having covered 64 miles by wagon wheels, a not too mean record for city bred folks used to macadamized roads and Firestone tires.

Field at Home Vol. XXII, No. 2, April 1946, p 11-12

EDSON EDITS

The Resuscitator Arrives

The stock phrase “Due to prevailing Wartime conditions” (which meant that you might not recognize your order when it did come!) has been dropped, and other phrases are being used which make delivery dates on our supplies just as vague. Some type of “conditions” slowed up the production of resuscitators, evidently, until we almost gave up hope of ever receiving ours. However, it did arrive a few weeks ago in a carefully made crate. It has been the talk of the town ever since, and its solid rubber casters have rolled smoothly over many a room in the hospital where its threefold purpose—aspiration, inhalation and resuscitation— has been explained and demonstrated. The added advantages that the compact instrument has of not requiring any electric power for use, and therefore being so easy to take to the scene of an accident, are items of wonder. Enthusiasm and interest has spread to such an extent that, under the leadership of the ladies of the Royal Purple, an entertainment has been sponsored and the funds, together with a donation from the local Community Club, have been given towards purchasing this piece of equipment which will be such a valuable asset to the community at large.

Incubator Babies

A year or more ago our new incubator was installed to replace the improvised one which had given satisfactory service in many an emergency. The coming of the new, up-to-date model seemed to be a sign for that ever-present bird, the stork, to bring us tiny human beings, needing all the warmth an incubator can give. At present two such tiny mites, both three pounds, are with us. The lusty cry of the older-by-two-weeks can be heard at quite a distance. His younger companion cannot understand why he makes such a fuss, as it is really too much bother to eat. “They never seem to leave a ‘fella’ alone— every two hours they wake you up out of such, a nice sound sleep, and put such a horrid old rubber thing in your mouth.

If you spit it out, they put it back. If you ignore it, they ‘squeeze’ a bulb at the end of the glass and the milk (they call it formula) comes through the rubber and you can’t help but gulp it down. They say I’m impossible, that I have to be almost

‘specialled’ (whatever that means). I suppose some day I’ll be glad that they looked after me, but right now I’d sooner sleep. Sister must think I’m pretty nice at times, though, because she took my picture today and thought it might look nice in the ‘Field at Home.’ I hope you like it.”

Field at Home Vol. XXII, No. 3, June 1946, p 4

EDSON EDITS

Crates for Cribs

The babies kept coming, and it was almost in desperation that we sent down to the sewing room asking the Sister there to improvise another crib. It proved to be an apple box practically disguised by cotton trimmed with bric-a-brac. Word of this got around, and the new offsprings were christened by the doctor “Winesap,” “Duchess” and “Delicious.”

One young mother voiced her subconscious mind under sedation, for although she had been amused by the appellations, she was worried about her baby. “You won’t put my baby in the apple box, will you?” She was quieted only when we assured her that her baby would be a “Roman Beauty”— and it was!

Field at Home Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1947, p 9-11

TWENTY YEARS A-GROWING

The winter—the twenty-first for St. John’s Hospital—began a few days ago with a sudden drop in temperature and an icy wind blowing snowflakes in every direction. It has kept telegraph wires busy with urgent messages from local coal dealer’s to unheeding mine offices; it has started in motion all the machinery of winter lumber camps and the sound of the woodsman’s axe once more echoes through the crystal-clear air; it has changed the “OT” sign on the railroad’s schedule board to 1 hr. 20 minutes late” or more; it has kept the nursing profession busy administering Penicillin to pneumonia patients and taking X-rays of accident victims.

The onset of winter has brought about the same changes in varying degrees each year for the past two decades, and they all have their effect on hospital routine. It was in the fall of 1926 when, at the invitation of Archbishop O’Leary of Edmonton, the Sisters of Service first visited Edson. They learned that a hospital had been

built some twenty-five years before and had been opened by secular organizations a number of times. Each time it had, because of financial difficulties, to close its doors. It was a large, dilapidated, two-storey square building with numerous windows, only a few of which had escaped the expert stone-throwers of the village. Inside the plaster had fallen and the floors were ruined.



The New Hospital

When the carpenters, plumbers and electricians had spent a few weeks on repairs, and the Sisters had spent the same time making up supplies, obtaining bed linen, medical stores and purchasing equipment, it was time to move in. (What a month's work those last few words contain!) Moving day was not the traditional May 1st, but one dark night with the thermometer registering 22 below. The corridors of the hospital to-be were filled with boxes and packing cases and beds. With help the Sisters managed to assemble two beds and make them up.

The following morning they attended Mass which was celebrated in the rectory as the Church was too cold (the house was not much warmer). The day was spent opening boxes and planning the wards, etc. A room—at that time still filled with paint and varnish tins—was chosen for the Chapel. The workmen were still busy. That night a meeting of the prominent men of the town had been called. The meeting was held in the front room and as chairs were scarce, boxes and nail kegs were used for seating purposes.

The following days were busy. There were the kitchen, laundry, wards, supply rooms, nursery, operating and case rooms and office to be properly arranged; the linoleum to be laid (partly done by a man, later the mayor of the town, who was a hardware dealer), curtains to be made and numberless other things to be done.

On November 25th, the first Mass was said in the hospital. The Montreal Catholic Church Extension Society sent the vestments, linens and supplies. The feast of the Immaculate Conception was chosen for the official opening and blessing of the now Catholic hospital by Archbishop O'Leary. Among the visitors at the reception were the really interested, the curious, and the skeptical, the latter wondering how long the hospital would remain open this time. The following day, three patients were admitted—the first in the long line of sick who have sought admission.

It was only to be expected that this fifteen-bed hospital, the only hospital at that time between Edmonton and Kamloops, a distance of almost 400 miles, would soon have more patients than it could adequately accommodate. Admissions doubled inside of five years and the inevitable happened—a new up-to-date building was planned.

There was much excitement “out our way” when excavations were begun for the new building and its progress was watched very closely by wide-eyed tots to whom cement mixing and brick-laying were fascinating new sights. Day by day the new structure grew to completion and it was a busy and exciting time when a group of C.N.R. men trained in first aid came up to the hospital equipped with a stretcher to transfer the patients to the new building. Shortly afterwards, on October 15, 1931, the official opening and blessing took place.

From that time to the present, the hospital work has developed until we can say that 1946 was a record year in every respect—admissions have increased from 243 in 1927 to 1,100 in 1946. During that score of years, very great changes have taken place in the hospital field. Twenty years ago, a hospital was a strictly charitable institution. Today charity is a social thing and a hospital is expected to be a highly efficient business institution.

There is the ever-present threat of state control through state medicine and the less dire threat, the one of which most thinking people are wary, of Government health insurance. It is now the time when a hospital however small, is placed in a certain category, according to the amount of equipment and the number of post-graduate courses the staff has been able to attend. It is the time also when, at hospital conventions, one watches the

heads of governmental departments take notes of every comment made and by whom it is made.

These definite trends present problems. The spirit of the Catholic hospital must be kept the same—the caring of the sick in the spirit of Christ and of charity—although the Government has taken, and intends to take over, the responsibility for different types of patients, which results in a limited though real control. The Sisters must look beyond the obligations now imposed on them of obtaining and maintaining definite standards, the obtaining of which means added effort after many a busy day, to a more intense realization of their vocation which accepts these challenges in order to be in the front line when the crisis comes. They must look to the personal caring of the sick in rural hospitals as the field on which the battle is fought for their own perfection and the conquering of souls for Christ.

The Doctor Reminisces

Our doctor loves to chat. He is one of those busy people whose virtue is always to have time to listen to others' stories and to offer a few of his own. This, of course, is not his only virtue. To us he is the ideal medico, a tower of security in any emergency and a friend to all. Because he threw in his lot with this community twenty years ago he, too, has felt and reacted to the changes which have come. He, too, views them gravely, but whether it is the financial status or the farming or lumbering question, or the newest hospital trends, the discussion usually ends with "Sister's, did I ever tell you about the time—" and then we enjoy a story—a humorous story, mostly.

We were discussing the new fire siren the town had installed, and one of our number, who had returned to the mission after a few years absence, was trying to remember what the old system was like. Then the doctor said, "Sister, did I ever tell you about the time there was a chimney fire in the house across the street? "We lived near the town hall at the time, next to the printer's office. The alarm brought the printer and myself out to view the proceedings. The fire engine then was a Model T which would have fallen apart if it had gone faster than ten miles an hour. It speeded down the street with the lanky driver clutching on to the wheel and clanging the bell with his foot like the Montreal street cars. It squeaked to a stop and two of the voluntary fire crew got out the roll of fire hose and proceeded to attach it to the water supply.

"The next ten minutes were priceless. The hose was brought out on the lawn by one of the men, when someone distracted him and he dropped it. Another, disgusted perhaps by his lack of purpose, grabbed the hose and proceeded on his way, but being reminded of some apparently vital thing, made his way back to the car, instead of to the house. The first firefighter came to reclaim his job and his mighty stride towards the scene of the fire did something to reassure himself and everybody else that this meant business. Following his previous course with the line of hose behind him, he did not realize that his companion's meanderings had wound the hose around a twelve-inch tree. An ingenious young chap stepped forward and proceeded to do the George Washington act. With a few mighty strokes he felled the obstacle, but one of them missed the tree, and yes—you guessed it—cut the hose!!

"My little English printer friend fell across a fence in a spasm, and I could do nothing to help him. We recovered sufficiently to see a six-foot volunteer steel his frame to redeem the situation somewhat. With a deep breath, which might have been his last, he covered his nose with a handkerchief, lowered his head, and plunged into the smoke-filled house. Such a show of bravery certainly deserved attention. The spectators had gathered waited with bated breath and widening eyes for his return. Soon he was silhouetted in the doorway and the crowd strained to see what he clutched in his right hand. With a definite look of pride he stepped out and presented for their approval in all seriousness—a baby geranium! The fence gave way this time, and my English friend rolled over in a heap—while the chimney smouldered on!"

Field at Home Vol. XXIII, No. 2, April 1947, p 8-9

EDSON EDITS

"Growling Feather" Comes to Town

On January 1, 1947, Canadians thrilled with pride at their new status as citizens. Their pride was laudable; as year follows year, Canada's tremendous possibilities become more apparent, and development follows development from sea to sea. Occasionally, however, some incident occurs which brings us face to face with the realization that our country is still young, and in some sections, still in the making.

It happened to us on New Year's Day, when *Growling Feather* arrived at our door, bringing with him a breath of the West that was "wild and woolly." His coming called up visions of vast prairie and forest regions peopled by wandering tribes of red men; dotted here and there with Hudson Bay trading posts; of courageous priests and Sisters travelling by wagon, by canoe, by foot, to bring the good tidings of Christ and His Church to these abandoned souls. A full-blooded, non-Christian Chippewa Indian, *Growling Feather* is copper-coloured, and has coarse black hair, which rumour says, hung in braids until recently. An encounter with a bear some years ago, in which he was badly mauled, left him blind in his right eye and with a cruel scar on his right cheek. He neither speaks nor understands English, and in addition, he is quite deaf.

Growling Feather, Sagigwan in his own language, belongs to a band of renegade Chippewa Indians. They came originally from around the Nordegg River some miles south of Edson. Recognizing neither the Government nor the Department of Indian Affairs, and having refused to accept the New Orthopaedic Treaty, they live a nomadic life, moving about from one district to another, killing off the big game.

The Department of Indian Affairs has had the Provincial Government set aside 33,000 acres of land for them in the vicinity of their old home. This they also refuse to accept. A law to themselves, they settle wherever is most convenient, without regard for the rights of property owners or the law against trespassers.

The leader of this tribe is the Medicine Man "*Red Bird*", who rules with an iron hand. A determined opponent of law and order, his influence renders any negotiating by the Government impossible. Were it not for him, the remainder of the band might fall in line with the other Indians, accept treaty, and become wards of the Federal Government.

Doctors Not Welcome

At present a group of these Indians is located about 50 miles north-east of Edson. Some time ago, a baby having died suddenly, one of our doctors, who is coroner for the district, thought it wise to investigate the matter. Accompanied by one of the RCMP, he started out on what was to become quite an adventure. The camp is situated deep in

unbroken bush, and consists of ramshackle huts, tents and an occasional lean-to, made of poles and the skins of animals. The burying ceremony, according to some weird pagan ritual, was about to begin when the visitors arrived. They received no sign of welcome; on the contrary, the animosity of the Medicine Man particularly was not even thinly veiled. Both men and women were dressed in skins, their faces painted heavily in vivid hues, and they wore feathers in their long braided hair.

There was a long discussion. The Medicine Man concluded with "You, doctor, know nothing; I, Medicine Man, know everything." However, a grudging permission to view the body was given. The baby, "Big Man Flying Strawberry" by name, was dressed in ordinary clothes. Its face was painted bright red, its lips stained a deep blue. Under the clothing, chest and abdomen were covered with a brilliantly coloured dragon-like design. The doctor mentioned an autopsy. It was not a happy suggestion. The smouldering anger of the Medicine Man at this intrusion leapt into flame. He would not allow it. The doctor insisted. At a glance from the Medicine Man, a number of nearby braves, came slowly towards the group, their attitude menacing. "I think you had better forget the autopsy, and let's get out of here," said the Mountie. This they did, while the Medicine Man hurled maledictions at the doctor, and threatened to have the policeman discharged from the Force.

He Likes Penicillin—For Others!

The foregoing may give some idea of the history and habits of the people from whom our patient springs. He, however, belies the bad name of the rest of the group. As a patient, he has no peer. Of course, his lack of English makes complaining rather difficult, but he has a highly developed sign language and indicates his wants to us in a way that is always eloquent, and sometimes embarrassing.

Like all men, he likes to be fussed over, and we do try to give him a little extra attention, because of his peculiar position. His greatest pleasure is in watching other patients get Penicillin. He had it himself for many days. Now as soon as he sees the syringe and needle, he smiles and chuckles and waves at the poor victim. No doubt the height of felicity for him would be to have eight patients in the nine-bed ward on Penicillin, the exception being himself.

Noisy Visitors

The blitz is really on when Growling Feather's family and friends come to call. When shrill voices strike a pitch to penetrate deaf ears, the effect is not too melodious. When these shrill voices are shrieking an Indian dialect, the effect is beyond description. The first time they came, we thought there was a fight in progress. One of the other patients said, "We were all ready to take action, Sister, but nothing happened." Old Pete Chippewa is Growling Feather's father. He speaks a few words of English. His hair hangs in long braids, and he wears a fedora hat. The effect is striking. Mrs. Pete Chippewa dresses in ordinary clothes, but carries gifts to her son in a sack on her back. They all wear strips of untanned leather wrapping their legs from ankle to knee.

And They are Still Pagan !

Growling Feather's sojourn with us has been quite educational for the staff. Indians and *Métis* are not a novelty in the West. But we did not know that there were pagans among them, nor had we any idea of their proximity to us. It is educational and interesting and a fan to the flame of our zeal. These souls who know nothing about God, given the opportunity to know Him, might love and serve Him to the everlasting shame of the modern pagans who ignore His existence and flout His laws.

Yes, We Have It—An Albee-Comper Table

Thus far we have not mentioned the nature of *Growling Feather's* malady. He had a compound fracture of the left femur, or thigh bone, the longest and strongest bone in the body. It seemed a bit of whimsy that this remnant of a primitive and fast-disappearing race should have his fracture reduced on one of the very few Albee-Comper Orthopedic tables in the Province. This table, of which we are justly proud, was recently presented to the hospital by our staunch friend, Dr. Tiffin. The table is designed for open-surgical operations, in fracture and orthopedic work, as well as for the usual run of closed reductions. The essential features of the operating table have been adapted, and to these are added simple and efficient mechanical innovations and facilities for accurate X-Ray examinations before, during or after the operation. This combination gives many advantages for the management of every desired orthopedic posture,

whether of the extremities or the spinal column in open surgery, as well as in closed reductions. The table is just one of the many indications of Dr. Tiffin's unfailing and kindly interest in the progress of our Hospital. Capability for loving is the measure of capability for suffering a heart that can love much can also suffer much.

Field at Home Vol. XXIV, No. 1, January 1948, p 5-6

Our Eddie

Eddie called today. It was his weekly visit, and he lost no time in greeting everyone, making use of his privilege to wander around even to the kitchen, where he knew he would be treated to chocolate milk and his favourite cookies. Not many patients reach his status where freedom of the hospital is granted because of the length of time spent here and a fine sense of propriety. Rarely does one find in a child of ten today the instinctive courtesy and thoughtfulness which characterizes Eddie.

These qualities were recognized soon after his admission with a badly burnt leg. The little fellow learned quickly in the school of suffering. Taught by Sister, he accepted his plight and through the ordeal of seven graftings and even at moments when he was very close to death, he would call on "his" Jesus to help him. Naturally, these instructions in religion could not be continued without his mother's permission. However, this was readily given, and Eddie drank in the lovely story of God's eternal love for man—and especially for Eddie. His zeal grew with his knowledge, and it was not unusual, on entering the ward, to find him instructing his neighbors—lumberjacks and miners—who respected the sincerity of the child, and listened.

After several uncertain months, he gradually regained enough vigour to be convalescent. He was allowed up in a wheelchair and finally found his way around on crutches. His own experience, and the maladies of others, gave him an intense interest in medicine. He never asked, but accepted eagerly any invitation to the "*Farmacy*" (Pharmacy) where he would watch closely while lab tests were done. The "*snethescope*" intrigued him, and he was profuse in his thanks if the doctor lent him his.

His stay lasted over a year, and he became well versed in hospital routine. On one occasion, his

companion in the ward was an old Irishman who regaled Eddie with his "tall" stories. However, the same gentleman was not immune to complaining at times when he actually had no pain. It was Eddie's turn. One evening when his friend was demanding sedative, Eddie produced a well-coated licorice in the shape of a capsule and asked Sister to give him that. Entering into the joke, the pill was given, and much to Sister's surprise, the "sedative" worked, and Eddie went to sleep laughing.

Although he never as much insinuated a priority, it was understood that he "belonged" to the Sisters, and on claiming that right, was prepared for the duties entailed. He was most eager to help and manifested a sense of responsibility beyond his years. Only the approach of Christmas resigned him to being discharged. When he left, it was with the promise of returning every week for a visit. One wonders, when he calls, what the future holds for a little boy who faces the world with nothing but a memory of the Eternal truths. That the sweet spell of grace be continued and the path of the Saviour followed, is the grace we are asking for our Eddie.

Red Cross Benefit

During the past few years, modern medicine has found many new treatments for age-old diseases.

A treatment which is continually proving itself very effective is that of blood transfusion. In our own little hospital, we have considered the establishment of a blood bank a necessity. With the transient population of our district, it was impossible to have a group of donors who could be called upon at a moment's notice. On the other hand, the high cost of purchasing blood commercially was a drawback in a district where the recipients could hardly afford such a service.

During this summer, the Canadian Red Cross Society came to our rescue with a plan for supplying our hospital and many others throughout Canada with dried plasma and whole blood. Hospitals were given the opportunity to accept or refuse the proposal. The "Hospital Agreement" requires that the Red Cross supply whole blood and dried plasma to hospitals free of charge and that they supply standard sets for the intravenous administration of the transfusions and be responsible for the sterilization, servicing and maintenance of such sets. The Red Cross also agrees to provide for transport for the blood and

equipment either by road, rail, or regular scheduled steamships or air lines. The contract requires that the hospital make no service charge whatever to any person for the transfusion administered.

The contract was "signed, sealed and delivered" on July 30th, and it is a day we will not forget, not because of the contract itself, but because of a very serious railway accident, the victims of which received the benefits of the contract. A small boy of ten years was brought to the hospital with his mother, both in what seemed to be a dying condition. After several transfusions of plasma and whole blood, the boy's condition improved sufficiently to operate and repair the damage which was robbing him of life. This was the first in a long line of accidents and serious illnesses to receive the service offered by the Red Cross. We look to the future and know that, among the victims of the dreaded accidents so common among woodsmen and miners, there will be many of the injured brought back to normal health again.

Field at Home Vol. XXIV, No. 2, April 1948, p 9

Animals, Too!

A new type of patient was recently rushed into the hospital—a dog! Mike was his name and he was the dearly-loved pet of a twelve-year-old boy; if at all possible, the dog had to be restored to health. He had fallen and hurt his shoulder. The first thing necessary was an X-ray. For a moment or two our X-ray technician was a little piqued. Imagine X-raying a dog! One glance at Bobby's face changed everything,

and Sister, Doctor, Bobby and the dog went to the X-ray room. The X-ray showed a fracture and Mike was put into a plaster cast. "We understand that after the pair returned home Mike fell out of bed one night, but apart from arousing the household, was none the worse for the fall.

False Alarm

Every now and then we have men call at our back door for a meal. They are usually men who are on their way to a lumber camp seeking work. We call them our "St. Joseph's men." Some weeks ago one of the Sisters noticed a man going towards the hospital. Thinking he was a "St. Joseph's man" she called to him, as he was going in the wrong

direction. There was no response. The man merely took off his coat, placed it behind the fire escape and headed for one of the basement windows in the Convent. By this time the Sister was really worried. She called a doctor and a mounted policeman who happened to be in the hospital at the time. All three rushed to the basement, only to find the poor man shoveling coal through the window. Sister learned that the poor fellow was deaf and dumb. A good laugh was enjoyed by all.

Souls Salvaged

While caring for sick bodies we have many opportunities for healing souls and giving babies tickets to heaven. Not so long ago a very sick baby was brought to the hospital. The mother had neglected to have it baptized, so she had brought it to the hospital to have the Sisters baptize it, as she herself did not know how. One glance at the baby showed it had only a few hours to live. It was baptized immediately and treatment started for its illness, but it died within two hours of admission. The mother was taught how to baptize before she left the hospital.

Last November Mr. Brown was admitted with a very serious chest and kidney condition. Mr. Brown was not a practising Catholic and he had several small children who were being brought up without any knowledge of the Faith. Sister told him he was a sick man and asked if he would like to speak to Father and go to confession. He reluctantly said that he would. Father heard his confession that afternoon—it was the first time he had received the Sacrament in many years. Arrangements were made for him to receive Holy Communion the following morning, but when morning came Mr. Brown was sleepy and decided there was lots of time — no rush. Sister was very disappointed. However, the next morning he did receive Holy Communion. As the days went by his condition became increasingly worse. Christmas morning he seemed a little stronger so Sister wheeled him in to the chapel as close to the altar as space permitted and left him for about ten minutes. On her return she found the man in tears. He then told Sister that he had not fallen away from the church through of ignorance of his religion. He had had a good education and had started to study for the priesthood. A few days later Mr. Brown received Extreme Unction and died. May he rest in peace!

Aid to Efficiency

Today, March 1, 1948. is a day of rejoicing. Our new autoclave and hot and cold sterilizing tanks are being installed. This will be a great boon to the Sisters as heretofore we have had to have one Sister sit beside our old autoclave for two or three hours to keep the steam pressure at the proper point for sterilizing. Now we can do our work and return when the time for sterilizing is up. Also we can have hot and cold sterile water day and night. Modern equipment saves energy, and gives the Sisters more time with the patients, thus providing more frequent occasions for spiritual therapy.

Field at Home Vol. XXIV, No. 3, July 1948, p 6-7

EDSON EDITS

An Introduction That Wasn't

On being asked to do the *Edson Edits* this month you started plans for an introduction. For some reason, quite unknown to you, the introduction was the thing. Late in April, at the end of a perfect Spring day, it had come into being. You retired that night all aglow with pride in the paragraphs extolling the beauties of Spring in Alberta. But alack and alas for vainglory, the following morning it was not Spring, there was not the faintest indication that it ever had been Spring. It was Winter, in big, block capital letters. Snow, inches deep, covered the earth as far as eye could see. Tree' branches bent low beneath their white burden. Means of intercommunication were in jeopardy because of the weight of snow on the wires. Instead of warm April showers and fragrant May flowers, we were deep in Christmas card scenery. The introduction was snow bound. And to-day came a pleading letter from the Editor "Copy, please, by May 20th." The calendar says May 15th, and nothing can change it. So with a regretful sigh for the introduction that might have been, you plunge into the Edits, determined that no Editorial gray hairs will be caused by your tardiness.

Flood Tragedy

Doubtless the floods which have been harassing the Western Provinces this Spring are Edson Scenery on April 26th common knowledge. This district has suffered very little in comparison with other areas. Life's little tragedies, however, frequently follow impassable roads and delayed train service. A young man and his wife came here one afternoon

recently, looking for Father and carrying a baby. The Sister who met them asked, "Is the baby ill?" and the mother replied, while big tears rolled down the father's face, "No, the baby is dead." They told Sister their story. They lived about 40 miles east of Edson. The baby had died during the night. Knowing that, with the roads as they were, neither the doctor nor the RCMP would get to them for some days, they decided the best plan was to bring the baby to Edson. Early in the morning they started out, walking. They were picked up and driven part way, arriving here in mid-afternoon. The mother had carried the little baby all the way. Being Catholics, they sought out Father who took over for them. They were grateful, so grateful, that the child had been baptized. They were resigned, too, but parent-like, deeply hurt at their loss.

Statistics and Souls

The first four months of this year have added 500 names to our list of admissions. Another 500 individual souls, all either actual or potential members of the Mystical Body, have passed through our hands thus far in 1948. Often, oh so often, the religious nurse grieves because lack of time prevents her from giving attention to soul and body. She can only pray for her charges and wait for the reinforcements, confident that her prayers are heard and equally confident that in His own good time, God will send labourers to the harvest. Disappointments there are in this work for souls, but there are tremendous consolations too. We do see miracles of grace when some poor wandering soul is lifted in the arms of the Good Shepherd and carried home. Mrs. X. was like that. She had been away from the Church for years. Her family, her friends are all non-Catholic. She came in here to die, and consented to see Father. In a few short moments, her soul was bathed in the Precious Blood, she received her Lord into her heart, she was anointed for the long last journey and with the final prayers of the Church sustaining and comforting her, she died.

The Babies Keep Coming

Lest there should be any misunderstanding, we are far, far more practised at ushering into the world than out of it. There were a few times during the winter when elastic walls would have been a boon. Three beds in the hall on second floor augmented our eleven maternity beds to fourteen. To give the

patients a modicum of privacy we brought screens from all over the building. This conglomeration of furniture in the hall made a road map almost a necessity. But the crush lasted not too long and things returned to normal, as they always do.

Spring Cleaning

April—and the Sisters' fancy lightly turns, not to love, but to house-cleaning. All we asked was a breathing spell in the hospital. And one fine morning there was a lull, not a long one, nor a big one, but enough of a one to suit our purpose. The house-cleaning squad was appointed and in no time buckets, and ladders, and mops, and brooms, were everywhere on the horizon, and the annual Spring house-cleaning was underway. Now, walls and windows, drapes and floors are shining with cleanliness. The Maternity ward boasts new Fowler beds in metal with a bleached mahogany finish and bed-side tables to match. With walls newly painted a pastel green, green blankets and gay flowered drapes, the effect is most pleasant, the patients very pleased with their surroundings and consequently with themselves, and us.

As this is written there are electricians all over the place, rewiring where necessary, for our new 100 milliampere shock-proof X-Ray unit, which we expect soon. The men had to remove a portion of the wall to gain access to what they call the attic, between the roof and the ceilings. Sister, telling us about it, said, "And all they found in there was one bat." Now Sister R. was on night duty and the previous night had been of the creepy variety when you see and hear things all about you. She spoke up quickly, "What were they looking for?"

Hope for the Harvest

"The eyes of the West are on the weather. For the farmer and all who look to him, everything depends now on sun and wind in abundance, and a long summer. During the past few days, birds are hazarding a peep into the world, the robins are busy, busy, the sky is assuming Our Lady's hue for Our Lady's month, and the atmosphere is bright with promise. May that promise be fulfilled not only in nature, but in the hearts and souls of all of us.

Another Nurse for the S.O.S. Rural Hospitals

Sunday, May 9th, was "Graduation Day" for Sister Leona Rose, who has now completed her years of

training at St. Paul's Hospital School of Nursing, Saskatoon. With the other members of the 1948 class. Sister Rose received her Diploma for Nursing at the Commencement Exercises held in the Capitol Theatre on Sunday evening. On that same morning a "Graduation" Mass had been celebrated in the Hospital chapel by His Excellency Bishop Pocock, who presented class pins and gave a little talk to the graduates.

So now we have a new recruit to supply much-needed assistance in our rural hospitals. We cannot yet say to what field of action Sister Rose will be appointed, but wherever she goes we know she will bring to her care of ailing bodies all the zeal of a true missionary Sister for the welfare of souls. We offer Sister our sincere congratulations and we pray that God may grant her many years of fruitful activity in His Service. The fire having gone out, the cat got up on the stove and went to sleep. Little Mary came hurrying into where her mother was and said: "Oh. Mama, the cat has got up on the stove and he's boiling.

Field at Home Vol. XXIV, No. 4, October 1948, p 8-9, 14

EDSON EDITS

A Visitor of Note

Among our many guests this summer was Rev. Bernard R. Hubbard, S.J. Edson was an uncharted stop in his long trip from California to the Far North and it was one which we were delighted that it was necessary for him to make. Having read Father Hubbard's book "Mush Ye Malemites," and having heard stories of his work in Alaska as geologist, we were most anxious to meet him. His visit was very enjoyable and we are looking forward to another, promised for the near future.

About Tonsils

Our Tonsillectomy season was only moderately heavy this year. True to form, all the fond mammas and papas added to the sales of the town's ice cream parlours in an effort to keep their promises to the younger generation. Our last patient, a shy four-year-old, had only just arrived in this district. Her parents and brothers and sisters had, in June, watched their home float down the turbulent Fraser River in its mad rush over fields and farms onwards to the sea. "Daddy" is working in a lumber

camp now to raise funds to begin all over again. It may have been a chronic condition but her only complaint after losing her tonsils was "I'm hungry."

Aspiring Beekeeper

There are bees in our garden—two hives of buzzing activity. They are scientifically cared for by a cautious gentleman who dresses up very elaborately for it. Recently, a much younger gentleman has begun his apprenticeship in this art. His interest was aroused when he watched his senior officer day after day go to say "hello" to the bees, as he described it. One day, we noticed the apprentice bending down at the opening of one of the hives, and saying in a baby lisp: "Hello beeth!"

Retreat and Profession

Our retreats are often a puzzle to patients in the hospital and innumerable questions regarding them are asked and duly answered. The latest ones were no exception. Lowell, although too young to know the word "retreat" watched from his cot the Sisters as they walked about the garden and he earnestly told his Mother—"You know that Sister has worn two paths down the lawn and when she came near my window she didn't even wave at me!" There were a dozen Sisters but they all looked the same to him.

Lowell, if he had been older, may have been just as bewildered as many another when they hear about the profession ceremony, so simple and yet, the symbolism of which is infinite, as are its effects. One patient, talking to one of our young doctors about it said: "I don't know how they can do it," to which the doctor replied: "Well, they do and I've never met a happier bunch anywhere." On August 15th, two Sisters made their Final Profession in our chapel here. They are Sister B. Knopic, Renfrew, Ontario, and Sister I. Profit of "Woodvale, Prince Edward Island.

The Same Old Problem

The newspaper clipping read: "A very pretty wedding took place in St. Stephen's Lutheran Church here on April 21st at 3:00 p.m. when Miss. ..."

So it was another one. Another home begun without the blessing of the Catholic Church! It is the same story that has been told hundreds of times in the past. It started in Europe or the British Isles after World War I when immigration first opened up.

They arrived in that new land—western Canada. They settled out in the wilderness where they might—if they were fortunate—have a field or two ready for cultivation. They began by dint of hard work to erect a few necessary temporary buildings.

Their minds and hands were not trained for the work and they were unaccustomed to the ways and customs of the new country. A Catholic priest was not known and this was perhaps the biggest shock, as they had come from organized parishes in the old country. Schools were few and far between. They managed to grow a small garden and to clear land, till it and get it ready for next year's crops. The winters were long, hard and terribly lonely. Lonesomeness for the folks at home and aloneness in this vast country made many a heart ache and break. Their only hope was centered in their belief in a God over us all, and that next year might be better than the present one.

Years have passed in which children have been born and have grown to manhood and womanhood—suffering the same loss as their parents in the lack of contact with the Church. Their parents have grown old prematurely and they are going to a better world one after another and as they die they are taking something with them that they have tried to give to their children but which they never could succeed in imparting as well as they wished. They had at least the memory—very vivid—of their churches, daily Mass, processions and big celebrations of saints' days, the schools in which day by day they learned the Written Word and, what is more important, were taught its practical application to every minute of life.

But, you will say, many of these people were never good Catholics even in their own country. That is true, just as you will find the world over. But they are the publicized minority. The majority are those who would choose the right thing if given a chance. The rural youth in Western Canada, in great part have never known Sunday Mass, let alone daily, they know only schools whose teachers treat God and the things pertaining to Him as old wives tales. I look at the clipping again and think that God could never blame her. This child had been in our hospital. She made her First Holy Communion after as many instructions as her sick body would permit. She went back to her home with theory and more written lessons but personal contact with the Church had ceased and there was no one to help

her apply the principles when difficulties arose, to help her see that religion is a vital necessity in life instead of the burden and foolishness that others would have her believe.

Humanity works so hard to cure the physical ailments of the body — the body which despite all efforts will one day crumble into dust. And yet the soul which is eternal and for whose use the body was created, so few remember. For our body, we must have the very latest treatment which science has discovered; as for the soul, we are content to feed it on the falsities that only Satan could conceive but which are taught in the schools daily without anyone giving it a thought.

There is no church in Woking so the schoolroom was both chapel and classroom. Our Lord in His little Tabernacle (brought from the church in Rycroft) had to be content with the teacher's desk for an altar. We lit the Sanctuary Lamp (also brought with us), the children decorated the altar with flowers and behold! we had a chapel. The children tip-toed in for little visits and we all said our prayers there during the day. Father said Mass each morning after driving 40 miles or more to pick up some of the children.

At the end of each day there was Benediction with hymns sung to the accompaniment of the school piano. After we had finished teaching in each centre came the excitement of First Communion Sunday with all its attendant festivities. Our own beloved Bishop Routhier now comes every two years to administer Confirmation in Rycroft and its Missions. His Excellency is most interested in our missionary work and gives us many tokens of his fatherly kindness. As we return each summer to teach Catechism in these different centres we realize more and more the importance of teaching Christian doctrine in districts where so many new Canadians are in danger of drifting towards the dreaded Communism.

Field at Home Vol. XXV, No. 1, January 1949, p 12, 15

EDSON EDITS

Arrivals and Departures

Winter has come to Edson; the brown and gold of autumn have given place to the pastel skies, the snow-splashed evergreens and the silvery haze of winter. In the hospital life goes on at an unbelievably

rapid rate. We have had an arrival and a departure of note recently. Reverend Sister General arrived to make her annual visitation in mid-October. Though this was her first visit to Edson as Sister General, Sister is no stranger here. Superior of this mission for many years, Sister General was welcomed by both sisters and people as an old and well-loved friend. Her stay with us was all too brief; it was with real regret that we said goodbye.

The departure of Sister Wymbs for Toronto was another milestone in the history of Edson mission. Twenty-one years ago Sister Wymbs opened St. John's Hospital with little of either money or help, but with a great deal of faith and courage. Sister's treasure chest of memories is rich and full. The early days were hard indeed, as pioneering is always hard; the generosity and self-sacrifice of the first group of Sisters was heroic. Sister Wymbs leaves us after devoted service during which time the work she started has grown beyond belief. We feel sure she is happy in the knowledge that the old frame building of many inconveniences has given place to a modern, smoothly-running, well-equipped hospital which ranks high among the small hospitals in Alberta. May God's choice Blessings, and His rich reward, be hers even here below.

Tragedies

Winter brings its quota of accidents, some slight, some serious, some tragic. The lumber camps in the district have settled into their winter routine with increased personnel. Some of the men bring their families to the camps which are usually in the bush well off the beaten track. One man brought his wife of a few days and his five-year-old son by a former marriage. The morning following their arrival in camp, the father started the fire in their cabin, then, leaving his wife and son sleeping, he went to the cookhouse for breakfast. Ten minutes later he saw his cabin in flames. Before help arrived the woman wakened, pushed the child through a window and crawled through herself only to fall exhausted beside the burning house. Both victims were brought forty miles to the hospital, and both were in a pitiable state. The poor husband was dazed with grief.

The following twenty-four hours were harrowing indeed, not only for the grief-stricken relatives but for doctors and nurses as well. The staff worked for hours cleansing and dressing burned areas

and giving continuous plasma. We knew we were waging a losing battle for the woman's life, ninety per cent of her body was burned and she lived only seven hours, but we did hope to save the little boy. God, however, decreed otherwise and the child died the following day.

Deaths somehow seem to come in threes here in Edson and this time was no exception. The third death was equally tragic. A young man, the father of six children, the oldest ten years, went over a three hundred foot cliff in his truck; though he lived several hours he did not regain consciousness. It is terrifying to think of these young lives being hurled suddenly into Eternity to come face to face with an infinitely just judge. What a blessing and a consolation we Catholics have in the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Though we were powerless to hinder the approach of death to these poor victims, one could and did storm heaven with prayers for them, confident in our knowledge that the Mercy of God is as limitless as His Justice.

State-Control or Charity?

Two of our number have recently returned from Calgary where they attended the annual Conventions of the Catholic Hospital Association and the Associated Hospitals of Alberta. The trend in the hospital field follows the general trend towards state control, although the Dominion wide support given the Blue Cross Plan would seem to indicate that a large proportion of the Canadian people are satisfied to have their medical services operate on a voluntary basis. One aspect of the matter which may not be generally recognized is this: the introduction of state health insurance will bring to an end our traditions of Christ-like charity in the care of the sick, traditions which have come down as a national heritage from the days of Jeanne Mance and Mother Catherine of St. Augustine. It was the ideal of love of neighbour for love of God which brought the first Grey Nuns, by canoe and by portage, to Western Canada in the vanguard of the early settlers, for the sole purpose of teaching the children and nursing the sick. One wonders, do the Canadian people really want to lose their voluntary hospitals.

Christmas is in the air. When Sister Phillips appears with a rapt expression on her face, we know it is not ecstasy, it is just the Christmas concert which she is planning. The artists among us are busy with

Christmas cards; the culinary experts have their fruit cakes hidden away. Soon, bulky boxes will make their annual appearance in the corridors and the sisters, ably assisted by ambulatory patients, will transform halls and wards with Christmas decorations. With the Christmas spirit in our hearts we are reminded that:

“It isn’t far to Bethlehem town,
It’s anywhere that Christ comes down
And feels in people’s smiling face
A loving and abiding place.
The road to Bethlehem runs right through
The homes of folks like me and you.”

Field at Home Vol. XXVI, No. 1, January 1950, p 12, 15

EDSON EDITS

Merry Christmas for Patients and Sisters

‘Tis Christmas Eve. Everyone is going about the daily routine work with a song in her heart and ideas in her head about what she can do for others. We think that idea makes Christmas what it was intended to be—a time of giving oneself—and that is why our staff thinks a hospital is a wonderful place to spend Christmas.

A few days ago boxes of coloured paper, wreaths, bells and ribbons were brought out of storage and with the aid of a step ladder, thumb tacks and scotch tape, the wards took on a festal appearance. The tree was erected and garbed in tinsel and lights. The temporary cripples from the men’s ward—who might have anything from a cut toe to a fractured spine—offered suggestions or climbed ladders depending on their infirmities. The mail carriers have been making numerous trips to the crowded post office and waiting in line for what seemed hours to obtain the armfuls of letters and gaily wrapped parcels which arrived daily for patients and staff.

With all in readiness for the big day, the patients are tucked in bed a little earlier tonight because anyone who wishes to attend Midnight Mass in the chapel may do so. For Mass, the altar is decorated with twinkling lights and a profusion of mums, gifts of thoughtful friends. A realistic little crib is built beside the altar under Our Lady’s statue which stands on a bracket high on the wall. The chapel is well filled with the old and the young, some in

casts and on crutches. We had moved the back pew out of the chapel in order to accommodate the two wheelchairs in which our two “prize” patients are being brought to Mass. These two teenagers have been here for a month, one having sustained a fractured hip after a fall from a horse, the other having had a serious case of rheumatic fever. The two girls are together in a two bed ward and they asked for special permission to come to Midnight Mass—the first time they have ever had the opportunity to attend. With sparkling eyes, they watch every movement.

The choir of Sisters sing carols during the Holy Sacrifice—singing the praises of the Divine Babe who gave Himself to and for each of us.

After Mass the patients return to the wards where coffee and doughnuts are served. A special party has been planned for the two girls—a Christmas tree has been placed in their room and during their absence the gifts from their school friends which have been accumulating for days are put on and under the tree. The girls on the hospital staff serve hot goodies and they all join in for an enjoyable hour before going back to bed.

On Christmas morning radios are allowed in the wards—a privilege granted rarely. The carols are beautiful and everybody enjoys them. Upstairs the women patients who are up and around decide to have dinner at a dining room table so they put all their bedside tables in a double row in the middle of one of the rooms and when the trays with their “Christmasy” covers and holly place cards are lined up on the table, it is very pretty indeed—and not only pretty, but delicious for the kitchen staff has applied all the rules of their culinary art to make the dinner the most appetizing ever served.

We have two other “dining rooms”—private ones with invited guests; two older ladies enjoy their turkey and cranberries, each with her husband as a guest. During the day gifts arrive from all sides and, like one big happy family, these are shown around to everyone and enjoyed by all. Santa Claus comes to the children’s ward in the early morning hours and sometimes returns to visit later.

Alcoholic beverages are usually not a source of difficulty. One Christmas, however, the afternoon temperatures and pulse were taken and the pulse rate showed amazing rapidity for every patient

in one men's ward. The nurse left the ward after making the comment "Well, boys, where did you get that little nip?" Seventy-five year old Hank, his aeroplane splint waving in his excitement, said to his neighbour, "Charlie, I knew we wouldn't be able to keep that away from her!"

The Sister's Christmas ? After Midnight Mass, we have breakfast in buffet style in our community room and we open our mail, letters and gifts from our families, from other Sisters, and from appreciative friends and former patients. We hear from the little people and from the others who are more important in the eyes of this old world of ours. There are greetings posted after long sleigh rides to post-offices on the highways and by-ways of this huge forest-filled district of ours ; other greetings come from far away parts—Mississippi, New York, Honolulu, Eastern Canada. They bring bits of news from people of interest to us, bringing back memories of those who have received help at St. John's or who have worked here.

Long term patients become well acquainted with us and we feel that we know them and their families. One of our friends writes to tell us that her daughter moved to New York with her family. The trip was made by plane and was enlivened by Christopher, aged three, declaring in stentorian tones, "My tummy feels awful, my tummy's gone crazy, I've got to get off!" One could go on indefinitely speaking of Christmas here. It is a wonderful time and I can say truthfully that I have never spent happier Christmases than I have since turning Edsonward. Some grown ups say Christmas is a lonely time—it is if you don't do something to make others happy. The Babe of Bethlehem gave us Heaven on the first Christmas day. May we all be filled with His Christmas spirit and learn how to impart it to others.

Spiritual Power Houses

In writing of one's first impressions about places or persons, it is always well to remember that very often first impressions are not lasting. That would seem to be the rule, but as with all other rules, it admits of exceptions. When asked some time ago, 'What are your impressions of Fargo?'—meaning the Religious Corresponding School—the picture of a powerhouse flashed across my mind. That impression has not only remained, but with the passing of time, has become stronger. This

comparison may seem to be rather far-fetched, but I think with a little explanation one can readily appreciate the similarity.

The well-constructed, firm, and solid looking buildings, with their thousands of wires spreading over the city and reaching into the homes of the people, is a familiar sight to most of us. Indeed so familiar are these wires that one hardly gives them a passing thought, as they spread over the roof-tops like so many threads of a spider's web. But when one thinks of the tremendous energy they carry, one views them with, perhaps, a little awe. We are grateful for this intimate network above us, for it represents three necessities of life—light, heat and power.

A Religious Correspondence School is a powerhouse, and the wires are the many lessons sent out by the Sisters of Service to children living in the country, deprived of the blessing of a Catholic school. Catechetical "wires" provide these children with regular lessons in their religion, thereby fulfilling a three-fold function and purpose as do the wires coming from a power-house. They bring into homes the Light of Faith, the Fire of God's Love, and the Power of Good Example.

Picture to yourself a home without light. An oppressive darkness covers the place. It is a chilling and cheerless house. Enter and you have great difficulty in finding your way about: you are overcome by a fear, wondering what could lurk in the shadows and darkened corners. But bring in a light and the darkness is immediately dispersed, and fear gives place to a feeling of security and safety. Without the Light of Faith, we grope about in darkness, but with our minds enlightened we walk with certainty and confidence.

As with light, so with heat. How inhabitable would homes be without warmth? Persons, in whom the fires of charity do not burn, are like such homes. To enkindle the fire of charity or to make it burn brighter, is one purpose of the "Catechetical Wires" coming from God's Powerhouse, the Religious Correspondence School. They teach our children how to love God and neighbor. A person on fire with the love of God radiates warmth and kindness and is, of course, happy.

And last, the power of Good Example. A well instructed Catholic with a clear knowledge and a heart full of love of God and neighbor, will be an

inspiration to everyone. He will be fearless in the defense of his religion, and give good example by practising it faithfully. Human respect will have no place in his life. Religious Correspondence Schools, therefore, are as necessary to maintain as Power Houses, for they carry into thousands of homes, light, heat and power—the Light of Faith, the Warmth of God's love, and the Power to give Good Example.

Let go of that feeling of hatred you have for another, the jealousy, the envy, the malice; let go all such thoughts. Sweep them out of your mind, and you will be surprised what a cleansing and rejuvenating effect it will have upon you, both physically and mentally. Let them all go; you house them at deadly risk.

Field at Home Vol. XXVI, No. 2, April 1950, p 10-11

EDSON EDITS

Spring Song

Standing on the east balcony this morning, we exulted in the first incomparable breath of spring. The sparrows were chirping their brave little tunes with all their tiny might; carried on the wings of the breeze was that indefinable something which assures us spring is on its way. Spring! Magic word which flings open long closed doors and windows, rescues seed catalogues from their winter oblivion and draws eager eyes gardenwards. Never was that ever-welcome season more welcome than now following the most severe winter in many, many years. Day after day the thermometer registered forty, fifty, sixty degrees below zero, there seemed no end to the snow which fell steadily, monotonously, burying fences, weighing down trees, burdening roofs to the caving-in point. You will readily understand our satisfaction in the pleasant change.

Drugs—New and Old

Our hospital wards have not been the bustling centres of activity to which we are accustomed. In fact this has been the quietest year in the memory of anyone now on this mission. To a great extent this inactivity is due to a drastic reduction in lumber contracts and lumbering is the major industry in the vicinity of Edson. Normally there are between three and four thousand men working each winter in the bush area which we serve.

This year there is approximately 75% fewer men so

employed. Though we have not had patients in great numbers we have had some who were extremely ill. There has been a particularly obstinate form of a typical virus pneumonia prevalent. It does not respond to the Sulfas, to Penicillin, to Streptomycin. The two latest sufferers have been treated with one of the newer antibiotics, Chloromycetin. In the first case this produced dramatic results. The second patient, Mrs. L., who is still in hospital, was ill enough to die the day we started her on Chloromycetin. Her temperature had been piking easily up and down, the least movement caused intolerable pain, she was too weak and listless to raise a cup to her lips. That morning she had had a chest X-Ray. The doctor was suspicious of fluid in the pleural cavity, hence it was important that the picture be taken with the patient upright in order to determine the fluid level. The exposure was for 1/10 second, two of us supported the patient during the exposure and immediately following wrapped her up and returned her to bed. Just that much exertion left her limp and bathed in perspiration. All this coincided with her first dose of Chloromycetin.

That evening her temperature was just over 100 degrees; the following morning she ate her breakfast with enjoyment, moved about easily and generally looked and felt a new woman. The improvement lasted 48 hours, then came a relapse. Now she is getting heavy doses of Chloromycetin and normal doses of Penicillin and Streptomycin. The infection which involved her right lung in the beginning has now attacked the left lung as well. We have every hope that she will recover but it will be difficult to determine what did cure her.

The Rejuvenation of Gerry

One of the pneumonia victims was six months old Gerry. He came in a few days before New Year's and remained two months. Though small for his age he was a beautiful child with large blue, blue eyes. It was pitiful to watch him struggling for breath, restlessly twisting his little head from side to side, his eyes mutely pleading with us to do something. For days he had continuous oxygen; for days someone was with him almost constantly; his hold on life was so slim, so fragile that we expected the slender thread to break anytime and he was unbaptized. Miraculously, it seemed, Gerry kept his appetite; he took his formula ravenously and finally one day he turned the corner toward recovery. By that time he

held every one of us in the palm of his chubby hand; we were his willing and devoted slaves.

He was here two months and in spite of all our efforts did not become spoiled. He progressed from a weak formula to whole milk and three meals a day; from just noticing a gingham Bambi with red ears and a red celluloid doll to grasping them and waving them in the air ; from smiling and gurgling when spoken to or when picked up, to lying alone by the hour laughing and chattering away to himself, playing with his hands while his legs were waving aloft. One red-letter day he was taken outdoors for five minutes all decked out in an improvised bunting-bag. The length of time was increased daily until he was spending three hours outside. At first he objected to this new procedure but gradually he accepted it and liked it. There were a few items on his daily agenda to which he always objected strenuously; when Gerry objected nobody was unaware of the fact, his lusty yell was heard all over the house. A few days ago Gerry went home well except for his bronchitis which we hope will clear up in the finer weather; we would have missed him a great deal but in the meantime Terry arrived.

Terry and His Chair

Terry is four and is quite a man. As Leukemia (a fatal disease with a marked increase in the number of blood leukocytes) was suspected, it was necessary to do many blood counts and blood smears. Terry is exceptionally good about it, up to a point, then he announces : "Now that's enough of that," and enough it invariably is. We have to come back some other time. Quite a practical little man is Terry. When he leaves the nursery he takes one of the small nursery chairs with him, taking no chances on a seating shortage. He is likely to be sitting anywhere; in the front entrance, beside the nurses' station, in one of the wards or right in the middle of the hall where you either have to go around him or over him. Likewise between the courses of his meals he takes time off to push a crib or two around, presumably to make room for what remains to be eaten. This versatile little character is a singer of sorts. His repertoire consists of two numbers, neither tune is recognizable but the words are "There's a Bluebird On My Windowsill" and "Rye whiskey, rye whiskey, rye whiskey, if I don't get rye whiskey I'll die." Amusing now, no doubt, but pathetic, too.

So many of these little Western children have only the most profane of profane knowledge. The words God, Prayer, Bethlehem, Calvary with all their wonderful connotations are as Greek to them. Poor little souls, they are growing up in pagan surroundings. Nothing in their environment suggests that the world has been Christian for 1900 years, that during all those years Our Eucharistic Lord has been dwelling in our tabernacles flooding the world with His love and His grace. What a challenge to us Catholics; what are we doing about accepting the challenge?

Plane Crash and Grateful Survivors

One night last July, Edson was aroused by a plane flying dangerously low over the town for a long enough time to indicate that something was terribly wrong. The local Fire Chief called the Edmonton Airport and discovered that a private plane from Anchorage, Alaska, had not been heard from since leaving Grande Prairie and was then overdue in Edmonton. The Chief had the fire siren sounded thus summoning about fifty cars. The cars hurried to the emergency landing field outside the town and enclosed the field which then had all the ear lights focused on it. The men hoped the pilot of the crippled plane would see the lights and make a landing. Unfortunately, however, the aircraft had gone east. The crew of a C.N.R. freight watched it anxiously as it swooped now here, now there, in frantic efforts to find some clearance where it could safely come down. Finally and inevitably it crashed about sixty miles east of Edson. Doctor Tiffin and the ambulance went out and the pilot and two passengers were brought in. The pilot was fatally injured, he lived about two days but did not recover consciousness. The passengers, two sisters, who were *en route* to Topeka, Kansas, to spend their vacation, were very fortunate in sustaining only a fractured leg and a slight concussion. The girls, Ruth and Nancy, were professional social workers who had been born in Honolulu and were working for the Department of Public Welfare in Alaska. They spent only two weeks here and were perfect patients; we felt that we had really done very little for them. That, apparently, was not the way Ruth and Nancy felt. When they were fit for travel they resumed their journey to Topeka. We received a nice letter of appreciation from there.

Shortly after that a box of Hawaiian delicacies

arrived from Honolulu. Then *en route* back to Alaska they made a long detour through Edmonton to Edson to visit us. Back in Alaska they continued to send their interesting letters, while at Christmas we were notified that our gift from them was to take the form of a luscious treat of fresh and very select fruit which would be delivered from Oregon at intervals during the year. Their great kindness has touched all of us. We seem to be receiving so much for so little. These little heart-warming demonstrations on the part of former patients make a bright spot in our daily lives. They are part of the hundredfold promised by Our Lord to those who leave all to follow Him; another instance of so much for so little.

Field at Home Vol. XXVII, No. 3, July 1951, p 13,16

EDSON EDITS

Just in case some of our readers may think that Edson has vanished off the face of the earth, we are putting in our little word to let them know we are still in existence.

The “Flu”! We had it, too!

In the early part of this year the “Flu” hit hard and heavy. The strange part about it was that it hit Edson first. Why it should settle in our little town first is beyond all human conception but that it did, and we are in no doubt about it. All members of the staff were going full speed as patients continued to pour in. They were admitted at such a rate that we were finally obliged to set up beds in the halls and some, who were not critically ill, were refused admittance. Although several of the patients were in a serious condition, owing to the excellent care of doctors and nurses, no deaths resulted. As several members of the staff were among the victims the remaining personnel were doing double duty, but all remained pleasant, kind and good-natured.

Snow and More Snow

While the “Flu” raged the snow continued to fall at an equal rate of speed. There seemed to be no end to either “Flu” or snow. No sooner would the snow be removed from paths and roofs when another downfall would appear. However, as all things in the world come to an end, so did the snow. There was great rejoicing as our famous Alberta sun peeked around the corner and a nice chinook blew up.

And then—the Mud!

Everyone sat back and thought troubles were over but, alas, the next situation was worse than the first, for in the place of snow we had mud, mud, and more mud—and such mud. Never before had we seen anything like it. The “lightweights” were not too badly off, but the poor “heavy-weights” just sunk and stuck. The roads were impassable for vehicles. One morning a patient was brought in from the bush, He had been on the road from 2:00 p.m. two days before. He had to be carried from the highway to the hospital on a stretcher.

Floods, Too!

The picture illustrates the main street with an imaginary steamship sailing on the water. While this photo gives an exaggerated idea of things, in reality it was a very serious state of affairs. As no patients could come in on the roads, work in the hospital became slack. Then, lest the devil find a few idle hands, it was suggested that Spring cleaning should get underway. By the time this reaches our readers we hope to have everything *Spic and Span* and shining.

The Martyrs Did It

One of our patients was unfortunate enough to have his hand badly cut. It was necessary to remove two fingers and part of the hand. The skin from the amputated fingers was grafted on the remaining part of the hand. Time went on and it looked as if the “graft” was not healing properly which meant the operation would have to be done all over again. Naturally the patient was very down-hearted and discouraged. One of the Sisters suggested that he go to the chapel every day, make the Novena and apply the relics of the Canadian Martyrs to the injured part. This he did most faithfully and at the end of the Novena the Doctors said the hand was healing nicely and the patient was discharged shortly afterwards.

Star Patient

Our star patient was little Billy—aged five years. Billy had an infected eye and was with us for a couple of months. Everyone tried hard to spoil him, but he was exceptionally good and the friend of all. Everything was going along fine until a little pal came in to play one afternoon during the Christmas Season. To everyone’s amazement it was suddenly discovered that the camel’s head, belonging to the

crib in the sun porch, was broken. Sister asked Billy what had happened. He admitted that he and his pal were trying to make the camel eat pine needles! As punishment, Billy was confined to his room for a day. He was very much in disgrace and he knew it. Never once during the day did he attempt to leave the room without permission. When his eye was healed and he was discharged there were more than a few of us just a little bit lonesome.

Don't Waste Mosquito Bites!

A little girl in Grade 2 said very seriously one day after the mosquitoes had been giving the class a particularly bad time of it: "God let's the mosquitoes bite us so's we can make up for our sins."

Field at Home Vol. XXIX, No. 2, April 1953, p 11, 16

EDSON EDITS

New Anaesthetic Machine and Steam Kettle

The local Kinsman Club made November 19th a memorable day for St. John's Hospital, when Mr. William Nigro, president of the Club, presented a cheque for seven hundred dollars towards the purchase of a new one thousand dollar anaesthetic machine. With Mr. Nigro at the presentation were Mr. M. Burleigh, mayor of Edson, and Mr. S. H. Cliffe. This new gas machine will contribute greatly towards increased safety and efficiency in the administration of anaesthesia to those undergoing surgery. The Edson Kinettes are also taking interest in the hospital and have presented us with an electrical steam kettle, for use in the Children's Ward. To these clubs we wish to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation.

Water Through a Needle

A little girl of three, with ruptured appendix, was rushed to the hospital. After the operation she persistently called for water. The doctor, while giving her an intravenous, tried to appease her by telling her she was getting water through a needle which in this case was just as good for her. As soon as the doctor left, the little girl said to the nurse, "I don't want a drink of water out of a needle. I want water out of my Clip."

Grandpa's Pills

Grandpa went home from the hospital feeling fine, but was not careful about where he put his sleeping

pills. As Mama wasn't home to watch, the little girls (one three and the other two years old) found the pills and helped themselves to Grandpa's "coloured candies" as they called them. Soon Daddy was at the hospital with two limp children. The doctors treated them and the youngest was soon out of danger, but the other girl was very sleepy, and the nurses had strict orders to keep her awake. This meant intensive work, bathing in cold water, making her run up and down the corridor and everything imaginable to keep the child awake until the danger was over. Next day Daddy went home with his two little girls, tremendously relieved that they were out of danger. And where was their mother? She was upstairs with her new baby.

Field at Home Vol. XXX, No. 3, July 1954, p 11-12

EDSON EDITS

First Communion

On First Communion Sunday in Edson 20 little ones received Jesus for the first time, and after Mass there was a First Communion Breakfast in the basement of the Church. This year each child had an older child for an angel, so the "angels" were present for breakfast, too. Dr. Kimmett took a moving picture of the breakfast and the receiving of certificates.

May Procession

In the evening there was a beautiful May Procession around the Church. After the procession Janet May crowned the statue of Our Lady. A lovely shrine, decorated with pink and white snapdragons and carnations, had been erected inside the altar rail. When the children were in their places they recited in unison the Pope's Prayer to Our Lady for Children.

Home Visiting by Our Lady

Another memorable event took place after the crowning. Reverend Father Johnson, C.Ss.R., preached an enlightening sermon to the parents on their duty to teach their children the principles of the Faith in the home—by word and example. He also explained why two lovely statues of Our Lady of Fatima were on Our Mother of Perpetual Help's Shrine. During the coming months these statues will travel from home to home in the parish. They will remain in each home for a week. While there

the home will be blessed and the family dedicated to Our Lady. Family prayers and Rosary are to be said each evening by the members of the family. May Our Blessed Mother receive much honor in and shower many blessings on our parish!

Sure Protection!

When instructing the First Communion Class Sister told the children a story of a soldier who, when in battle, was struck by a bullet. His pen and pencil set was shattered, but the bullet had been stopped from piercing his body by a miraculous medal. A few nights later Kenny brought his three year-old brother over to visit Sister. Billy, to Sister's horror, was playing with a cigarette lighter. She asked Kenny if he wasn't afraid that Billy would set his clothes on fire. "Oh, no. Sister," replied Kenny, confidently patting his brother on the chest. "He's all right; he has his medals on!"

Pay It With Prayers

The latest project in Edson is one to beautify our property on the left of the hospital. Sister Superior decided to have planted many poplar, pine and spruce trees which in future years will provide a nice shelter both for Sisters and Convent and beautify the grounds. Mr. Buck, the head of the Forestry Department in our district, came to our rescue. Not only was good advice given, but he took it on as a Forestry Project. About fifty little trees have been planted. The reward? A little prayer for Mr. Buck when we pass the grove on our way to Church!

A Valiant Mother

"Goodbye and God bless you!" There they go—Marie, Dave and the baby. They are not travelling in a 1954 car, but in a Democrat pulled by horses. No married couple could be happier, as this is an eventful homeward trip for Marie. But perhaps I had better start at the beginning instead of the end of the story.

Several weeks ago on a Saturday night I was aroused from sleep to take an X-ray. When I arrived in the hospital Marie was having a very large scalp wound sutured; then X-rays had to be taken. She and her husband had been admitted to hospital following a car accident. What struck me was the cheerfulness of Marie—not a sound out of her as she was moved from operating room table to a stretcher, from stretcher to X-ray table. The X-rays showed a

dislocated shoulder and a badly fractured hip. Dave had a fractured leg, also. Marie's shoulder fracture was reduced and she was put back to bed.

Added to all this, Marie was eight months pregnant. When she discovered the extent of her injuries there was no moaning and groaning but, "Sister, isn't it wonderful that all this happened to me and nothing happened to the baby?" It isn't Marie's first child, it is her eighth; she isn't rich, but poor. Her first request was to borrow a rosary, which she said every night. Sunday evening Marie was sent into the city hospital to have her hip pinned and if necessary a Caesarian operation. Dave remained with us one week, then went home on crutches.

About four weeks later Marie arrived back on crutches and gave birth to a beautiful boy. After ten very happy days, for they truly were, she made her Easter Duty—"got all fixed up" as she expressed it. They live far from the church. Many of the town, ladies who had heard of her brought small gifts and visited her. Now she is on her way home, 24 miles distant, and so excited because "you know, Sister, it is two months since we have all been together"

Field at Home Vol. XXX, No. 4, December 1954, p 8

Our Christmas Crib

As the mighty oak has its beginning in the small acorn, so also many an enterprise springs from a small idea. That small idea was the origin of our outdoor crib. This is how it happened. Sister Superior said, "I have been thinking a great deal lately of how we can help put Christ into Christmas. Have you any ideas?" Through a long evening, we talked and debated over many suggestions. Generally, it was felt than an Outdoor Crib would best accomplish our purpose.

Having progressed this far, the next point was how to reach the desired goal. Sister R. was to go to the City the following week, so it was decided that she make enquiries and, if possible, bring back with her all the necessary material. Sister contacted many companies in person and by 'phone until the project began to look hopeless. As a last resort, she approached the Hook Advertising Company. Yes, they had something that might serve the purpose. It was a poster which consisted of nine pieces, and when erected, measured eighteen by twenty feet. They would be pleased to send it to Edson

gratuitously. The offer was gratefully accepted.

Now that we had come this far, the next question was how could it be set up? Mr. Grant, the engineer, was called in on the discussion. He suggested a sign board in the corner of the front lawn to which the pieces might be pasted. The paper hangers would do that. As we had no lumber, we asked Father Shalla if he had any he could spare. Father generously donated the required kind and amount, Mr. Grant built the background, and on the vigil of Christmas, the paper hangers arrived. It was so windy they could not handle the paper. Many prayers went flying up to heaven that the wind might calm down. It did. The men made a beautiful job of the hanging and donated their services.

The next people to come on the scene were the Outdoor Crib, Edson electricians who placed three large spot lights over the scene. Pine trees and bushes were gathered and placed around it. A snow flurry gave the desired results. As you can see by the photo, the figures were life size. We were all so pleased with our project and many people who saw it must have been, too, because one of them took the trouble to take the photo and sent it to us—gratis!

Catholic Hospital Conference of Alberta

“A change is as good as a rest”. Though we were not looking for either, we were told we would be attending the Catholic Hospital Conference of Alberta—we, being an office worker and a nurse—both greenhorns at public meetings. This one proved to be our introduction to some Communities of Sisters we did not know, seeing changes in the habits of others, and hearing of changes still to be made. It was entertaining and educating to try to attach names to the various Sisterhoods. Meeting old friends was a happy experience. The programme was an interesting one. Especially did we benefit from the Administration Group discussion. Here, to her dismay, my companion found she was to be the leader of a group. Try as she would to get out of it, she still found herself up on the platform, speaking over the “mike”, and presenting the results of our discussion. At these “Group” meetings we found the answers to many of our questions. Here, too, we found that our problems were also the problems of others, and together we simplified them.

During the Conference we were addressed by the Mayor and by the Chaplain of the Conference. The

gist of the Mayor's address was “Measure yourself by what you give to others”. The Chaplain, in a booster talk, said, “Sisters, in general, are all talking about how busy they are. Yes, we know it is true”. And he went on to say, “Why shouldn't you be? Isn't that why you dedicated your life—to be busy for the Lord—to die if necessary?” You did a good job, Father. Many of us, we feel sure, re-dedicated our lives to God and thanked Him that we were busy. And we from Edson were quite agreed that the two days of convention had passed very quickly and that Conferences were not such bad ideas after all.

Catechism Classes

Religious instruction classes opened again in September and about sixty children enrolled—which shows the growth of our small town of Edson. We have two classes—the Juniors, from four to nine years, and the Seniors, from nine to thirteen. This year, we are taking for our programing, in both groups, the Study of Prayer and the Promises of the Sacred Heart. This we are supplementing with picture stories from Father Heeg's chart “Jesus and I”, and with project books on the same subjects.

Field at Home Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, January 1957, p 5

Tonsils: One Half Dozen

It isn't every day that we do tonsillectomies on three little boys from one family, but that is just what we did this morning commencing at 9 a.m. Yesterday afternoon, Mr. Mitchell drove in from Bickerdike in his big truck and left Roy, 6 years, Bobbie, 4 years, and Keith, 3 years, with us. Roy, being the eldest, was in charge of his brothers. The little Mitchells are not strangers to us, all three were born in this hospital. Furthermore, Roy and Keith had been in for several days a few weeks ago, but this was Bobbie's first time away from home and that first separation from Mummy and Daddy is usually quite something to remember. Normally though, the first hour in the hospital is the worst, then, tears are dried and all troubles are forgotten. Parents find it hard to believe that their children forget them so quickly, but that is just what happens as the youngsters lose themselves in the mystery of their new surroundings.

As the wee fellows were being undressed, Roy's first words were, “This is my final and last chance to come to this hospital.” “But Roy”, said Sister, “we

will be lonesome if you don't come back". "Well", Roy conceded, "maybe I could come back another time, but just one more time". The first thing each little fellow did when he got into bed was to open his big box of popcorn and eagerly search for the prize in store for him. There were many joyous squeals as Roy found a box of crayons, Bobbie a green plastic mask and Keith, the baby, a blue plastic bracelet and ring. Then it was suppertime and the Mitchell brothers were certainly ready for it. Roy, undecided whether to eat his cake or have two glasses of milk, was helped by the nurse to choose the latter. When supper was over he called Sister to get him a bigger pair of pajamas as the ones he wore were too tight around the waist. Sister assured him that when his stomach got rested there would be plenty of room.

Nine a.m. came all too soon. Roy had already informed his brothers that the only thing about the hospital they would not like was getting needles, so they took the needles philosophically. The first in line for the operating room was Bobbie who, besides his tonsils, had some baby teeth for extraction.

When Bobbie was carried back to bed, Roy looked him over and decided that the bit of blood around his mouth was due to the teeth which had been pulled. Both Roy and Keith agreed that Bobbie looked like an elephant with "that tube coming out of his nose." Next, Roy instructed Keith, "Now, don't be frightened because you don't have to have any teeth out." Finally, it was Roy's turn. Before going to the O.R. he advised Sister not to leave his little brothers because "they may get up, so pull the sides up on the bed so they'll be safe." The rest of the day was very quiet as the trio slept off the anaesthetic.

When Mummy and Daddy came the following afternoon there were three happy little boys awaiting them, all talking at once and each with his own story to tell. They promised to come back to see the Sisters, but only to visit, unless, as Roy said, "I would maybe fall off my horse and break my arm."

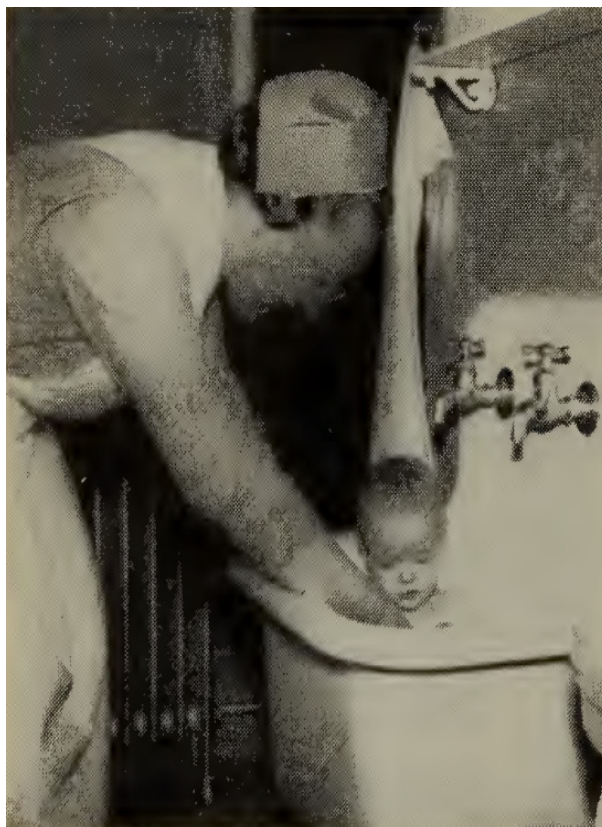
Sister B. Knopic

Field at Home Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, January 1957, p 15-19

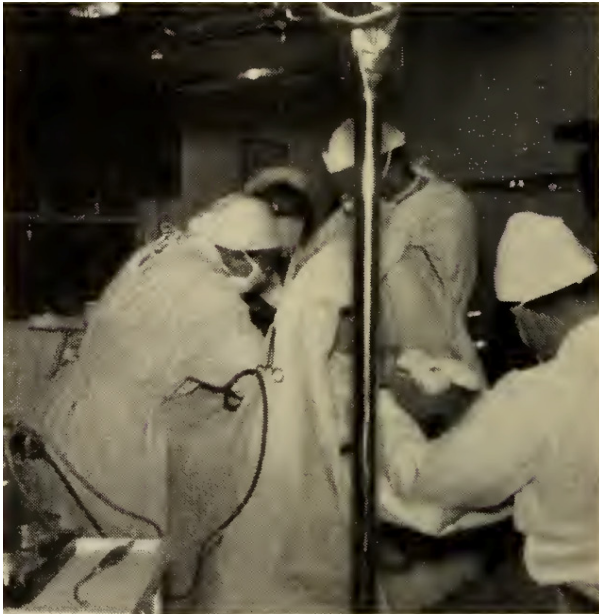
A Day in an S.O.S. Hospital

"The Catholic Hospital in the mission field stands out as one of the highest expressions and living symbols of Christian Charity. It has always ranked in the vanguard of our missionary efforts, often blazing the way to the return to or the acceptance of the true Faith. For as Pius IX said to Ozanam and his worthy disciples; 'When the world has ceased to believe in miracles and sermons, it still believes in charity,' ... In accordance with their missionary ideal, the Sisters of Service has gone to the fringe of the country to minister to the sick and dying. Moreover the rule of their institute prohibits them from accepting large institutions ... It is essentially a missionary endeavour. Pioneer work is the special calling of the sisters who have taken as the motto of their life the words of the Master; 'I have come to serve.'"

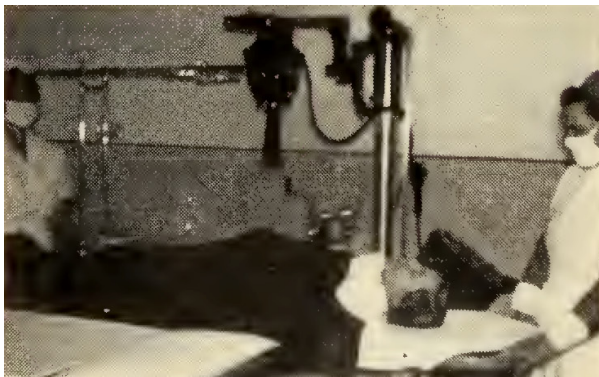
Father Daly in *The Field at Home*
January 1927



Starting the day with a splash. Sister Knopic gives a morning bath to a small patient in St. John's Hospital, Edson



Each day brings moments of intense concentration in the Edson operating room. Sister Knopic assists the surgeon.



Sister Pelletier and Mis Kenopic wheel next patient into OR



Sister Daly, the laboratory technician in Edson does a blood count.

Field at Home Vol. XXXIII, No. 1, January 1957, p 26-27

EDSON REVISITED

After twelve years in the East, I have returned to Edson and find that the town has really grown since 1945. While there are now six Ghost towns in the Coal Branch area, just seventy miles West of Edson, the population of Edson itself has almost doubled in these twelve years. About half the homes in the town are new. There is also a new Federal Building and most of the shops and business houses have taken on a new look.

From our hospital, we can see Highway 16, just one block south. This highway has been resurfaced with blacktopping from Lloydminster to Jasper town, a distance of 391 miles. Mr. Charles Grant of Edmonton made the first motor trip to Jasper National Park, back in 1923, in a Model T, covering the 200 miles in about 16 hours. Just a few weeks ago, the same gentleman made the same trip in 4½ hours. The Super-Continental has also shortened the Trans-Canada trip by rail. Atom bombs, diesel engines, antibiotics and automation have changed many things, including statistics, travelling time, health and employment problems.

On my arrival at the hospital on September 21st, I was initiated into the art of admitting patients. That started a jumble of letters running through my brain such as "ABC", "DVA", "WCB", "DMA" et cetera, *et cetera*. I know from recent conversations with my sister's children, David and Ann, that although "2 and 2" are still "4", the old arithmetic has been revolutionized for the present generation. No longer do scholars worry about additions, subtractions or divisions. Now, I am told, they learn the "plus signs", "take-aways" and "guzintas". This last I learned, after much questioning, is a corruption of "goes into's". And here I am, at my age, learning a new alphabet.

But all is not worry, frustration or confusion. We have our little amusing and pleasant interludes. A mother brought her young son in for a minor operation. Jimmy, who had been discharged and was watching for his mother to come for him, saw the lady leaving. He politely reminded her, "Lady, you forgot your little boy." And a few weeks ago we had a flash back on English history, admitting patients with the names, "Nelson, Gladstone, Bacon and Wesley. My fourth day here was a record breaker

with the greatest number of admissions ever made in one day. My first week-end, we admitted seven patients who were victims of three different car accidents. A few days later we had three boys, all 4 years of age, for herniotomy operations; then, three little girls for tonsillectomies on the same day. But everything doesn't come in threes.

The year 1955 was the biggest year in the history of St. John's Hospital, but glancing over the figures for 1956 to date, this year should exceed last year. Much of this is due to the great number of patients coming from Hinton, which is about 55 miles further West. Many newcomers to the Province are working on the construction of the North West Pulp and Power Company buildings.

On November 3rd, mining operations stopped for the last time at Luscar in the Coal Branch. Luscar is the 6th Ghost Town in as many years in this area; a disappearing market for coal caused this strip mine, the town's only industry, to be closed. Luscar, and the other five once bustling towns, are deserted and silent monuments to Alberta's great coal history.

About half the houses in Edson have been erected in the last twelve years. They are modern homes, some brick but most of them frame, painted white, blue, red, green, buff or other bright colours. The new Post Office, at the corner of 5th and Main streets, occupies the first floor of the Federal Building, a modern two-storey, cement block building with green metal trim around doors and windows. As I recall it, back in '45, the Post Office was crowded into a corner of Low's Hardware store. The buff stucco building on the north-west corner of 5th and Main, is the Edson Medical Centre, which houses the offices of our three medical men. Doctors Begg, Crawford and Lee, as well as the town dentist. Dr. Robins. We also boast of new elementary and high schools and a new Sacred Heart Church. On the site of the old church there now stands the new Monastery of the Redemptorist Fathers.

Both church and monastery were built, for the most part, by the volunteer labour of Fathers and parishioners. In the hospital a new X-ray machine and a rebuilt and re-equipped laboratory are among the many improvements. But all the modernity, all the antibiotics and automation in the world cannot change the ways of nature and babies still come as they did in Grandmother's day. Mother Nature still

has the final word in other things too. Industrialism has not made any difference to the blue skies of Alberta. We still pause in reverent awe before the sunrises, the sunsets, the chinook arch, all the beauties which are the hall-mark of the Eternal Father, His work and His alone!

Sister Evelyn Tunney

Field at Home Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, January 1958, p 6-7

THE EDSON STORY

By Sister M. Knechtel

What is St. John's Hospital, Edson? It is a small, general hospital. And what is a small general hospital? It's a large general hospital in miniature except that the patients never become mere numbers. They are part of the hospital family; their ups and downs, joys and sorrows are woven into the fabric of every hospital day. Many of them are born, have their own babies and, finally, die in their community hospital. When the hospital is Catholic their spiritual ailments are given equal care and attention with the physical. St. John's serves a far-flung area whose outer fringes are sparsely settled. It is from these outer fringes that stray sheep often come to us. When for years one lives many miles away from church and priest, it is so easy to wander far from the Faith and so difficult to find one's way back.

There was John, for instance, well over 70 years. From time to time a heart condition brought him to us for days or weeks. Everyone loved him. When he was well enough to be up and around the other patients looked forward to his visits, his cheerfulness, his ready stories. The children, especially, were his friends. And what a boon to the staff when John's stories and pictures kept the small fry quiet and content. The poor old heart, though, was not getting younger or stronger and John was advised that it would be well to straighten his accounts with God. He took the advice, thank God, and knew a deep peace. A few days later John was discharged from the hospital; he returned to his rooming-house and was found dead.

But it is not all gloom, death and death-bed conversions in our hospital. Often and often there is the thrill of a Baptism. We had one young couple, barely out of their teens, whose happiness and excitement on the arrival of their first and completely perfect (of course) baby was quite contagious. The baby had to be baptized

immediately! And what a family affair! The parents, just bursting with pride, the grandparents, nearly bursting and the great grandmother, a patient at the time and a non-Catholic, who was doing her own share of bursting with pride too.

The children are nearly always with us. Noisy, self centred, frequently unmanageable and completely lovable, they don't miss a trick and they make life interesting for everyone around them. The Indian and *Metis* children have an uncanny and almost instinctive knowledge of nature and the things of nature, birds, animals and fish. Then there is the more sophisticated type who has started to school and who can usually be depended on to give us some good laughs. One such youngster described her new teacher as "a painted savage" when she was only a modern young lady.

Each day brings its quota of admissions and discharges. Accidents are plentiful in this area, both on the highways and in the woodlands, and all require patient, watchful care. Often the priest and doctor work side by side, each with his sacred duty to perform. And in the general scheme the religious nurse has a vital role; assisting the doctor, caring for the patient, consoling and encouraging the relatives. Actually, every member of a hospital staff has a vital role, no matter what it may be, and a unique opportunity to live completely the glorious doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Field at Home Vol. XXXV, No. 2, April 1959, p 13-15

Patience and Patients (or Trials of a hospital secretary)

By Sister Evelyn Tunney

"You nuns and your tranquil lives!" these are words spoken in haste and envy by a woman now forgotten, but "the memory lingers on". Yes, nuns lives are fairly tranquil, but not because we haven't many reasons and causes for their being otherwise. Rather, because of them we build up a resistance to them, and all without the use of tranquilizers.

We are not all born placid. I, for one, had to learn the hard way—by trial and error. A picture of Mount Vesuvius in our front parlour, back home, used to intrigue me as a child, perhaps because I, too, was often in eruption. But thanks to God and the guidance of a wonderful mother, and after many

years and eruptions, I can now cloak my Vesuvius temper with a smile of tranquility, grit my teeth and face each day serenely.

Today it is quite a game to keep serene outwardly amid the multifarious forms, letters, reports *et cetera*, and at the same time deal with the regular or irregular routine of the smoothly run hospital. Maybe the responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the manufacturers of tranquilizers, making an effort to boost sales, or maybe with the pulp industry in nearby Hinton instigating a wider use of their commodity.

Take for instance the ordinary procedure of admitting a patient, and every patient has to be admitted. Now here comes Mr. March, (that's not his name but is very apt as he came in like a lion and went out like a lamb). He is an old man, if you call eighty years old. In this year of A.D. 1959 he is an old man full of infirmities as is shown on the doctor's admission slip which Mr. March carries with him. He labours up the few steps with the assistance of two "do-it-yourself" walking sticks which he has, no doubt, whittled from trees in his woods. He moves slowly and when he has seated himself on the couch in the waiting room, I go to him with the necessary paper, forms and pencil to get his information.

"Where do you live?" I ask him.

"Wolf Creek" he growls back.

"Do you own the property?"

"You don't need to know that." This time he snarls.

I explain to him that, indeed, I don't need to know, but the Government of Alberta wants this information from all patients. The rest of the information was relinquished less belligerently and from there on we got along fairly well. The request for his signature on Form 520 concerning Hospital Benefits presented a little problem—that is for a minute or so, until we got organized. Mr. March does not wear glasses, and does not see very well. He handed me a large magnifying glass, about six inches in diameter, to hold so he could see where and what he was signing. During those few minutes I felt a kinship to Sherlock Holmes.

Later that same day Sister Guest had occasion to bring a message to one of the men in the same ward. Mr. March called her over. He wanted her to put his money in safe-keeping. Sister, as is customary, started to count out the money—"One,

two, three—" she started, but he interrupted with "Shush, not so loud". And no wonder, for he had seven hundred dollars and he was smart enough not to want the other men to know just how much he had. Also, being a smart man, he was a good patient and he made satisfactory progress. In about a week's time he was discharged home. On leaving hospital he came to the office for his wallet. Again, as is customary, I started to count out his money to him, (and this time there was nobody within hearing distance), but he said "You don't need to count it Sister, I trust you because you wear that ring." He was really grateful to the nurses and doctors for the care and kindness he had received.

As it takes all kinds of people to make a world, so it takes all kinds of people to fill a hospital. I could say that all the patients are good. But when I say that, I am reminded of Doc Anderson, one of our High School teachers, who had a rubber stamp with the word "Good". Every pupil's report was stamped "Good" but we were always told, "There are two kinds of good: some good and no good—so let your conscience be your guide."

The telephone was a wonderful invention of Alexander Graham Bell. Much good has been accomplished by the proper use of this innocent-looking piece of material—and it too can supply opportunities for acquiring patience or patients. Of course, in Alberta we have the Alberta Government Telephones which can be just as useful or exasperating as the Bell variety. It is not so much the telephone as the strange voices that come over the wires. For instance, I admit a little baby and ten minutes later, while the nurse is still getting the patient to bed and I am still typing the necessary documents covering the admission, with Form 520 still incomplete, the telephone rings. I answer, "Hospital". A voice says, "How is my baby?" And I say, "Who is your baby?" "But I just brought my baby in" says the voice.

So I explain to the voice that it will be a while before there can possibly be any change in the baby's condition. Now there's the phone again. This time I hear, "Will you please deposit thirty-five cents". Then a male voice says, "Just a minute till I find it". After some scrounging around in a pants pocket I can hear the jingle of the coins as they fall into the slot. "Can I speak to Mary Buckteeth?" (Mary Buckteeth has just been brought in with a broken leg.) So I tell this voice that Mary cannot come to

the phone but would he like to leave a message for her. Again the voice, "Oh no, I just wanted to ask her how she is".

Of course, hospital life has its more pleasant moments too. Often enough when the children are allowed out of bed they find their way to the office where they are quite interested in the typewriter and adding machine. Some are not strangers to the typewriter. One little boy told us, "My father writes letters to Blue Henry on his typewriter. (We interpret "Blue Henry" to be "Blowey Henry", an Edmonton firm). Then there was the little boy who thought Sister Guest was a nurse. When Sister explained that the nurses wore white aprons he asked her if she could cook. Sister admitted that she did not cook either. Looking up at Sister solemnly the little lad asked, "Then what are you hanging around a hospital for?". One of our very recent toddlers told about his sister who had a fall and confusion set in. So before confusion sets in I close, wishing one and all a happy, happy Easter.



Sister Tunney and a young patient.

Field at Home Vol. XXXV, No. 4, October 1959, p 16-17

"ME SAID I"

By Sister E. Tunney

Pediatrics in Edson Hospital is a small department for small people in which, oftener than not, there is "no room in the inn." Usually the children's ward, like the Scotchman's taxi, has over 100% occupancy and a waiting list. It is amazing just how many things can go wrong with little people; chest conditions, lacerations, burns, broken limbs, poisoning, to mention only a few.

At times, not often, all is quiet and serene as in Longfellow's Children's Hour. At other times pandemonium reigns or rains. Once when the latter condition prevailed I had occasion to go to the ward on business. On attempting to quieten one little baby I was told by a belligerent three-year old, "That's not your baby. That's Sister Allen's."

One morning, a few months ago, I had the first of many encounters with little Susan. As I was going down the corridor to deliver a message I heard a small, quaint voice which piped, "See what me's got out." What "Me" had out was the thumb of her right hand. Susan looked not unlike an Egyptian mummy wrapped, as she was, in bandages from her waist up. All I could see that was human was a pair of blue eyes, a tiny mouth, a nose and the famous thumb. Susan was badly burned when her clothing caught fire from matches she was lighting. Her parents bundled her up and brought her to us by car, a distance of 45 miles.

To most of the Sisters at Edson Susan was no stranger. Just over six years ago she was a premature baby weighing in at 2 pounds 11 ounces. For 22 days she was kept in the incubator and was discharged when she was seven weeks old; she weighed five pounds and one half ounce. Less than two weeks after her discharge she was readmitted with a chest condition from which, however, she recovered rapidly. "What me's got out" did not stay out very long, because our little patient used the free thumb to loosen her other bandages. Susan proved the truth of the proverb which says, "Necessity is the mother of invention." It was amazing to see how quickly and easily she substituted her feet for her hands in opening drawers and helping herself to candy from the table.

Susan suffered greatly, as you may well imagine. Sometimes we wondered if she would really pull through. Naturally, she capitalized on her illness when she could. She tried tantrums to get her own way but Sister Knechtel was firm with her. Without lessening Susan's affection for her, Sister won the child over to proper behaviour. Childlike, Susan had a great curiosity and never failed to ask what was in every package she saw, regardless of the owner. However, when her neighbours sent her a lovely bride doll, nicely wrapped in gift paper, ribbon and seals, she was in no hurry to satisfy her curiosity. Picking the stickers off carefully and deliberately she said, "Me wants these 'tamps for Sister 'Nectel."

We all tried to break her of the habit of saying "Me" instead of "I"; perseveringly we asked "Who?" Sometimes she was difficult to understand; once when asked to repeat she said, "Me said I."

It was not an uncommon sight to see Susan leaning against Dr. Crawford like a puppy against its master. The doctor liked to hear her talk and one day in the operating room he asked her if she could feed herself. She mumbled something and then said, "It's no darn wonder me can't with all these bandages."

Susan was transferred to the University Hospital in Edmonton for a skin graft after 41 days with us. When saying goodbye she told us, "Me going to Edmonton to have a 'kin graft." We had another very interesting case; a five month old baby girl with a fractured femur. Her leg was set and put in traction and within three weeks she was discharged. She was a happy little baby, never fretful or cranky. In closing I would suggest that if any of our readers are planning on fracturing a leg, do it early, say during the first 12 months. You will then be assured of a speedy recovery like our little Lorraine.

Field at Home Vol. XXXVI, No. 1, January 1960, p 18-19
FROM MY CORNER

By Sister Dorothy Daley

The most obvious thing about my corner is that it isn't a corner. It's a narrow little room sandwiched between the sewing-room and a store-room on the ground floor of St. John's Hospital, Edson. It is the laboratory. But the drama of life, with its laughter and pathos, can come into any space, however small. It comes to my little lab. One sunny morning a young man of about twenty came to the lab for some blood work. A letter I had received from home the day before lay on the ledge and, with it, a picture of my little niece. I noticed the patient looking sadly at the picture.

"My niece's picture seems to make you sad," I said.

"She is very like my sister Elizabeth," he said with evident emotion.

He looked out the window for a few minutes then told this story. It was several years ago—on a Saturday when Mom was extra busy. She asked me to baby-sit with Elizabeth but I wanted to go out with the gang. So I was really mean to my sister. She asked

me to play house. I said no and told her to keep quiet. Then I just stared out the window in a fit of sulks. I decided to read and Elizabeth climbed up on my knee, "Please David, read the pictures to me.

"No, go away," I said crossly. She cried a little then and running to the door, she said, with big tears in her eyes, "All right David, if you won't play with me I'll find another brother." I watched her run down the street a few yards. Sure enough, there was Dougie in the big window of his home across the street. He smiled and beckoned to Elizabeth to come and play with him. She darted out. When she was halfway across she saw cars coming from three directions, she heard the squealing of brakes. That was all she heard. I heard the jamming of brakes, too, I saw the crowd gathering but I couldn't do a thing. A policeman came and asked for Mom. I was rushed upstairs and a neighbour cared for me.

That night I was tucked in bed as usual but I couldn't sleep. It was all my fault, but how could I tell Mom and Dad. I'd have felt better if I could have told them. I got up to listen to the folks in the living room; Mom was saying, "Elizabeth ran away from David. The neighbours saw her run out of the house and dash across the street between cars." Dad said that Elizabeth had died instantly and had not felt any pain. No one blamed me but I was full of shame and guilt. One night a week later when Mom had finished the dishes she sat in the big chesterfield chair. I put my head on her lap and told her everything.

Mom leaned her head back for a long time. Then she said, "David, I know you are really sorry for what you have done. But Elizabeth is happy, she has gone back home to heaven to Jesus.

Now you tell Jesus all about it and promise that if He sends you a baby sister you will never be mean again." Weeks and months passed. I prayed every day and asked the Sisters at our local hospital to be sure to phone Mom as soon as a baby girl came with our name on it. I was pretty young, you know. Then it happened; we got the baby sister. Her name is Carol. I have three other sisters and two brothers now, but I guess you can understand Sister, that Carol always has been and always will be first with me.

Field at Home Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, April 1961, p 8-9

IN EDSON AN S.O.S. NURSE SPENDS HER FIRST NIGHT IN WHITE

By Sister Joan Schafhauser

[Ed. note: Until December 8, 1960, S.O.S. nurses wore gray chambray habits with white aprons and the usual gray cap.]



S.O.S. nursing staff in Edson. Let to right: Sisters B. Jackson, K. Allen, M. Knechtel, J. Schafhauser, B. DeMarsh and M. Roberts.

It was December 8th, an immaculate feast, when we donned our immaculate white. With a little more fervour I thanked Him for having clothed me in this uniform and asked that I may be a religious not in name and habit only, but that I may wear it for His greater glory.

8.30 p.m. I began the night rounds. My first few steps were retraced immediately to answer the phone. "Sister, an accident." My response was the same in white as in grey—the stretcher was wheeled to the ambulance entrance, the operating room was set up—Dextran on hand—and they arrived, the victims of a terrible car accident. Leaning close to one I said the Act of Contrition while his lips moved in silent response.

9.00 p.m. I accompanied the Doctor as he made his final rounds in the children's ward to check his tonsillectomies for the next day. "Is this tomorrow yet?" asked Rickie in wide-eyed expectation of the big day! After listening to Peter's chest the Doctor said, "How would you like to get up and walk tomorrow?" "Well," hesitating . . . "it all depends on her," as he pointed a chubby finger at me.

9.30 p.m. On to the men's ward to see the elderly gentlemen from 90 years up. "Sister," called blind Mr. Sharr who, at 95, is in the stage of blissful senility, "what is this other arm doing here in bed with me?" I assured him calmly that it was his own paralyzed arm he was holding up to me. "Well, I'll be damned," he grinned back.

12.00 Midnight. The new day began with the sound of a car making a fast stop at the hospital entrance. I turned the lights on and rushed to the door as Mr. Sand panted, "Its almost here!" It was quite chilly as Mike was born but he responded well to the chilly air. I wrapped him up and gave him to Mrs. Sand as the proud father carried both inside. My "white" was a little the worse for this adventure.

3.00 a.m. All was very quiet now as I crossed by the front stairs. I glanced into the still darkness outside. There against the window was little old Mrs. Kean. She rapped on the glass as she noticed me. I hoped I could help her, whatever she wanted. "Sister," she was breathing fast, "we have no phone and my husband is very sick. Please get the doctor." She was calm and resigned as the doctor drove her home to her sick one.

5.00 a.m. The sun was rising now and the sky ablaze with red. The patients in St. John's had come through their night of sickness. I prayed, as I started my morning work, "Help me see Thee in the persons of the sick and let them see Thee in me."

Field at Home Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2, April 1962, p 3-8

THE EDSON STORY

From the *Field at Home* files with editorial comment

"Disaster at Edson"—"Pipeline Section Shredded by Blast"—When these and similar headlines appeared across the country some time ago the town of Edson was suddenly spotlighted into prominence. The survivors of the disaster were brought to St. John's Hospital in Edson which is operated by the Sisters of Service. Further on in this issue Sister Tunney of the hospital staff tells of the impact of the disaster on the hospital. We believe our readers will be interested in a flashback history, from The Field at Home files, of the work of the S.O.S. in Edson. Edson, Alberta, was 15 years old when the Sisters of Service opened St. John's Hospital in 1926.

The town was established in 1911 when the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway was still under construction as it pushed its transcontinental line westward. In what was, at the time, high-pressure advertising, Edson was hailed as the "Gateway to the Last Great West." At that time also the government was cutting a colonization road north to Grande Prairie from Edson, a distance of some 250 miles. The road is still known as the Grande Prairie Trail.

It is a far cry from the Edson of the frontier days to the bustling activity of today's town, just as it is a far cry from the abandoned 15-bed hospital of 1926 to the modern, well-equipped 45-bed hospital of 1962.

January 1927: Edson, Alberta is our most recent foundation. Edson, a divisional point on the main line of the C.N.R. between Edmonton and Jasper, is an admirable location for a hospital. South of this point there are some 5,000 miners in the coal-fields of the Alberta Coal Branch. On December 8, 1926, His Grace Archbishop O'Leary blessed our foundation. . . . Our only fear is that before long the 15 beds now available will not be able to meet the needs of that isolated population. April, 1931:

C.N.R. TRAIN WRECKED NEAR EDSON

Train No. 1 thrown from track as car hits split rail—

Five coaches hurled down embankment—29 people injured

On Sunday morning last Train No. 1 had left the Edson yards only a few minutes when the air was pierced with the shrieks of the wreck signals. The wrecking crew arrived at the shops in record time, and a relief train was made up when it was learned that No. 1 had jumped the tracks and that there might be people injured.

The Sisters of Service in charge of St. John's Hospital, Edson, won the unstinted praise of those brought to their care. As soon as they were notified by Dr. Tiffin that the injured were on their way to the hospital, the Sisters made immediate preparations to receive them, although the hospital was full at the time . . . The hospital was a veritable hive of activity as the stretchers and cars bearing the sufferers arrived.

From the *Edson-Jasper Signal*, April 14, 1931

October 1931: His Excellency Most Reverend H. J. O'Leary, Archbishop of Edmonton, and Mr. A. D. McMillan, Mayor of Edson, met at the hospital and each cut a ribbon which was drawn across the main entrance. The new St. John's Hospital was open to the public. Father Landrigan, pastor of Edson, acted as Chairman and introduced the various speakers. His Excellency outlined the history of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson, and told of the sad condition which existed prior to their arrival. "I remember some ten years ago when I first came to Edson, your hospital was in ruins and a large number of people, probably three or four thousand in this vicinity, were practically without hospitalization.

Children were born under conditions which were a disgrace to modern civilization; the sick had to be sent to Edmonton in order to receive proper medical attention . . . now the people of Edson have a splendid new hospital with equipment equal to any large city hospital."

Reverend Father Daly, C.Ss.R., who was present for the opening, also spoke of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson five years ago. Though beginnings seemed so dark, the Sisters had carried on, trusting in a brighter future and their hopes had now been realized. Superintendent McDonald of the Canadian National Railways . . . very pointedly marked the contrast between the present-day institution and the few spasmodic efforts that had been made in the past to establish a hospital.

January 1936: Four children were admitted, all suffering from scurvy. It seems their diet all winter has been potatoes, potatoes and more potatoes. All four will soon be healthy again.

April 1939: Our old Indian patient died. He had been pretty repulsive but he did make apparently fervent acts of contrition, faith and love before he died. On hearing of his death his sister came in. The first thing she asked for was his pipe. When we gave her the coveted souvenir she sat down in the office and had a good smoke. Falling trees and power-saws; rock slides and stooping posture! All add up to a high percentage of accident patients from the mines and from the logging camps which operate in the area during the winter months.

April 1942: At present I have one of the men's wards where the patients are practically all ambulatory—

cut fingers, bruised arms and torn ligaments—just enough to keep them in the hospital and not enough to make them miserable. I am getting experience on how to approach these men about receiving the Sacraments. Most of them are willing enough and their simplicity, at times, is touching. It seems that some spend just enough time here to make their peace with God before returning to the logging camps.

An S.O.S. hospital is many things—hospital, social work centre, and, sometimes, a hostel. So many calls are made on the Sisters and it is right that it should be so. Besides the ordinary little things like supplying meals, clothing, an occasional bed, one of the Sisters has been giving the Canadian Red Cross course in Health, Home Nursing and Emergencies to a group of Edson women.

January 1946: On Sundays we go to Haddock to teach catechism, that is, some of us go. On these Sunday trips we can always expect the unexpected. If you are good at "pushing over", if you don't mind bumps, if your constitution can stand back-seat churning, and if you don't mind six where three should be, then you have a few of the qualifications for a Sunday passenger in Father's car. Gradually a great change took place in the hospital field. In 1926 a hospital was a strictly charitable institution. By 1947 charity was a social thing and a hospital was expected to be a highly efficient business institution. New trends in the hospital field presented new problems but the spirit of the Catholic hospital had to be maintained—caring for the sick in a Christ-like spirit of charity.

April 1948: Life's little tragedies frequently follow impassable roads and delayed train service. A young man and his wife came here one afternoon recently looking for Father and carrying a baby. I asked, "Is the baby ill?" Big tears rolled down the father's face as the mother replied, "No, the baby is dead."

The baby had died during the night. With the roads as they were the parents knew that neither the doctor nor the RCMP could get to them for some days. They decided to walk to Edson. They were picked up and driven part way. The mother had carried the little body all the way. Being Catholics, they sought out Father who took over for them. They were so grateful that the baby had been baptized. They were resigned too, but parent-like, deeply hurt at their loss.

In 1948 a contract was signed with the Canadian Red Cross whereby Red Cross supplied the hospital with whole blood and dried plasma free of charge and the hospital and doctor looked after the administration of the blood and plasma, also free of charge. During the years the hospital had been acquiring new equipment: an incubator, a resuscitator, new O.R. equipment and, in this year, a 100 milliamper X-Ray machine which necessitated re-wiring in the X-Ray Department.

January 1949: Sister Wymbs has gone to the Mother House and another Edson milestone is passed. Twenty-one years ago Sister Wymbs opened Edson Hospital with little of either money or help, but with a great deal of faith and courage. The early days were hard indeed, as pioneering is always hard; the generosity and self-sacrifice of the first Sisters was often heroic. Sister Wymbs leaves us after years of devoted service. She is happy in the knowledge that the old frame-building of many inconveniences has given place to a modern, smoothly-running, well-equipped hospital which ranks high among the small hospitals in the Province.

April 1952: Judging from activities within a radius of about fifty miles, a pulp mill, a cement plant and huge derricks dotting the country-side to herald the beginning of an oil era, Edson will undoubtedly become a thriving centre of industry. It is also rumoured that the road from Peers to the Peace River country will be completed. During the years both individuals and organizations have been generous to the hospital in Edson. The late Dr. M. E. Tiffin, for many years the backbone of the Edson medical staff, donated an Albee-Comper Orthopaedic table to the hospital. The large percentage of patients who are fracture cases made this a particularly welcome gift.

In 1953 the local Kinsmen presented a cheque for \$700 to the hospital toward the purchase of a new anaesthetic machine. The Edson Kinettes gave an electric steam-kettle for the children's ward.

July 1953: About 1910 a little church was built in the very new town of Edson. As the population grew the building became inadequate, and required an addition. The town continued to expand and in 1952 the sod was turned for a new church. The new Sacred Heart Church was ready for Holy Mass in March of this year. Already it is filled to capacity every Sunday.

July 1957: Recently there was an excited rush at the front door as a slightly wild-eyed young man appeared with a carton on either arm. We could not see any reason for excitement and anyway the cartons should have been delivered at the back door — or so we thought. The contents were rather special though. Each carton contained a baby girl, each baby weighed seven pounds, two ounces. The mother was admitted a little later. Mother-like she had insisted on her husband bringing the babies in first to be checked by the doctor.

In 1959 the Edson Branch of the Canadian Legion gave the hospital a Hoyer Patient Lifter. Doctors, Sisters and other staff members are delighted with the lifter which eliminates the necessity of lifting and eases back-strain.

April 1961: On December 8, 1960 we donned our white uniforms for the first time. It seemed odd to be donning white again, I had just become accustomed to being a gray nurse. But I prayed a little prayer that the white would be worn always for His greater glory and the good of souls. And so the Edson story goes — all of life's joys, sorrows, hopes and fears are met in the small hospital, perhaps in a more intimate manner than in larger institutions. The small hospitals are rapidly giving place to larger, more centralized institutions. Undoubtedly this is a good thing in many ways. It is a good thing provided that patients never become numbers but are always treated with the respect, the courtesy, the Christ-like charity which is their due as human persons, actual or potential members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

Field at Home Vol. 52, No. 4, Winter 1976, p 2-5

Edson, Alberta

GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF THE SISTERS OF SERVICE

On September 12th, 1976, Archbishop Joseph McNeil addressed many local Edson residents, out-of-town friends and clergy on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the arrival of the Sisters of Service in Edson to operate a hospital which at that time was the only hospital between Edmonton, Alberta, and Kamloops, B.C. In his address His Grace said that the Sisters of Service were always pacemakers and faithful witnesses of the Church in Canada since their beginning in 1922, stating that he had been associated with the Sisters for some years.

His first encounter was in Halifax at the Girls' Residence on Tobin Street, and then at the Port of Halifax assisting the immigrants on arrival in Canada. In a recent visit with the Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care of Alberta, the Honorable G. T. Miniely expressed to His Grace his gratitude for the many years the Sisters of Service have worked in Alberta, and added that the Alberta Government is very desirous to retain voluntary hospitals in the province. In closing Archbishop McNeil said that the Sisters of Service give credibility to the Church by the example of work in the hospital and in the religious contributions to the people in the area.

Day Began With Mass

The day began officially with a Concelebrated Mass by Archbishop J. MacNeil assisted by Rev. George Gunnip, C.Ss.R., Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Rev. C. Landrigan and Rev. J. C. Naphin, C.Ss.R., former pastors, and other visiting clergy. Father Edward Kennedy, C.Ss.R., of Edmonton, gave the homily in which he said he recalls attending Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Winnipeg, with his mother when he was a little boy. It was the first time she had ever seen a Sister of Service though she had followed their founding in the pages of *The Catholic Register* of Toronto, and *The Field at Home*.

Father Kennedy, as a Redemptorist Father, later had "the privilege of living for 10 years with Father George Daly, C.Ss.R., who assisted in the founding of the Sisters of Service, and guided them over 25 years as they pioneered in so many places in Western Canada. The coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson was one of his projects and remained very dear to his heart to the end of his life.

"Today we are celebrating with grateful hearts 50 years of the Sisters of Service here in your midst as a sign presence, as friends and medical workers. The Sisters of Service have, first of all, been a sign in your midst of the Kingdom of God. Follow the Counsels of the Gospel "Since the first years of our Catholic history, women and men have come together to form sisterhoods and brotherhoods in which they would follow the counsels of the Gospel to live in simplicity, in virginity and obedience after the example of the Lord Jesus. Like the Sisters of Service, most of these religious orders have had an apostolic purpose such as serving the sick or educating the young, yet we have always believed that the meaning and purpose of religious life in our Church is not so much the

service these dedicated people give to others in the name of Jesus but rather their presence among us—a presence we call a sign presence. Before they do anything, they are a sign, a reminder to all the people of God that the Kingdom of God has already begun in our midst, and for the sake of the Kingdom, men or, in the case of the Sisters of Service, women have left father and mother and the natural desire and consolation of a family of their own to live by the hope of the Gospel.

"To be such a sign and such a presence among you is the most precious gift of the Sisters of Service to the people of Edson and today together we say 'Thank You.'

"The Sisters of Service finally have, day and night, in season and out of season, given the highest level of nursing service to you. The Sisters have been the anchor and heart of the proficiency of St. John's Hospital. Now Edson is growing and the extension of the hospital's services means that the Sisters, because of limitation of numbers, will not be able to carry the same responsibilities in the future. But the legacy of these Sisters to this hospital, we hope and pray, will remain. Here everyone, whether he comes from Edson or Marlboro or Robb or wherever, has been welcome whether they come in office hours or at three in the morning. We appreciate then not only the professional qualities of these Sisters but the faith in which they have worked.

"In his play *The Amen Corner*, James Baldwin has one of the characters remark, 'I'm just now finding what it means to love the Lord. It ain't all in the singing and the shouting. It ain't all in the reading of the Bible. It ain't even - it ain't even in running all over everybody trying to get to heaven. To love the Lord is to love all His children - all of them, everyone - and suffer with them and rejoice with them and never count the cost.' To have served these many years and never stopped to count the cost is the gift of the Sisters of Service to Edson."

280 Guests at Banquet

After the Mass, the Catholic Women's League catered to a banquet in the Parish Hall for approximately 280 guests. Tributes and congratulations, flowers, telegrams and vocal greetings are too numerous to mention here. Sisters Kathleen Allen, Brigid Knopic, Mary Roberts, Hermine LaMothe, Margaret Guest, Dorothy Daley

and Mary Harding, and former Edson Sisters now missioned in Regina, Fort McMurray, Edmonton, St. Catharines and Toronto, were present. Each Sister was introduced by Les Halliwell, Chairman of the Hospital Board, and availed themselves of the opportunity of recalling some incident or anecdote. Mr. George Keefe, representing the Canadian National Railways, who over a period of 18 years gave the hospital an annual grant under an agreement that the hospital would take care of the sick and injured of their employees and their families, expressed his thanks and good wishes.

Two presentations were made to Sister Kathleen Allen, who accepted them on behalf of the Sisters. The first made by the Chairman of the Hospital Board, Les Halliwell, was a plaque commemorating the Sisters for their contributions to the town and West Central Alberta area, expressing gratitude of all concerned. The second, made by Walter Fowler, was a plaque with a list of clubs, organizations and individuals who contributed to the expenses of the 50th Anniversary, and a donation to install a carpet in the living room of the Sisters' Residence.

Commencing at 4 p.m., there was an Open House at the Residence where refreshments were served by the Hospital Auxiliary to the many people who called in to visit and extend congratulations. Many former residents were back for this occasion and it was like a 'Good Old Home Week' as many memories and anecdotes were exchanged. This was a day to be recalled for years to come.

Field at Home Vol. 54, No. 4, Winter 1978, p 4-6

ST. JOHN'S HEALTH CARE COMPLEX

Sod Turning at Edson, Alberta

By Evelyn Tunney, S.O.S.

At 2 p.m., Wednesday, September 27th, we gathered in front of St. John's Hospital in Edson, Alberta, for the Sod Turning event for our new Health Care Complex. Plans for this project have been about five years in the formation, which has meant many hours of board meetings, meetings with government officials, search and research on architects, planning for the needs of the community for some years to come.

Among those present for the sod-turning were: Sister Kathleen Allen, Director of Nursing; Les Halliwell, Chairman of Hospital Board; Honorable Gordon Miniely, Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care; Sister Brigid Knopic, and Albert Mercier, Administrator. Back row: R. Schmidt, L. Myggland, Administrators, Hinton and Jasper Hospitals; Walter Fowler, Vice-Chairman; Frank Magyar, Hospital Board; Dr. T. Morgan; Mr. L. Bergman of Bergman Construction, and Paul O'Hara, Hospital Board. Mrs. Sarah Harrison, represented the long-time residents of Edson and Sister Mary Roberts, represented the Sisters of Service, who had worked so hard during construction of the present hospital.

Mr. Walter Fowler, Vice-Chairman of the Hospital Board made the introductions of the visiting guests and saw to the successful conclusion of the afternoon's program. There was a minute of silent



The St. John's Health Care Complex

prayer in memory of Miss Frances Ciciarelli, Vice-Chairman of the Edson Nursing Home District No. 25 Board, who was buried a week previously. Frances had been an active member for some years, both of the Hospital Board and the Nursing Home District Board, and it was felt that at this time a fitting tribute should be made.

The Honorable Gordon T. Miniely, Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care, opened the St. John's Health Care Complex, with remarks on this project which began in 1969, and what a lot of time and effort has gone into the complex since that time; with an additional 56 new beds, 50 beds for the nursing home and six beds for day care. An emergency operating room will be part of the new complex. It is estimated the project cost will be slightly over \$4 million.

History of St. John's

Mr. Halliwell, in his remarks reviewed the history of St. John's saying, in part: "The town of Edson and the Victorian Order of Nurses built the Lady Minto Hospital in 1914, at a cost of \$5,000. Built on the same property as the present hospital it was a two-storey frame building with a ten bed capacity.

It served as an emergency centre under the direction of practical nurses and generous women of the town. They nursed patients in the flu epidemic in 1918.

"1921: The VON operated the hospital for one year. It was the only hospital between Edmonton and Kamloops. Miss Reeves and her assistant found the task was too monumental, and they resigned.

"1926: Edson General Hospital was transferred to the Sisters of Service. This abandoned municipal hospital was so dilapidated by this time that snow and rain came through the operating room sky light.

"Extensive repairs were made, the name changed to St. John's in memory of a generous benefactor. Conditions were primitive and limited space made operation very difficult, the stretcher had to be carried up and down stairs. Plans were soon underway for a new two-storey brick building with 38 beds.

"1931: This new hospital was built at a cost of \$90,000. A great debt assumed by the Sisters in those depression years. The old frame building served as the Sisters' residence until 1968.

Buildings Demolished

"1969: A new 50 bed active treatment brick building at the cost of \$1 million was opened in December 1969. The first frame hospital and second brick building were demolished and the new hospital was built on the same lots." In his remarks, Honorable Gordon Miniely, said that construction should be complete in 12 to 13 months. (from The Edson Leader) During the few days I spent in Edson I was witness to the commencement by the construction company of our new complex. From this I would believe this augurs well for a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Edson possibly in December 1979, God willing!

Latest news from Edson

The new construction is coming along well to all outside appearances. They have been working for several weeks on the new medical centre building. Doctor Harrison is building a concrete block, a one-floor building and down on the west corner of the block Lib Joy is building a new funeral home next to his house. In 1971 Edson wanted growth to improve its economy and in 1978 Edson wants to know how to cope with growth. Edson can do it with its many assets of railway, geographic distance from Edmonton, good business centre, wholesale, recreation and governmental centre—and last but not least—Edson's ingenious people.

Field at Home Vol. 56, No. 4, Winter 1980, p 19-20

ST. JOHN'S HEALTH CARE COMPLEX

By E. Tunney, S.O.S.

"She makes friends instantly," said Marion, admiringly and a trifle enviously, indicating a girl who had just waved to the group on the porch as she drove past. "Does she keep them?" asked Cousin Margaret, who often put questions that were hard to answer. "Not very long," confessed Marion, "but then, she always has new ones so it doesn't matter." "It matters a great deal," said Marion's father, looking up from his newspaper. "Friendship that is not lasting is not friendship at all."

This I was to experience on returning to Edson, Alberta, for the opening ceremonies of St. John's Health Care Complex on September 19, 1980. This was a long awaited day which turned out to be a real reunion, renewing friendships of the

people I worked with and for - Cutting the ribbon co-workers, staff, patients, government officials, members of the Alberta Hospital Association, *et al.* All joined with us in celebrating this great event.

The Nursing Home has two entrances: one through the main emergency entrance on 5th Avenue, and there is the second entrance through a door by the greenhouse. There is rhyme, reason and coding behind the riot of vivid colours of green, yellow and blue. The facility is built on a pod system, each pod being practically a complete unit, taking their names from the nursing home districts—Edson House, Hinton House and Coal Branch House. The hallways leading to the facility have been named Jasper Way to incorporate that part of the nursing home district. Edson House, the biggest pod, adjoins the special areas, the beauty parlour, the laundromat and the tuck shop, as well as the occupational therapy centre and the arts and crafts room.

Seeing is Believing

But seeing is believing, and there are many ways of doing just this, and in true Western style socializing along the way. I said to myself, "It is good for me to be here." I met so many of my former associates and friends, like Bob Dowling. I recall the first time I met Bob, who was then our M.L.A. He was riding a horse in the Edson Rodeo. I said aloud, "Oh what a beautiful horse!" At this the rider approached and said, "But oh, the rider r-r-h!"

Doctor Ann Reid, after the unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque, read the wording on the plaque, which said: "St. John's Health Care Complex. Owners: Sisters of Service of Canada, Edson Nursing Home District No. 25. Official opening September 19, 1980 A.D. with the cooperation of the Government of the Province of Alberta celebrating its 75th Anniversary." It continues to name all the participants in the opening ceremonies, the members of the Boards as well as the builders. Dr. Reid pinch-hitted for her husband, Dr. Ian Reid, M.L.A. , who was grounded by fog in Edmonton. Les Halliwell, Board Chairman, and Bob Dowling unveiled the plaque bearing the names of all the Sisters of Service who have worked in Edson since the community came here in 1926.

Gifts Presented

The Hospital Board had decided to recognize some of the people who had put in so much work on the construction. They remembered Frances Ciciarelli, who had been a very active member of the Nursing Home Board until her death. Frances was well known in the district for her ceramic work and Art Ciciarelli was asked whether it would be possible to buy some of her work for the occasion. It was.

As a result every participant in the ceremony received a small squirrel pin. In addition, ceramic gifts were received by: Dr. Ian Reid, Hon. Bob Dowling, Mayor Watson, Mayor McArdeil, Kent Border, George Beck, Mr. Lehman, Dr. Trevor Morgan, Ivy McEvoy, Andrew Fossheim, Olinda Larson, Keith Olson, Jo Soskowski, Millie Crawford, Dr. Jim Crawford, Joe Wynne, Sister Helen Hayes, Sister Allen, Sister Harding, Art Ciciarelli, Ron Linford, Paul O'Hara, Dorothy Cooper, Dick Corser, Frank Magyar, Walter Fowler, Albert Mercier, Harold Schmidt of Hinton and Mr. F. Wright of Jasper.

Shirley McNaughton presented a plaque from the Town of Edson which was accepted by Les Halliwell. Nursing Home Board member Harold Schmidt, on behalf of the Town of Hinton, presented beautiful bouquets of roses to Sister Helen Hayes (Sister General), Mrs. Les Halliwell and Mrs. Albert Mercier (wives of our Board Chairman and Hospital Administrator). Someone described these last two ladies as "hospital widows," but let's hope Corey and Jean will now enjoy more of their husbands' company.

Can Be Proud of Building

In the evening the banquet at the Legion Hall was attended by approximately 200 persons. Mr. Border, architect, received the keys of the building from Mr. Lehman on behalf of Bergman Construction, and presented them to Albert Mercier, Hospital Administrator. Chairman Les Halliwell, in his short speech, said that the Government of Alberta had been extremely helpful; only very recently it had written off the five million dollars, cancelling all debts incurred in the building of the facility. Les concluded with the message: "We can be proud of this building, but we can only be proud if we use it properly, namely to reach out a helping hand to those who cannot help themselves. This is your building. Come in and use it.

Come in and visit its guests, make and share a cup of coffee and a piece of toast with them.”

This was truly a celebration to mark an end and a beginning - over eight years of negotiations, discussions, planning and construction with all its problems and frustrations, until the present facility emerged ready for use. This I know because I was a member of the Board when this first appeared on the agenda of the St. John's Hospital Board, before leaving to take over the editorship of the *Field at Home* in Toronto, in 1975. During these years many friendships have been formed and here I quote Cicero: "Friendship excels kinship." P.S. - In a message recently received from Edson: "We have eight patients in our new complex. Pete Wyandy is one of the occupants. He was quite surprised at first and mentioned he thought it was too good for him but he seems to be settling in O.K."