



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.

Sisters of Misericorde Historical Data

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SISTERS
of
MISERICORDE
—
HISTORICAL DATA
—

*If thou wilt be perfect,
come follow me.*

(Mat. XIX-21)



MONTREAL

1921

SISTERS
of
MISERICORDE

HISTORICAL DATA

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MONTREAL

1921

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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE COMMUNITY
OF THE
SISTERS OF MISERICORDE

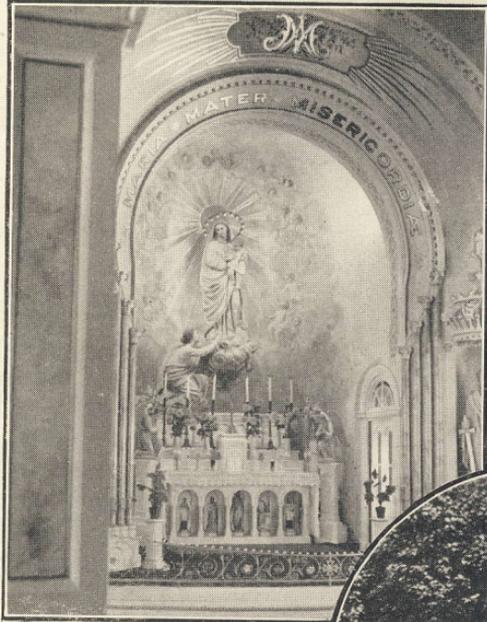


Imprimatur

† GEORGES, *Ev. de Philip.*

Adm.

10 Mars 1921.



SANCTUAIRE DE LA STE. VIERGE



MADONE DU JARDIN



NOVICIAT

FIRST PART

The beginnings of the community of the Sisters of Misericorde

CHAPTER FIRST

THE FOUNDRRESS

Marie Rosalie Cadron, the saintly woman chosen by Providence to found the works and the Community of the Sisters of Misericorde, was born on January 27th, 1794, at Lavaltrie, a small village on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, thirty miles below Montreal. Her parents, who were upright farmers, began early to impress on her a love of the Christian virtues, especially of charity, a task which was made easier by Rosalie's early leaning towards all that was good. The venerable parish priest, who was closely following the progress of his sincere spiritual daughter, did not hesitate one day to affirm "that God had designs on her for great things."

After a childhood free from trouble and diligently taken up with the duties pertaining to her years, the fulfilment of which gained for her the title of "perfect child" and undoubtedly foreshadowed her future apostolic mission, she married, at the early age of seventeen, Jean Marie Jetté, a friend of the family. Her married life was edifying: anxious always to accomplish the duties of her new state of life, she became a loving and devoted wife, a tender and energetic mother, the "valiant woman" of the Book of Proverbs; her ardent zeal for works of charity was fruitfully exercised during the few moments of leisure left in her laborious life. One day, she took into her home a poor child who had been rescued from the criminal frenzy of his mother; she adopted him and

lavished on him all her motherly tenderness. Later on, when the moment of separation came, it was accomplished in tears. Providence had thus begun to plant in the soul of this apostolic woman the first germs of the special vocation to which she was to devote herself in after life. Not suspecting as yet what were the views of God in her regard, the humble mother devoted herself to the education of her children, to the service of her maker and to the relief of the sufferings of others during her twenty-two years of married life.

When Providence wishes to mould chosen souls, it does so through trial and suffering ; neither the one nor the other was spared to the foundress of her privileged community in Canada. Sorrows of all kinds became her portion, the most cruel of which was the death of her husband. This noble woman, whom God was fashioning in sanctity, was not crushed by her heavy cross ; on the contrary, the more she was overwhelmed by earthly things, the more she clung to the things of heaven. Once her intense grief was over, she uttered the cry well worthy of the lips of a saint : "The world means nothing now for me".

This was the principle that guided her in after life. From that day Madame Jetté gave herself up to prayer and to the relieving of the misfortunes of her fellow-creatures. She interrupted her intimate colloquies with God to work for the return of sinners to virtue. Prayer and works of zeal occupied her life until the moment when she was ready to learn what special form of labor God wanted her to do.

Episcopal Intervention.—The great human heart of Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal, bled at the prevalence of so much sin and suffering. Each case of children abandoned by their guilty mothers drew tears of pity from him. A plan for the reclaiming of the unmarried mothers and their little ones took shape in his apostolic mind and he chose Madame Jetté as the person best suited to carry it out. He had known her intimately for a long time ; he had directed her in the path of perfection ; he had been edified by what he had seen of her saintly life ; he was now to utilize her tact and her zeal by entrusting to her the delicate mission. The death of her husband had assured a greater freedom of action to this charitable woman, and Mgr. Bourget resolved to turn

into a regular career the experience which she already had in the work he contemplated. Sending for Madame Jetté, he spoke to her thus : "As God has been pleased to make use of you up to this to do so much for these poor unfortunates, would you not like, my daughter, to continue your work and increase it by founding a community which would perpetuate the good you have already begun to do?"

Without a moment's hesitation, Madame Jetté accepted the proposal of her Bishop, for it was the realization of the secret wishes of her own heart. The germ was taking root. Inspired by God, as it surely was, and seconded by the unbounded zeal of the charitable widow, the bold project was to be carried out under the high protection of Mgr. Bourget. From that interview on May 1st, 1845, dates the foundation of the work of the Misericorde.

CHAPTER SECOND

DEVELOPMENT

The hour of Providence had come to initiate Madame Jetté in her vocation as foundress. Henceforth a wide field was open to her zeal. Immense as was her apostolic heart, unquenchable as her thirst for charity, the horizon was limitless : Montreal to begin with, then Canada, then all America. Who would dare put a limit to her active zeal ? . . . Fearing no difficulties and trusting in God, Madame Jetté set to work. She was to spend her life and her talents in bringing back the wayward and those who in their wanderings, like Magdalen, had followed the wide road ; she was to be the savior of orphans, and her soul yearned to devote all its energy and its years to the training of these little ones.

Her first duty was to find quarters suitable for her work and here again Providence came to her aid. A miserable hovel, half-sunken in the ground, was the first home of the Misericorde.

Instinctively, the zealous foundress recalled the stable at Bethléem, whence issued salvation for the world. From the humble home of St. Simon Street the frail stem was to grow

until one day it would appear a strong and vigorous tree extending its branches far and wide, and mercifully shielding under its thick foliage the miseries of great cities, becoming at the same time a nursery of sanctity for souls and a perpetual benefit to society.

Mgr. Bourget himself blessed the ramshackle refuge and decorated it with the name of Hospice. The foundress and one protégée formed the staff, one month later four new protégées joined the first one. Madame Jetté was the soul of the new home on St. Simon Street. To describe the thousand and one details of her industrious charity would mean the recital of high deeds that are usually read in the history of the founders of religious orders of another age. She divided her heart and her time amongst her dear adopted daughters; she was ever at their service. How happy we should be were we able to recall the kind words of love she said to them during the toils of the long day. It would benefit our souls were we to hear again her exhortations to resignation, her appeals to hope, her eloquence in praising the sweetness and the happiness of a virtuous life. It was an edifying spectacle to see this courageous woman attending to the household work, even the most menial, accepting with the rebuffs of ungrateful women, serving with humility her beloved protégées and being satisfied with the remnants, when remnants there were of their scanty meals. Nowadays, when luxury is rife, these constant sacrifices in little things should cause every cheek to blush. When night came on, Madame Jetté, worn out but happy, discarded her bed and rested on the bare floor. So little did this great soul care for privation, if only her daughters were at ease.

When Bishop Bourget, the only one who had any clear perception of the poverty of the Home, asked for the details of the hardships and the self-denial of the inmates, the recital brought tears to his eyes, and he hastened to find a remedy. How often did he knock at the door of Mr. Olivier Berthelet, the charity-hero of Montreal! And then with his hands filled with alms he hastened to the Home and gave all. Later on, when appeals were made directly to Mr. Berthelet, they were always met with the same generosity. "He is the visible Providence of the house", was the whispered comment of its inmates.

The final foundation.—The Home on St. Simon Street was always inconvenient ; besides it became too small for the work, a handicap which was felt in every subsequent foundation. “Enlarge ! enlarge !” is the cry uttered by any well-established work. The Hospice needed more room so that it might be free to embrace its opportunities for well-doing and extend its field of operations. A rather modest property was secured on Wolfe Street, and thither on July 26, 1846, the small community moved with all its goods and chattles. On the same day Mgr. Bourget celebrated Mass in the new Home. Feeling that the time had come to organize the work on a more solid basis, he gave his Christian servants the first outline of a Rule of Life and declared the novitiate open for recruits. A chaplain was promised and a Superior was appointed. The actual companions of Madame Jetté were the best guarantee of the ultimate success of the community.

A few months later, on the first of December, there was an investiture. Ten novices were clothed and began the sacrifice of their lives to the rehabilitation of wayward women. Their decision was not a sudden impulse ; no emotional resolution ; it had been arrived at after mature reflection and prayer . . .

It would seem that the small community was now in a position to carry on its work more fruitfully. It had its rules and regulations ; it had its superior, its novices, its chaplain, the religious habit, everything, in fact, except a name which would designate its special kind of apostolate. To give this last touch of completion to the new foundation, Mgr. Bourget waited until the first religious profession, and on January 16th, 1848, Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, not merely did he declare the formal existence of the community, but also, in his pastoral solicitude, he conferred on Madame Jetté and her companions the beautiful name of Sisters of Miséricorde.

The grain had been sown ; it hath been watered by sacrifice ; it had even begun to grow ; in a short time, owing to the holy lives of God’s chosen ones, it would produce abundant fruits of salvation. It would be useless to recount here the various phases through which the Home has passed since its foundation seventy years ago. This general outline, however, will allow the reader to get an idea of the rudiments and of

the various circumstances which were ultimately to bring about a fuller expansion of the work.

Just as the growing child discards for larger ones the clothes that have become too small, the Home had several times to vacate the premises which sheltered its first years of infancy, until at last the day arrived when it was to take possession of a home that would defy years and centuries.

One looks in vain to-day for some traces of the first and humble hovel on St. Simon Street, some relic that would recall again the secrets of the past. For twelve months only it sheltered the brave beginners of the Misericorde ; it was there that the great work was begun ; suffice it to recall all the sweet souvenirs that vanished under the pick of the demolisher. The home on Wolfe Street still remains. If you look at the house bearing the number 229, a few steps from St. Catherine street, you will see what was the true cradle of the work of the Misericorde. It was there the novitiate was opened, and this is perhaps the most precious memory to recall. The property remains very dear to the Sisters ; if they had to abandon it, it was owing to ill-will on the part of its former owner.

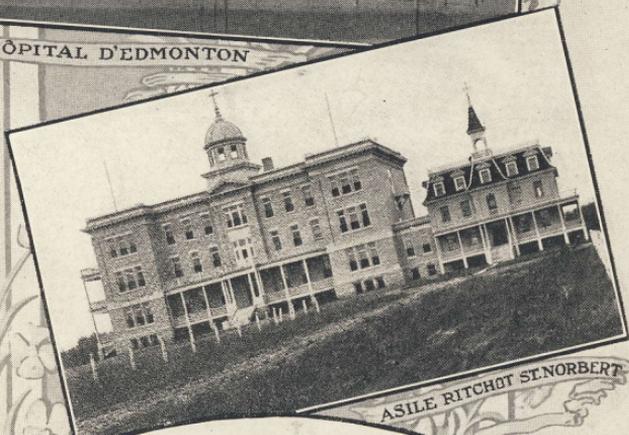
A year had scarcely elapsed before Mother Nativity,—the religious name under which Mother Jetté was venerated, left the Wolfe street home and settled in St. Catherine Street at the south-east corner of St. André Street. The whirligig of time which effect many transformations has turned that home of prayer and penance into a place of amusement, but the souvenirs attached to it are long-lived. Behind those walls, on January 16th, 1848, the first novices consecrated themselves to God in the community. There were present on that day two great men, Mgr. Bourget who presided at the ceremony and the young Abbé Lacombe, who became later the intrepid Oblate missionary and who remained all his life a devoted protector of the Sisters.

Three years later one could hardly recognize the small community which was becoming a large monastery on Dorchester Street, where to-day stand the majestic buildings which shelter the various departments of the mother-house. The year is memorable, 1851, the sixth only since the foundation.

During those six pioneer years the home had harbored four hundred and thirty six penitents and had secured the baptism



HÔPITAL D'EDMONTON



ASILE RITCHOT ST-NORBERT



HÔPITAL DE WINNIPEG

and often saved the lives of three hundred and ninety new born babes.

CHAPTER THIRD

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INSTITUTE

The Constitution.—"The first and principal object which the Sisters of Misericorde wish to attain is to glorify God and assure their own sanctification by the faithful observance of the evangelical counsels, by the practice of the simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and by imitating as perfectly as possible Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother."

The second and specific object of the Sisters of Misericorde, is to honor the infinite mercy of the Saviour God by working for the salvation of Souls. The end of the religious life is therefore personal sanctity by the free choice and the practice of religious vows. The young girl whose ideal it is to become a Sister of Misericorde or of any other religious family, must first have in view her salvation and her perfection. But in addition to the pursuit of spiritual perfection, she must as in other communities of active life, devote her intelligence and her moral and physical qualifications to works of charity, such as the education of children, the care of the sick, the keeping of orphans and the aged, etc. The adoption of any of those works decides the special nature of an institution.

Now the special work of the Sisters of Misericorde is the conversion, the uplift and the preservation of persons of their own sex and also the care of the sick in hospitals. The true letter and spirit of the constitutions of the Sisters of Misericorde are centered in these works and their lives are consecrated to them.

How it works out in Practice.—The houses of the community are conducted in conformity with their regulations. All are either homes for women or hospitals for the sick. None of them deviates from either of these objects, and none exists that is not in perfect conformity with the letter of the constitutions.

The Sisters who give themselves to the community of the Misericorde are therefore assured that they will be employed

only in duties, both temporal and spiritual, pertaining to homes and hospitals. But temporal duties are always subordinate to the spiritual, for long before this sketch was written, the co-founder, Mgr. Bourget, said : "Your special vocation, my beloved daughters, in this new institute which Divine Providence wishes you to found, is to work for the purification and sanctification of souls, who, after having had the misfortune to go astray, seek in religion a safe asylum in which they may repair their fault and at the same time hide from reproach. You should devote yourselves generously to the salvation of the greatest sinners. Mary, Mother of Mercy, will be the special object of your devotion.

These words of the zealous prelate referred especially to refugees. But work in the hospitals is in itself well adapted to help in the spiritual sanctification of those who are engaged in it, and is, besides, an inexhaustible source of happiness for them. The nursing sister helps bodies, so as to reach souls more easily ; she multiplies her works of corporal mercy in order to better instill into human hearts her works of spiritual mercy. By this the Sister of Misericorde will realize the nobility of her vocation, whether in home or hospital ; she spends herself in her holy calling and seek her reward in the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER FOURTH

SPIRIT OF THE INSTITUTE

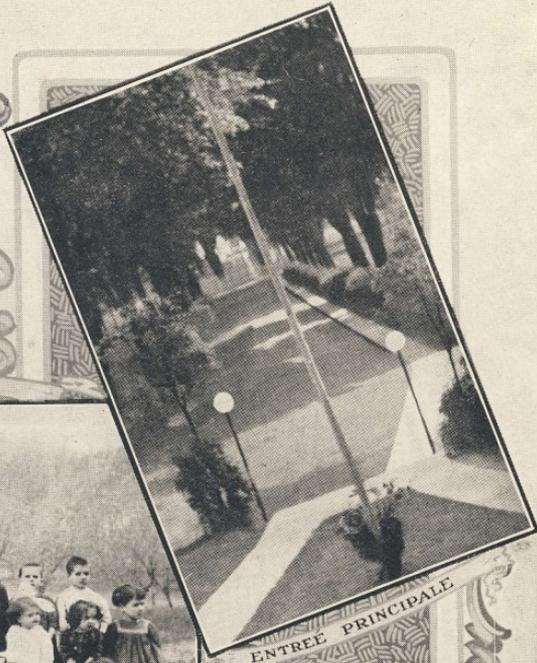
Like the dew from heaven, the mercy of man gently falls upon his unfortunate fellow-beings, who but for the benign influence of the compassionate, would be doomed only too often to misery and despair. In no field are richer fruits developed or greater consolation experienced than in that which provides for the relief of human suffering. The spirit of the Misericorde is charity in its noblest interpretation ; manifold are the blessings and far reaching are the benefits resulting from the practice of this virtue. After the example of Christ, universal charity is established and exercised in this institution, so that the Misericorde is a boon to all who come within the reach of its ministrations, and a blessing to



RIVIÈRE DES PRAIRIES



CRÈCHE ST PAUL



ENTRÉE PRINCIPALE

many who, when otherwise unable to provide spiritual and medical care for their members, are thus enabled to receive the aid of skilled physicians and modern scientific methods for their restoration to health.

But charity is extended to others besides the sick. There are diseases of the soul that require more care than those of the body. Miracles of grace and penance are brought about by the charity exercised by the Sisters. Even little children are protected and prepared for lives of usefulness.

CHAPTER FIFTH

OCCUPATION OF THE SISTERS

Prayer.—Religious life is a life of prayer and work ; the day of a Sister of Misericorde illustrates magnificently this principle : “Pray always, work always”, briefly says the custom-book of the monastery.

Moderate in sleep, the sister is on her feet at five o'clock in the morning ; the exercises of piety and work of all kinds which succeed one another the whole day long, occupy every moment and quickly lead her to nine o'clock in the evening, when she goes to rest. Early morning is given to vocal prayer, meditation and Holy Mass ; later, a spiritual reading, private examination of conscience, and the rosary recall her to the presence of God ; finally, the way of the cross or benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, according to the day, general examination of conscience and evening prayer place her again at the feet of the Master. Prayer under these various forms takes up four hours each day. That is about the portion of time strictly spiritual which is reserved to God in all communities of women devoted to active life.

Work.—The various and interesting works pertaining to homes and hospitals occupy the greater part of the Sister's time. Each one has the direction of a group of special works.

At the hospital, the nursing sister may manage a department of patients of the teaching of nurses ; she may keep an office for admission of patients ; even a superintendence ; it is to meet the necessities of such an organization that

nursing Sisters are called upon to secure their diploma. Other Sisters, more qualified for manual work, are assigned to certain duties which, in appearance, seem less honorable, but which in reality acquire a great dignity in the eyes of God; the supervision of expenses in the kitchen, the operating of laundries and ironing rooms, sewing and shoemaking.

Two Sisters are generally appointed to take charge of each of these departments. One is called the officer in charge and has the responsibility, the other is the companion, because she has to help the other or take her place when there is need. The officer must unite maturity of age with prudence, while the companion may be a young professed nun, who is trained under an experienced and charitable guide to initiate herself to the duties of the institute.

This method has this great advantage : not only does the young nun prepare herself surely for her special vocation, but at the same time she may freely practise her devotions while her companion attends to the sick and trains assistants. In this way the impulses of the soul towards God are not interrupted and the sick are assured of constant care.

In the Home, the same occupations exist with slight variations, The Sister of Misericorde is quite happy to instruct her protégées, to counsel them, to aid them, to speak of God to them. She daily teaches catechism, prepares them for daily Holy Communion, for retreats given by a retreatmaster. It is evident that God blesses and crowns the efforts of the guardians of His doctrine. He multiplies conversions, increases courage tenfold, and thus helps the Sisters to pursue the same fruitful sacrifices, rewarded by the same consoling success. When a patient dies in the Home she has a share in the prayers and merits of the community and a mass is offered for the repose of her soul.

In the Children's Department.—The Saviour received little children into His arms, loaded them with caresses, laid His hands upon them and blessed them. To place their innocence and their life in security, He declared that it would be better to be cast into the sea, with a millstone round one's neck, than to scandalize a little child, and that He should consider as done to Himself whatever would be done to the least of these little ones, who are His brethren. In answer to this invitation full of tenderness, the Sister of Misericorde

devotes her days and vigils to the care of the little ones. Large, well-lighted, hygienic and pleasant rooms are reserved for their use. A doctor is always in attendance. Nurses under the supervision of the Sisters devote themselves to the very delicate care of these infants. The Sisters cultivate these young souls with jealous love, preserve them from all dangers that could assail them and direct them unswervingly in the paths of honor and virtue.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

THE NOVITIATE

Occupation.—The Novitiate is a time of religious probation and formation, under the direction of the Reverend Father Chaplain in all matters pertaining to conscience, and under the guardianship of the Novice-Mistress for external conduct and observance of the rule. . . Let us suppose a young girl the day when she can give up her life to God. Her health is sufficiently robust ; she has the intellectual and moral qualities that fit her for the higher life. Her soul yearns to devote all its energies and its years to the care and training of little children, to comfort Christ in nursing His sick poor in the hospital. She wants to spend her life and her talents in bringing back the wayward and those who in their wanderings, like Magdalen, are tarnished and stained. In a word, she wants to give herself up to this kind of religious life. She feels that she is called to be a nun, she presents herself at the Novitiate where she may study at leisure the duties of the perfect life, weigh all its obligations, examine herself, ascertain the sincerity and the rectitude of her intentions and dispositions, and solve the serious problem of her vocation.

On the other hand, the superiors have the heavy obligation to know the novice, to discover her qualifications and her tastes, and decide if she has the necessary endowment of virtues to attain to religious perfection.

A vocation can be defined as the qualification for a state of life with the desire to embrace it. Evidently, if our Lord

wishes us to follow Him in a certain path, the first requisite is the bestowal of the ordinary qualities required. When these exist and with them a sincere desire in the soul for a particular calling, nothing else can be reasonably demanded. If these qualities are lacking, no matter what the desire, clearly there is no call. But when there is no desire for perfection the call is made in vain. One day, when Our Blessed Saviour had just finished laying His hands upon the heads of the little children, a young man came to Him beyond the Jordan and asked : "What shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" To the answer of Jesus : "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," He replied : "All these have I kept from my youth, what is yet wanting to me?" Then Jesus said to him : "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven ; and come follow me."

The life of a young girl in the novitiate is given up precisely to a study of her vocation. She sounds her strength to know whether she has the courage to adopt the austerities of the monastic life, while the community, on its side, considers if her qualifications are equal to the requisite and special form of life. Meanwhile, during this period of formation, she is acquiring a solid piety, the love of the things of God, the Christian virtues and counsels. She is told that it is necessary to exercise oneself in order to know oneself well, to eliminate defects, to reform character, to perfect education, to repress inordinate natural leanings, and to entirely crush the spirit of pride, as all this constitutes a religious life.

The spirit of the Sisters of Misericorde is acquired during the novitiate through a harmonious chain of exercises of piety, of certain classes, and of manual work. Following the example of the Sisters, the novices devote four hours to prayer every day, and six to other classes and works. These include Christian instruction, ethics, French, English, Latin, book-keeping, etc. Sewing, the care of dormitories, of refectories, etc. also form part of the rules of the novitiate. There is nothing cold or formal about the training of novices. It is a school of love, an image, no doubt, of Bethany, where Martha ministered and Mary sat listening at the feet of Jesus. Six months of postulancy and eighteen months of noviceship are followed by temporary vows, renewed annually

for three years. After this period are taken final vows. At the end of their canonical year, the novices may apply themselves with moderation to the works of the institute so as to get initiated in them, but always in the house of the novitiate.

Peace and joy.—As our Lord promised the hundredfold to any one who quits all to follow Him, the novitiate must be a foretaste of the wholesome and solid happiness which accompanies the religious life. The postulant bids good-bye to the world ; she severs the sweet ties that bind her to her family ; she makes the complete and radical sacrifice of herself in favor of Jesus. She has therefore a right to the predilection of God, the moment she enters the novitiate. The nearer she approaches the day of her vows, the more she becomes conscious of her happy life, the more she feels this joy “of the children of God” sink deeply and forever in her heart.

What are the slight and quickly dispersed sorrows of the cloister compared to the endless consolations and the precious advantages of religion ? The dangers of the world do not enter into the asylums of God, pernicious examples do not dare make their way thither. Discord does not live in places where charity reigns ; the worries of temporal things are banished from the minds of the Sisters—the superiors generously assuming all the burdens ; the future is assured ; everything contributes to envelop the servant of God in a peaceful atmosphere. And then, unity of life and the pursuit of the same ideals group together all energies, render charming the intercourse of persons of the same excellent condition, chosen amongst the elite of our good and virtuous Catholic families, and what of the charm and contentment of keeping one’s conscience in peace amid duties performed ? The year goes by untroubled, full of serenity, intermingled with religious feasts, numerous in the mother-house ; of family feasts so much appreciated in the monasteries, of holidays always so welcome. All this relaxation drives away tediousness, breaks the monotony of a severe rule and gives to the soul new outburst towards the ideal of perfection.

Ask those Sisters who have borne bravely for years the yoke of religion, and all will tell you, with a sentiment of regret perhaps, that the years of the novitiate were the happiest of their life, they passed all too quickly and left

in the mind souvenirs of the sweetest joys and the most profound impressions. Who has ever lost the remembrance of her novitiate ? Ask the mistresses of novices ; they will answer : rarely have we to reproach our novices for being sad ; they are joyous and happy, so much so that sometimes we are obliged to moderate their loud and overflowing joy. How many times we hear this remark on the lips of new comers : "Religious life is quite different from I thought it was."

If we dare lift a corner of the veil which hides the sanctuary from the eyes of outsiders, it is not to suggest to our readers that monastic life is easy or free from its little crosses : on the contrary, it requires daily courage. Our object is simply to root out certain prejudices in persons, alas, too numerous, who persist in depicting the novices and the Sisters as poor prisoners who painfully drag along a dark and heavy life. What an illusion ! Let us transcribe truthfully a letter from a novice to her parents, in order to undeceive those who would doubt our assertions :

Very dear Parents :

A few days more and your child will celebrate her mystic wedding with the King of Heaven. . . This thought creates in my heart a number of varied sentiments which I cannot keep from you. Let me pour them into your own hearts in all simplicity and confidence. Need I tell you, in the first place, my dear parents, that it is with joy and comfort that I see approaching the solemn moment of my complete donation to Jesus. As a sailor gladly enters port after a long journey, so, on the eve of my profession, I sing to the Lord a hymn of gladness because He gave me the grace of happily reaching the goal of my desires. However, I feel a sentiment of regret when I think of leaving the beloved cradle of my religious life. Before I bid it adieu, let us cast a retrospective glance on the two happy years I have spent there! . . .

Dear good parents, when under the humble garb of a postulant I passed for the first time the threshold of the novitiate, how cold and forbidding seemed to me those walls wherein I was to imprison my liberty. My poor little heart would have quickly burst into sobs, had not the sight of the

large crucifix readily comforted me. In contemplating it it seemed to me that I heard the good Saviour whispering to me : "Come, my daughter, fear nothing, I shall be with you always. All that you have left for my sake, I will give back a hundredfold." At that moment, my fears disappeared and the kindly greeting of our good Novice-Mistress consoled me completely, I felt that I was in the bosom of a new family where I thought it would be good to work, to pray, and even to suffer.

But the novitiate is the apprenticeship of religious life ; one must therefore be initiated into all the regular observances and exercise oneself in the practice of the religious virtues. It is a work that is rarely accomplished without pain and tears. To break one's will, to abdicate sometimes one's own opinion, to apply oneself to all sorts of work, to mortify one's little passions, all these things occasion struggles and suffering. . .

When added to that, loneliness or ennui takes hold of our heart at the remembrance of the happy life at home, oh, how everything is dark and threatening ! The poor little postulant is frightened in the midst of the rumbling tempest. Fortunately the good Master shows the means of defying it. A visit to the Blessed Sacrament, a short talk with the spiritual Director, or with our Mother-Mistress, are nearly always sufficient to clear the clouds gathered by the enemy.

This is a short sketch of the salutary trials of the novitiate : they are always proportioned to the strength of each one, and if you only knew with what joys they were rewarded ! Let us consider some of those joys which make us forget all the little sorrows. They are, first, the days of monthly contemplation, and the retreat preparatory to the reception of the Holy Habit. How good, how sweet is solitude with Jesus ! He speaks to our hearts in tender words ; He so fills our soul with peace that we are overjoyed. It is His own way of making Himself loved by those who really seek Him.

And the solemn ceremony of the RECEPTION, what consolation it gives ! It is sweet to feel them, but it is impossible to describe them. It is sufficient for me to tell you that this remembrance consoles me still and stimulates my zeal in the hours of difficulties.

The succession of great feasts of the Church and those

peculiar to the Institute, which are celebrated with much solemnity, bestow upon us very sweet joys and fill our soul with new energies, which allow us to face obstacles bravely, and to rise always higher in spite of them . . .

Then Mother-Mistress's Patron's Day must not be omitted. We celebrate it in the intimacy of the novitiate, and it is much enjoyed. It comes with a keen zest of expectation and is prepared in secret, on the previous evening a full holiday is given. Chosen hymns are sung at Mass by the novices; many little surprises are prepared for us the whole day long, and an evening entertainment crowns the happy day.

We have every day a few hours of recreations, when pleasant conversations, bright sayings, witty stories, etc. bring forth innocent laughter which gives rest to both body and mind. Our walks in the garden during the summer, and on the balconies in winter procure us agreeable relaxation.

A word now about the hours of prayer and work which ordinarily occupy our days. The first are always welcomed, especially when one has undergone some little pain or suffering. It is good to acquire renewed strength for the soul by fervent colloquy with the Beloved of the Altar. And then Holy Mass and daily communion, what a source of grace, of merit and happiness! The rather numerous hours of work are so well intermingled with the exercises of piety and recreation that we are always in the spirit to enjoy them. Although the kind of work is not always within our competency, we make an effort to accomplish it, and with the aid of God, we succeed tolerably in our endeavor. In a word, such is our life in the novitiate. As you see, it abounds in all sorts of spiritual good, and one cannot leave it without regret. I hope the acts of virtue which I have striven to perform will render me less unworthy of the great favor that awaits me on the day of my profession.

Let your pious prayers aid me to take advantage of the last moments that are left me to prepare myself to meet the Spouse.

Kissing you most affectionately, I remain your most grateful child,

SISTER N.N. novice.

PART SECOND

Present state of the Community

CHAPTER FIRST

MOTHER-HOUSE AND BRANCHES

Mother-House. (1848).—The place where the Mother-House of the Sisters of Misericorde is situated greatly facilitates the exterior communications of the members of the Community. Located right in the center of the city of Montreal, and undoubtedly the easiest approach of this cosmopolitan city, at a few minutes ride from the principal railways stations, the monastery is always within easy access of trades people and medical assistance, etc. The Cathedral is within convenient reach for ecclesiastical affairs, and the Oblate Fathers from St. Peter's Church officiate regularly in the chapel and are ever ready to attend sick calls either in the home or the hospital.

The exact point occupied by the Mother-House is historical. In 1662 four brave colonists victoriously resisted the attack of fifty Iroquois Indians, the first enemies of rising Montreal. A memorial tablet affixed to one of the buildings recalls this glorious event.

In the rectangle comprised within Dorchester, Lagauchetière, St. Andrew and St. Hubert Streets have been gradually erected the various buildings of the Mother-House. In 1854 the first block was built and later on in the same year the chapel. In 1860 a second block went up. In 1876 the western wing, now occupied by the Magdalens, was built, and in 1884, the administration building was completed. The Hospital was built in 1887, and ten years later the chapel was enlarged with an addition to the childrens' department.

All these different buildings in juxtaposition are in solid stone and afford spacious quarters with their four stories and basement. It would be tiresome to give figures ; suffice to say that from a close calculation, these buildings, detached and divided, would be sufficient to endow with a splendid hospital several secondary towns of the Province of Quebec.

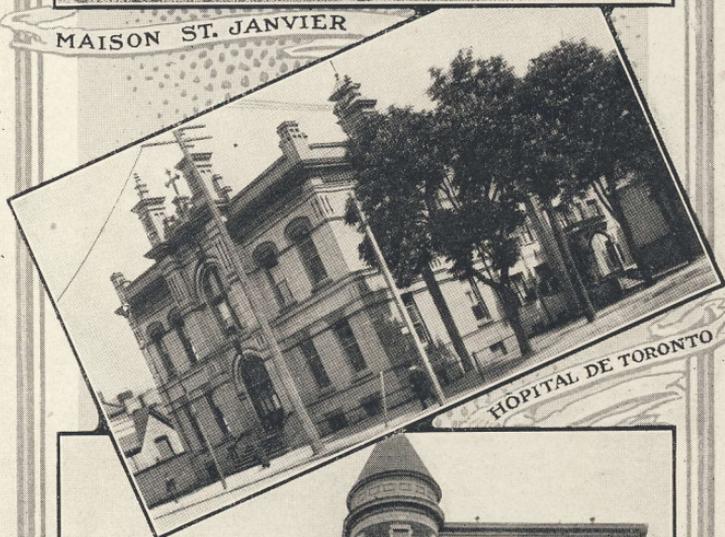
The administration building is occupied by the Superior General and her council. The novitiate, in full conformity with canonical rules, is in this extreme eastern wing, where solitude and the required isolation prevail. Quite near the chapel, aged or infirm sisters enjoy special quarters. Other apartments of this wing and of the main building are occupied by the sisters who, under the authority of a local superior, attend to the work of the hospital and of the infants' department. The chapel is open to the public. Pious people and visitors love to come and admire the beauty of its architecture and mural decorations and to breathe the piety of conventual devotions. Its title of public chapel authorizes the solemn display of liturgical ceremonies at the principal solemnities of the ecclesiastical year, and admits of imparting a particularly touching character to the beautiful feasts of the religious vows.

The good accomplished in Montreal, or rather in the whole province of Quebec, by this Institution, is immense, incalculable. Statistics are not published. All that is known is that happiness has been restored to many souls, hope and peace return to numerous hearts ; what is known, also, is that the population have a profound veneration for the sisters. The interested, the philanthropists, the true Christians, the Reverend Clergy, all never weary in expressing their admiration for the work and in pointing out the good performed within the institution and the improvement in the social conditions outside. . . .

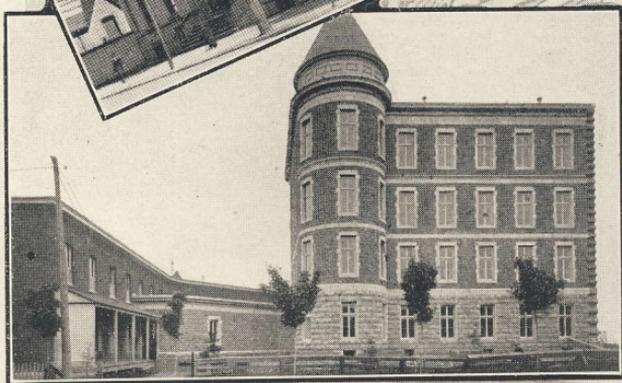
Sault-au-Récollet —Several years before the opening of this branch in 1903, the need was felt of a country house near Montreal, to relieve the congested wards at the Mother-house, where the number of children was always increasing. Hence a comfortable home affording fresh air to the little ones was agreed upon. Attempts in that direction having failed more or less in 1902, we occupied for a few weeks a house belonging to a charitable farmer of Laval. The following year, official



MAISON ST. JANVIER



HOPITAL DE TORONTO



HOPITAL D' OTTAWA

overtures were made to Archbishop Bruchési, who, understanding perfectly the sisters' embarrassment, shared it at first ; but suddenly His Grace, yielding to an inspiration worthy of his generous apostolic heart, exclaimed : "I have a property at Sault-au-Récollet ; I will give it to you for the children."

The Saint-Janvier Residence, as it was then called, was a home for aged and invalid priests under the direction of the Sisters of Providence. This latter community, having been notified of the Archbishop's intention, raised no objections and willingly transferred the establishment. Archbishop Bruchési, Rev. Charles Beaubien, Pastor, the Sulpician Fathers and the churchwardens, all interested in various ways, agreed and officially offered to the Sisters of Miséricorde this princely gift, then valued at \$25,000 and worth now six times that amount.

In May 1903 the institution was opened, laundry and out-buildings were constructed, etc. In 1911-12 a new wing was built of stone, two storeys, well heated, well furnished and especially well lighted the name St. Paul was given in remembrance of the generous donor. "Paul archbishop of Montreal". Accommodation for two hundred children, plenty of space and fresh air and God's sunlight allow the little ones to play merrily from early dawn until night.

The home is beautifully located on the Prairie River, where the peacefulness of the spot together with the fresh umbrage of fine old trees attract lady-boarders who marvel at the primitive, quiet and rustic scenery. In 1918, Sault-au-Récollet was annexed to Montreal. Street-cars carry passengers thither in thirty minutes.

CHAPTER SECOND

OTHER HOUSES IN CANADA

Ottawa, (1879).—It was in 1879 that the community made its first attempt at establishing branch houses in other provinces. Ottawa was the second city in America to open its hospitable gates to the Sisters of Misericorde. Six sisters, full of trust in Divine Providence, left the Mother-house on

May 19, 1879, and went to work for the reclamation of erring souls in the Capital of Canada. The praises bestowed a few months later from the authorized lips of Archbishop Duhamel, when, at the blessing of the Mother-House chapel, he expressed his satisfaction at the good accomplished by our presence in his episcopal city, permit us to infer that God blessed the expansion of the work.

Of course, difficulties were not wanting. Are they not the seal God sets on all works that serve for His glory? There were manifest at the very opening of negotiations. The appointment of the Rev. Canon Bouillon as delegate in this matter met with a certain reluctance on the part of the sisters, who were probably alarmed at the novel formality of such a step. Bishop Bourget, being consulted, answered; "I have long prayed that you should have an outside mission". More serious were the difficulties on the part of Ontario, but finally, the federal government recognized the public utility of this work and voted an annual subsidy. At once it was decided to enlarge without fear for the future. Alas! though men ceased raising difficulties, God, whose views are unfathomable, reserved a severe trial to His servants. In 1900, when a new wing had just been completed, a terrible conflagration swept part of the city and the destructive fire reduced to nothing the long and hard labor of twenty years of privation and sacrifice. More submissive than ever to Divine Providence, the sisters did not fail. They bid good-bye to the ruins of Wellington Street, and came to plant the frail stem of their apostolate on Primrose Hill, Cambridge Street, one of the finest sites in the Capital. A two-story brick house was promptly built and received the staff of the Misericorde. Three years later a four-story building proved the fecundity of the work; when finished it will compete, by its elegance and its size, with the finest buildings of the city.

At Ottawa, there are 13 nuns, 12 nurses, hospital capacity for 100 patients, conversions are numerous and many abjurations during the year prove consoling. . .

Winnipeg.—In 1898 Archbishop Langevin took the resolution to establish the Sisters of Misericorde in his diocese. Having decided to support this foundation, the Archbishop was in no great hurry to hasten the coming of these workers of salvation; he feared that he might be imposing too heavy a

sacrifice on the Sisters by urging them, without assured resources, in a difficult enterprise. Notwithstanding his undisputed generosity, he could not see his way clear to give at that time any assistance. Unexpectedly, an apostle arrived on the scene, who, being interested in the foundation, used his influence on his spiritual chief, and cleared away all the difficulties: "Now is the time, sisters; you must come at once." For the second time in the annals of the Institute we hail the name of the illustrious Father Lacombe. Gratitude and honor to the saintly missionary of the West! This new mission just about to open was coincident with the Golden Jubilee of the Institute. Was it not an approbation of heaven, the reward given by God to His auxiliaries on earth? Every one thought so.

On December the first, four sisters set out for Manitoba and hospitality was given them upon arrival in a house belonging to Mgr. Faraud. Winter did not spare them; it put to the test their patience and their spirit of poverty; God's usual way. Shortly after, the community bought a splendid piece of ground at Winnipeg, Sherbrooke Street, and erected a superb building which was completed in 1907. This piece of ground measures 500 x 300 feet: situated in one of the finest quarters of the city, on the banks of the Assiniboine River, within the city limits but enjoying the tranquillity of the country. Winnipeg is principally English and Protestant. The Sisters, however, hold the esteem and affection of both Catholics and Protestants; all agree in praising their devotedness and in acknowledging their experience and charity.

As everywhere else, the house is prosperous and the good accomplished is immense; the general hospital combined with the home offers accommodation for 250 patients, under the direction of 18 sisters, 30 nurses. Conversions among the patients are not rare, marriages are rendered valid, first communions and confirmations of converts are worthy of mention, and many abjurations are registered.

St-Norbert.—(1904).—About five or six years after the foundation of Winnipeg, the necessity of a childrens' Home was felt. Heaven led the sisters to the kind Mgr. Ritchot, pastor of St. Norbert, the "visible providence" and the tireless benefactor of the community.

This generous pastor graciously offered 83 acres of wooded

land, including 25 acres ready to receive the plough, and a few wooden buildings. In his last will and testament he entrusted to his executor, Mgr. Cherrier, another charitable friend, the care of continuing his works of charity, by helping to construct a splendid brick building to accommodate 150 children, which was christened later "Ritchot Asylum".

The first Mass was celebrated on June 13th, 1904, feast of St. Anthony of Padua. The coincidence of the dedication of the house and the feast of the popular Franciscan was specially noticed, and from that time the St. Norbert people often recommend themselves to the protection of this saint.

In St. Norbert there are ten nuns, 15 nursery maids. The children, when six years old, are transferred to St. Joseph's Home, Winnipeg, where they have the advantage of taking up their primary studies. . .

Edmonton.—(1900).—Here again we meet Father Lacombe. His untiring zeal for the good of souls led him to conceive and undertake the still further propagation of charitable works by the daughters of Mother Nativity. With his keen foresight, he anticipated that Edmonton would become an important center in the "Land of Opportunity" and that institutions of this kind would become a necessity. With Mgr. Grandin's approval he hastened to Winnipeg, and solicited sisters to come and visit the Capital of Alberta and view the situation. The visiting sisters made a favorable report to Montreal, which the latter approved, and a new foundation was decided upon.

The episcopal Corporation promised a piece of land at Strathcona and guaranteed a loan for \$10,000. In May 1900, Father Leduc, V. G., who was in Montreal negotiating many enterprises for his missions, returned with four sisters bound for the Canadian west. They were warmly received by Bishop Grandin, and many delicate attentions marked his generous heart. The Sisters will always remember the illustrious bishop's farewell: "I can rest in peace now that I have the Sisters of Misericorde in my diocese." Bishop Grandin died in 1902, at the age of 73 years.

Here, as in every foundation, the beginning was difficult; poverty was a constant cause of suffering. The house which the Oblate Fathers ceded to the sisters soon became too small; but the Fathers, fully understanding the situation, gave up a

larger house which answered our needs for five years. In the meantime, the Sisters resolved to establish themselves definitely in a select part of the city. Providence came to their assistance, putting them in possession of a fine piece of property, for which the Episcopal Corporation agreed to pay. In the early Spring of 1905 building began, and the new hospital was dedicated and ready for patients in April of the following year.

It is a handsome building of stone and brick, three stories with a French roof, 130 x 50 feet, modern equipment ; scientific methods and requisite utilities form the basis of this up-to-date hospital. A luxurious sun-porch was added recently. In these spacious parlors the patients spend many happy hours and enjoy much comfort, ease and sunshine . . .

Misericordia Hospital, so named has always been a favorite among the missionary sisters, and those who are called away leave with regret. The protection and blessing of God are evident when we consider the good accomplished among all classes of people.

In Edmonton the nursing staff is comprised of 16 sisters, 25 nurses, hospital capacity 75 beds.

Toronto.—(1914).—More recent but no less prosperous, the house at Toronto has a peculiar story which gives uncommon praise to the Sisters of Misericorde. The foundling houses under control of the Provincial government met with difficulties. The Protestant associations were not giving satisfaction. As a last resort, the government applied to Archbishop McNeil of Toronto, and asked for Catholic sisters. The Archbishop went to the office of Statistics, asked for reports of the various foundling institutions of the province, and carefully studied them. His choice obstinately and unexpectedly settled on the Sisters of Misericorde.

Simultaneously, Providence permitted that two sisters of the community who were visiting in Toronto called on the Archbishop, who forthwith solicited the creation of a house in his archdiocese. The community hesitated. The successive and uninterrupted foundations had dispersed its members and drained their resources. Archbishop Bruchesi, counsellor in the hours of doubt, was consulted. He did not share their apprehensions ; on the contrary, he pointed out the good to be done, seed of the Catholic influence to be sown, and, counting

on the blessing of God, the Sisters accepted. On the 22nd of October, three sisters left for the capital of Ontario and took possession of the old St. Ignatius Academy, Bond Street, near the Cathedral, belonging to the episcopal Corporation.

In 1920 the Sisters purchased a select site on Jarvis Street, with two commodious houses, one serving for the hospital and the other for children. It was generally supposed that Toronto was the home of religious bigotry ; yet, despite the Protestant majority, the Catholic minority has full representation in all civic affairs. The generosity of the citizens, stimulated by the example of the Archbishop's zeal, increases daily. The city is satisfied with the services rendered. Thus the sisters are relieving all those who come within their ministrations and many conversions are registered. St. Mary's Hospital, as it is called, has a nursing staff of 10 sisters, 10 nurses, hospital capacity 25 beds, babes 50.

Cartierville.—(1920).—Six acres of beautiful grounds with all modern improvements were purchased with the intention of erecting a commodious house and chapel for the novices, remote from the smoke and din of commercial life. Here all is primitive quiet in the charming solitude and peaceful scenes of nature. Clumps of cedars, maples, bushes, shrubs and vines of rare beauty adorn the sanctum.

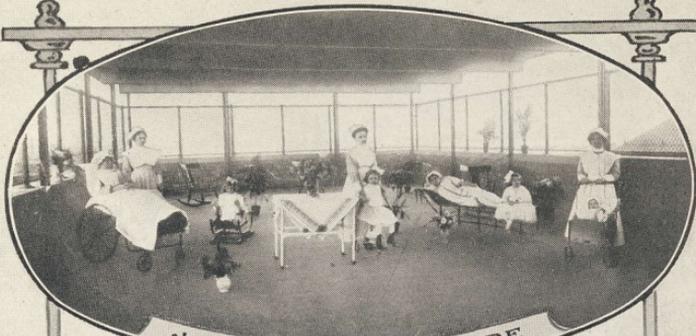
The novitiate, now under construction, is pleasantly situated back of the mountain a few steps from Cartierville Church, on the banks of the Prairie River, where the novices, favoured with the advantages of the country and its products, will benefit largely in health of body and mind.

Street-cars carry passengers to Cartierville in thirty-five minutes...

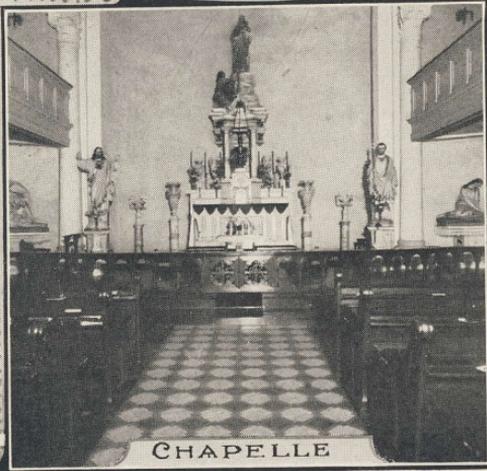
CHAPTER THIRD

AMERICAN MISSIONS

New York.—(1887).—The Revered John McQuirk, D.D., Pastor of St. Paul's Church, New York, came to Montreal in quest of Sisters of Misericorde to conduct a Maternity Hospital for the poor, the city already operating a similar institution for the rich. After the necessary negotiations between



JARDIN DE TOITURE



CHAPELLE



HÔPITAL

the archbishops, the offer was accepted. Four nuns left for New York in August of the same year. The first winter was spent at Staten Island, and owing to the severeness of the season many privations were experienced. In 1888, Archbishop Corrigan called them to the city, where the civic authorities were interested in their favor, and the new house was incorporated under the name of "New York Mothers' Home", changed later to "Misericordia Hospital". Scarcely had three years elapsed when they quitted the house on 123rd Street, already too small, for spacious quarters on East 86th Street, near East River Park. Patients came in large numbers. "We never refused admission when there was room for a bed" could truly be reported. Development was rapid. In 1892, the eastern wing was built, accommodating 150 patients. The visible good that pierced through the walls of the establishment raised the enthusiasm of the population and attracted generous benefactors. In 1910 the administration building was erected, including a beautiful chapel, and in 1913, the western wing was built, thus completing the plans of his modern and up-to-date hospital. The eastern wing is reserved for maternity cases, while the center and western wings are given to medicine and surgery. The school for nurses occupies three houses on Henderson Court, which will eventually be replaced by a modern nurses' home.

In New York the good accomplished by the Sisters surpasses all expectations; remarkable conversions, marriages blessed, and many retractions are recorded.

The nursing staff comprises 30 sisters, 50 nurses, hospital accommodation for 350 patients.

Hartsdale, N. Y.—(1901).—At different times the community has had country homes for the extension of their work; among these might be mentioned Hartsdale, which for eighteen years was a branch of the New York Mission. An unexpected occasion permitted the acquisition of this choice property for the minimum sum of \$16,000. The city house becoming too small for the number of babies received, the home at Hartsdale, dedicated to St. Mary of the Angels, harboured as many as one hundred and fifty at one time.

Every medal has its reverse; this beautiful farm of 25 acres, with orchards, lake supplied with spring water, rare hedges, rustic scenery, in spite of all its charms, was so inconveniently

situated that we passed it into other hands after the enlargement of the city hospital. The community, however, retains for it an affectionate remembrance for the many services rendered to the little ones.

Green Bay, (1900).—The relief of abandoned children gave rise to this prosperous foundation. Archbishop Messmer, then Bishop of Green Bay, pleaded the cause of these little ones with Sisters of Misericorde of New York and secured a home for his episcopal city. Five sisters, chosen by the Mother-House, were assigned the hard task of establishing it. The old St. Joseph's Orphanage received the Sisters in its decayed and used-up precincts; but, having been put in thorough repair, this house is still occupied by the sisters, the daughters of Madame Jetté.

There as elsewhere the boredom of building had to be met. Little by little a basement and two storyes were built for the use of the children. Two years later, in 1906, this hostel was transformed into a general hospital at the reiterated request of a celebrated surgeon and of the diocesan authorities. The children and protégées were moved to a new wing built for their use. In 1908, a power house and out-building were raised; and in 1914 the administration building was enlarged and a southern wing with sun porches for convalescents.

This is another prosperous house where nurses are eager to enter the Training School and take up the scientific course, and to graduate from St. Mary's Hospital, which is rated in Class A among the American hospitals. The nursing staff is ordinarily composed of 18 sisters, 30 nurses, with accommodation for 250 patients.

The Town of Green Bay is very old. Situated on the west shore of Lake Michigan, it was founded by Nicolet, a Canadian, in 1634, and was christened "Baie Verte". It has a population of 35,000, and its climate is very salubrious.

Oak Park.—(1907).—Oak Park is a suburb of Chicago, the "Westmount" of the city. Before the construction of the Catholic hospital Oak Park was literally the fortress of Protestantism and bigotry.

This house is a daughter of the New York Institution, as is the preceeding one. To plant this offshoot of the ever growing tree of the Misericorde, God made use of an eminent doctor of the locality, a man of superior and sincere mind, Dr. John

Wesley Tope. This man, a Protestant, ardently desired a Catholic hospital under the direction of nuns. He expressed his desire to his neighbor and friend, Reverend Richard Dunne, who immediately communicated with Reverend Father Fenlon, Sulpician of Dunwoodie Seminary, New York, and admirer of the Sisters of Misericorde. Negotiations were quickly determined, and on September eighth, Mother Nativity's Day, the new foundation was accepted.

The plot of ground, superbly situated, affording the charm of the country and easy communications with the town, was donated; on July 2nd, 1906, Feast of the Visitation, the blessing of the cornerstone took place in the presence of a large concourse of Catholics and Protestants, all delighted to possess a hospital. The first patients were admitted in March of the Next year.

The hospital is a credit to Oak Park; it proudly displays its five stories in vitrified brick, a massive fireproof structure, on a space of 125 x 46 feet. The operating rooms with their glazed balconies on the fifth floor, attract much attention; the X Ray Laboratory with all its electrical equipment used in medical treatment is claimed to be superior to any throughout the Middle West. The building is still, however, unfinished.

Chicago, otherwise known as the "Garden City" owing to the numerous parks by which it is surrounded, does not lose its poetical appellation at Oak Park, the sisters themselves apart from a kitchen-garden, making it a point of honor to maintain a pretty park, delightfully supplied with fresh air, flowers and attractive shrubbery.

The nursing staff is composed of 20 nuns, 30 nurses. The hospital accommodates 100 patients principally rich people, though the poor are received with great cordiality. A school for nurses in connection with the hospital is directed and affiliated with Loyola University of Chicago.

Milwaukee.—(1908).—Before beginning our story let us explain that, at the time of this foundation, the Archbishop of Milwaukee was the same prelate who, at Green Bay, had called the Sisters of Misericorde to his town. Is it surprising that he should undertake new negotiations to endow his present archdiocese with the same benefit?

Doctors always play an important part in everything that

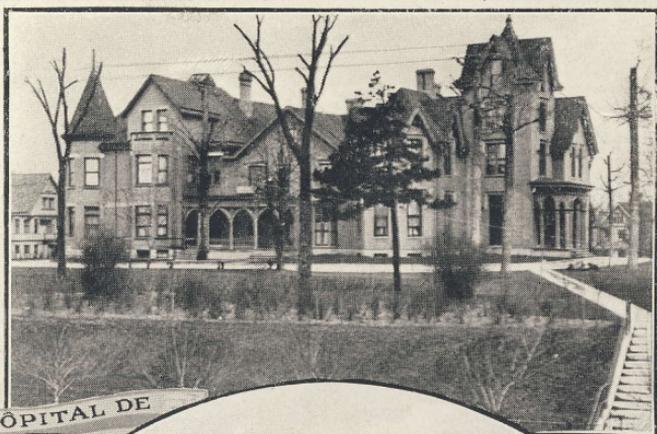
concerns Hospitals,—the doctors of Milwaukee applied to Archbishop Messmer to have a Maternity Hospital established. Immediately the Archbishop had recourse to the Mother-House. Unfortunately the call was refused on account of the rarity of subjects. He waited two years, and one day the sisters came. The episcopal residence became their property, remodeled for hospital use, the bishop taking possession of a new episcopal palace. The grounds stretching gracefully over a block, ornamented with large trees, afford constant enjoyment to all within their enclosure.

Loved by the population, the community with its nine nuns, 15 nurses, received a great number of ladies, and about one hundred protégées annually, and maintaining a childrens' department always well filled.

Pana.—(1914).—Now God called the Sisters of Misericorde to exercise their apostolic zeal in a new country, more than a thousand miles from their Alma Mater, to the coal regions of southern Illinois, where Providence provided unusual means. Let us quote a letter from a faithful friend of the community.

“Dr J. H. Huber, a non-catholic doctor, had practised his profession at Pana, during fifty years. Respected and loved by all, he was considered a great benefactor of the place. He attended the poor gratuitously without discrimination of religion or nationality. The dream of his life had been to endow his town with a hospital; before his death he left \$20,000 to his wife for that purpose. Mrs. Huber, also a non-Catholic, applied to the Catholic parish priest and entreated him to see that nuns took charge of the new hospital. The zealous pastor Rev. J. P. Moroney, at the invitation of Father Breen, c.s.v., went to Oak Park, visited with satisfaction the splendid establishment of the Sisters of Misericorde and insisted on having the same nuns.”

A plot of seven acres was bought on the boundary of the town, and ground was broken by the devoted pastor on May 12th, 1913. It was a gala day in the prosperous town. And now, we have before us a magnificent building in vitrified brick four stories high; it accommodates 50 patients, nine nursing sisters, 10 nurses. Thus do our humble Canadian nuns—not only those of the teaching orders, but also hospital



HÔPITAL DE
MILWAUKEE



HÔPITAL DE PANA,
ILLS.



HÔPITAL DE GREEN BAY, WIS.

nuns—powerfully contribute everywhere in America to spread the love of the Catholic Church and extend her influence.

It was agreed to give the new hospital the name of its celebrated benefactor ; the "Huber Memorial".

CONCLUSION

The various enterprises which turn to account without exhausting the devotion of the Sisters of Misericorde are distributed throughout the United States and Canada, principally in large centers where the good to accomplish is most fruitful and most pressing.

It is the ambition of the community to endow large cities of America with these institutions, so useful to society that in Europe they are regretted where they were suppressed.

No doubt, through all these succinet pages, one has felt, at certain moments, a sense of admiration for the courage, sometimes heroic, of those who were going to unknown parts to lay the lasting foundations of these daring constructions, without any other resources than hope in public charity and blind confidence in Providence. But above the fleeting promises of men, above the paltry calculations of personal interest, above the depressing anguish of continual difficulties, the tenacious foundresses had placed their ideals, their faith and their energy. God blessed them and, faithful towards those who leave all to bend under His yoke, He prepared the ways, levelled the paths, made Christian charity bloom in the hearts of the faithful and drew from His infinite treasures as fast as the needs became more pressing.

Is it not a visible proof of the finger of God, this constant and opportune multiplication of workers of salvation ? Is it not the spirit of God that led the propagators of pardon in the countries of all America thus to fix a point from which they could spread in all directions and limit the field of wrongdoing by increasing that of virtue ? Great are the kindnesses which unceasingly flow from this source of charity.

Catholics are edified at the sight of their austere life, Protestants highly respect and admire their zeal and their disinterested virtue. The ecclesiastical authorities are in perfect

security concerning the application of Catholic principles in all operations and treatments ; civil society itself sees the number of its scandals and immoralities diminish, and the Church of God is increased by all the beauty of the souls who revert to the principles of Christian life. To prove the astonishing fecundity of the work of the Misericorde, we will simply quote these words of the late Archbishop Quigley, of Chicago. He said in regard to the influence of the nuns : "In 1905, when you founded the Oak Park Hospital, there was not a single Catholic parish ; and now there are four flourishing parishes in that locality ; all that is due to the Sisters of Misericorde, to their devotion, and I am sincerely grateful for the good example they have given ".

Let the Mother of all Mercy continue to keep a compassionate eye on her gallant co-operators in the salvation of souls. Let her send numerous new workers, full of generosity, of courage, of zeal, animated with a keen desire of spreading the kingdom of God by the consecration of their lives and of their will to the service of the sick and needy. O God, Father of all piety, make the sweet flower of sacrifice and penance bloom in the hearts of our single-minded young girls. And you who cherish in the secret of your soul the thought of leaving all to follow Christ, come, come with confidence, come without fear to the novitiate of the Sisters of Misericorde, come and offer yourself to the Master of the vine, come and make use of your talents and gain an everlasting crown by accepting the most holy of lives, the life for God and with God.

ADMISSION

To be admitted to the Institute of the Sisters of Misericorde the postulant must be of exemplary life, sound judgment and good character, free from visible or invisible infirmities, free from all obligations or engagements in the world and born of respectable parents. She must have gone through at least an elementary course of studies in some school or Academy. Before she is admitted as postulant, she must produce her certificate of baptism and confirmation, a certificate from her pastor attesting her good conduct, her freedom from marriage-



HÔPITAL DE OAK PARK



GRADUÉES DE 1918.



TERRACE DE L'HÔPITAL



GARDES MALADES GRADUÉES 1918

ies and the integrity of her parents ; she must answer fully and in writing the QUESTIONNAIRE which the Superior General puts before her.

As far as possible (this is a question of justice towards the community and to each nun in particular) every postulant or novice should pay the expenses of her novitiate and her dowry at the time of her profession. Full information is given to all those who ask their admission to the novitiate. The community, however, never refuses to admit a subject endowed with the qualifications required for the religious state, on account of her inability to fulfil the pecuniary conditions.

APPENDIX

LETTER FROM A SUPERIOR ASKING FOR NUNS

NEW YORK, September 30th, 1918.

Reverend and beloved Mother,

Undoubtedly you will rejoice to know that the immense work which we undertook a few years ago to bring our hospital up to the standard of the best hospitals of our large city is nearing completion. We therefore breathe more freely ; heretofore we were unable to meet the demands.

If you could get a glimpse of our operating rooms, laboratory, creches, etc., you would, I am sure, be convinced of the important problem still remaining unsolved, the lack of workers.

You are aware that the medical staff of the hospital has increased one-half within the last six months, which means greater progress ; in consequence, the work has doubled. I have examined closely the continuous and excessive efforts on the part of our small religious family to execute the task assigned to each one ; and I find they are unable to cope with the situation ; hence I am obliged to ask for help.

Not only does the manual work suffer through the insufficiency of subjects, but I have chiefly in view the good of souls

in making this request. Here, more than elsewhere perhaps, more time and patience are required to teach catechism to our protégées ; the little babies require assiduous overseeing at times, not to speak of the good a sister can do at the bedside of the sick and dying. Therefore, for these reasons, we require at least five or six additional nuns to meet both our temporal and spiritual needs.

Kindly pardon the perplexities I am causing you ; your past kindnesses are to me a sure guarantee of success in my present request.

Pray accept anticipated thanks, and believe me in deepest respect.

Sister N. N. superior.

OBITUARY NOTICE OF SISTER ST. MILDRED

1880-1912

The short career of our dear Sister St. Mildred can be summed up in these few words : she was a model of fidelity to the rule, and this regularity dates back not only to her profession, but to her entrance into the novitiate.

She was twenty-six years old when she was admitted into our Community. Having a thorough understanding of the importance of the obligations which she was about to contract, she set to work the very first day to fulfil all her duties with the greatest care and the most exact punctuality.

During the hours of silence she was always recollected and absorbed in her work, never talking or laughing with anyone. She was the very life and soul of recreation. Her mistresses, superiors and companions held her in the highest esteem. Her face radiated calm and serenity, and the welcoming smile with which she greeted everyone will long be remembered.

Having been sent to our New York house five months after her vows, our dear Sister's fervor never slackened. Towards her superiors she always showed the most religious respect and the most filial obedience. The sister who had charge of her during the three years of her life as a professed religious

bears this touching witness : "Sister St. Mildred gave us the constant example of perfect regularity ; she also had great openness of heart, manifesting it in the practice of spiritual direction, although this practice is not a matter of obligation and is left perfectly free according each one's inclination ; but our dear Sister, having at heart her own perfection, would neglect none of the means leading to that end".

What shall we say of her love of work ? For there were no idle moments, and those which were not employed in manual labor were consecrated to prayer.

But Sister St. Mildred was not left long to labor in the Lord's vineyard ; when she was still in what seemed the beginning of her precious career, she was stricken with galloping consumption, which brought her to her grave in less than eight days. As soon as she was told of the danger, she generously made the sacrifice of her young life, awaiting with joy the hours of her last journey. When offered an extraordinary confessor who might help her to settle the affairs of her conscience, she replied with perfect tranquillity : "I am not anxious about anything, I made each of my confessions as if it were the last". Very great indeed was her trust in God. Her favorite prayer was : "Most sweet Jesus, be not my judge, but my Saviour".

Gratitude was her heaven-born characteristic, in the first place thankfulness to God for having called her to the religious state. She never ceased saying how happy she was to die a nun, and telling her visitors that the sweetness she experienced in her last moments was incomparably better than the little she had been able to give up for the Lord. Not only was she pleased with every attention and care bestowed upon her, but she always thought the nursing sisters were doing too much for her, and she would have liked to spare them all that trouble.

The progress of the disease was so rapid that she could not be transferred alive to the Mother-House. When she returned there, death had closed her eyes, but her lips still bore the smile of the faithful spouse going to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. She was in the thirty-second year of her age and had been a nun five years.

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