



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



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

The Role of Religious in Pharmacy Under Canada's "Ancien Regime"

by

Sister M. Giovanni C.S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to
The Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Toronto
In Partial Fulfilment of The Requirements
for The Degree of Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy

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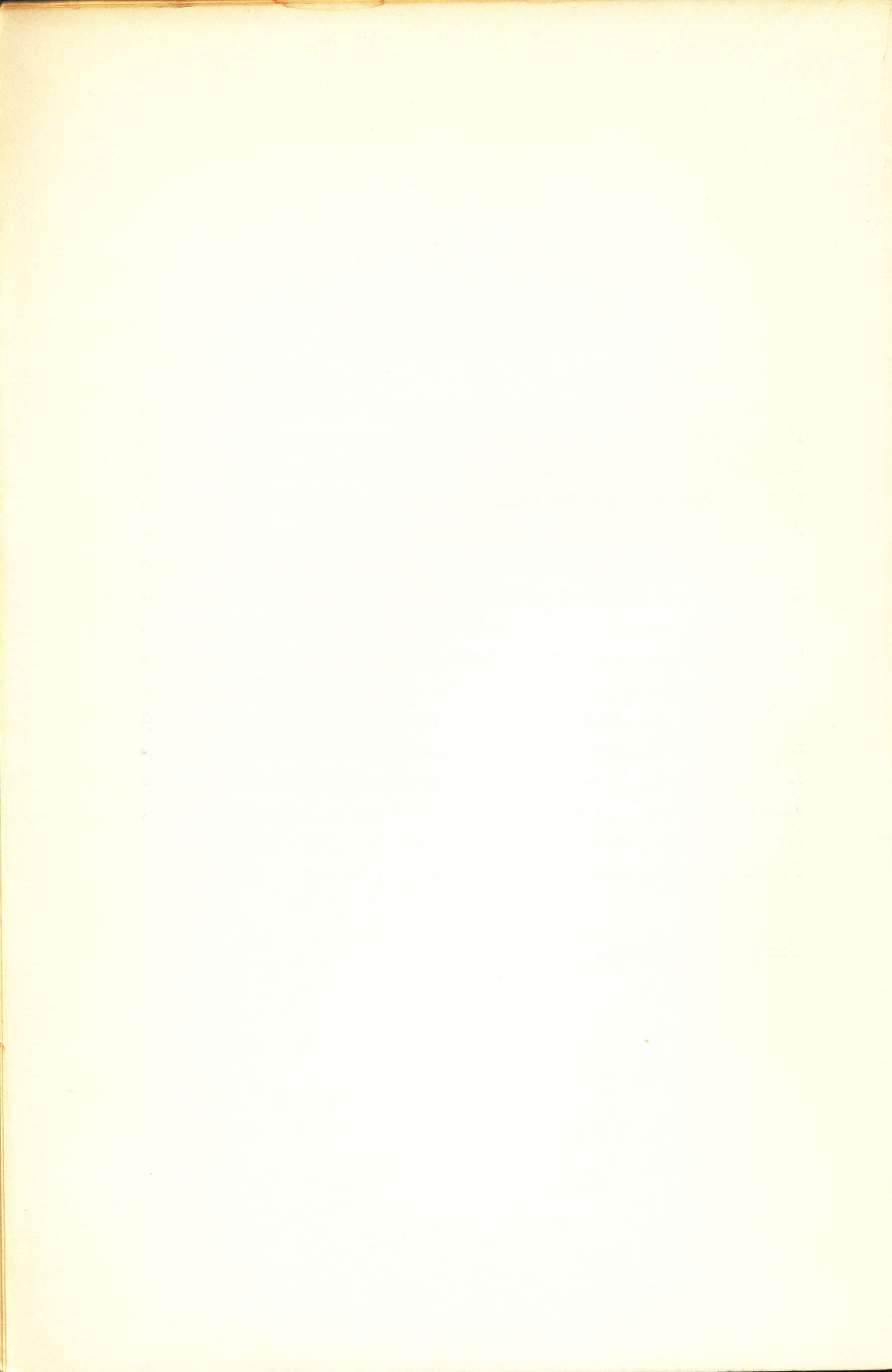
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S.M.G.

Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas.



INTRODUCTION

This is by no means a full history of the early religious in Canada and the part they played in the healing arts. Indeed, a large volume would not suffice to tell all the heroic deeds and accomplishments of these "Knights of Christ".

Rather then, this is an attempt to reveal the contributions of religious to pharmacy. Of necessity, it has been limited to that period covering Canada's "Ancien Régime" (1500 - 1760).

These heroes and heroines of God whose lives were dedicated, claimed charity to the poor, sick, well and rich as their rightful responsibility. Like the church herself, of which they are the "storm troops", the numerous religious communities are successful in so far as they show fidelity to the spirit of their order.

The picture presented is one of hardship, war and disease, all of which played an important role in shaping the destiny of Canada. Nothing, however, could separate these religious from the vocation they had chosen - love of God.

It is my hope that the reader will find here indications of self-sacrifice, devotion to duty and the desire to "give" which the Church of Christ has inspired through the course of the ages.

PART I

THE OLD WORLD

CHAPTER I. PHARMACY AND MONASTICISM

Turning back the pages of the numerous volumes that cover the history of the early middle ages, we find that the practice of the healing arts was the heritage solely of religious. Particularly was this true of the old monasteries in Western Europe; and with the fall of Rome in the fifth century, there began a period of rapid expansion of religious houses.

The monastery established by St. Benedict of Nursia at Monte Cassino in the year 529 is of particular interest to us; it is to this monastery that we are indebted today for much of our pharmaceutical and medical knowledge. The Rule of St. Benedict was based on prayer, work and devotion to duty. Lands were cultivated, the Gospel preached, and a "scriptorium" was set up by the Abbot where the monks copied the ancient manuscripts of both Greek and Roman scholars. The monk, Cassiodorus, urged them to study carefully the works of Hippocrates and Galen, to familiarize themselves with plants useful as drugs and the methods of compounding them.

The general plan of a monastery provided for a "guest house" or hospital apart from the monastery proper. Here the sick poor were treated by the monastic physicians. In the Benedictine monasteries, there was established an infirmary which was also used for preparing medicines. Herbs and spices like ginger and cinnamon were kept in the "amarium" or medicine chest in modern day language. The title "apotecarius" was synonymous with "amarius" meaning keeper of the medicine chest. These apotecaires

must have been considered to be men of high repute and intelligence for in the signing of legal documents their names are to be found directly after that of the Abbot and preceding a list of some thirty other monks.*

The medical and pharmaceutical training of those engaged in this field was purely empirical and taught within the monastery itself. The interested student followed his "preceptor" as it were, on his medical rounds, noting carefully on his tablets the diagnosis made and the treatment given. Under strict supervision he was allowed to compound certain medications and he committed to memory countless medicinal remedies and recipes. As every monastery planted and cultivated a herbal garden, the pupil of pharmacy was able to acquire a considerable amount of basic knowledge regarding the properties and use of these medicinal plants. The counterpart of our present-day "Formulary" was found in every monastery; many of the recipes contained therein were later compiled into the once famous household remedy book.

Among the many documents which have come to us from the monastic houses is one which illustrates the general arrangement of a monastery. What the pharmacist is interested in particularly are those buildings given over to the care of the sick. The following is illustrative of the Abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland which comprised two buildings and a garden directly behind. The first was appropriately named "*Fleotomatis hic gustendum et potionarius*" or the house of the blood letters and servers of purgative drinks. Considerable bloodletting was done in those days especially in the treatment of high fevers. Between the medical garden and the blood-letter's house was the Pharmacy and the residence of the physician. This building was actually divided into four apartments:

- (1) *The Armarium Pigmentorum*
- (2) The Physician's Office
- (3) *The Cubiculum Valide Informorum*
- (4) *The Mansio Medici Ipsuis*

In the "*Armarium Pigmentorum*" or the Apothecary Shop, drugs were stocked and compounded into prescriptions by order of the

* — SUPPAN, L.R., "The Monastic Dispensaries of the Middle Ages" *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*, IV, (1915), 384

physician. Mortars and infusion pots composed the crude apparatus. This dispensary led into the "*Cubiculum Valide Informorum*" — a room for those requiring immediate care by the physician. To the right of the doctor's office was the "*Mansio Medici Ipsuis*" — the home of the physician himself. This arrangement bears a striking resemblance to our modern-day Medical Center !

The medicinal garden was systematically divided into sixteen plots, and included such familiar name plants as *Lilium*, *Menta*, *Rosmarino*, and *Gladiola*. We are told that a book on medicinal herbs was written by the monk Strabus which he called "*Herbulorius*" or Little Garden. Apparently certain religious orders were well known for the cultivation of particular plants — that of the Benedictines being licorice root, while the Carthusians specialized in angelica. Later on they became famous for their essences, cordials and liquors. To this day the formula for Benedictine and Chartreuse is the strict monopoly of the monks.

Monastic orders of women arose simultaneously with monastic orders of men. Little distinction was made among medicine, pharmacy and nursing. The nuns as well as the monks studied the works of Hippocrates and Galen. Often both worked in the same hospital, the nuns looking after the women, while the monks took care of the men. The bulk of the hospitals that remained after the fall of Rome were confined within the church with the exception of two hospitals in France associated with lay groups. These hospitals were the Hotel-Dieu of Lyons and the Hotel-Dieu of Paris. The latter was controlled by a small group of laywomen who eventually formed a religious community of nuns known as the Augustinians. They are the oldest exclusively hospital Sisters in existence today.

The twelfth century saw both the peak of "monastic prestige" and a gradual decline. The monks in particular had acquired great wealth and political power; imperceptibly abuses began to creep into the monasteries. This met with dissatisfaction from the church as well as criticism from the nobility regarding those who were expected to exemplify the knowledge and teachings of Christ. There followed a period of rapid reform by the monks themselves and monastic rules became more rigid in an effort to return to the poverty and simplicity which Benedict had laid down for them in his Holy Rule.

The late middle ages were characterized by the religious expeditions known as the Crusades, formed for the purpose of protecting the people of the Holy Land from Mohammedan rule. These Crusades however, failed to accomplish their purpose and in order to accommodate the wounded Crusaders, many hospitals were established. The beginning of male nurses ensued from these religious wars and much of the caring for the sick formerly done by the monasteries was carried on by them. A period of reform was begun which resulted in a widespread movement toward suppression of the monasteries. Monks and nuns were deprived of practicing the healing arts as hospitals were taken from them, and the care of the poor and the sick neglected while wars were waged for religious opinion. The one exception to this was found at the Hotel-Dieu of Paris, operated by the Augustinian Sisters de Dieppe. These sisters were allowed to carry on their work in the hospital which housed over six hundred people and from which no one was refused admittance. The reputation for unremitting toil which the nuns established still exists in their hospitals today; it is the part played by these and other religious orders in hospital and pharmacy in the new world with which we are concerned, and which I shall endeavour in the following pages to bring to light.

PART II

QUEBEC

CHAPTER II. FRANCE IN THE NEW WORLD

The state of religious intolerance which existed in Europe at the termination of the fifteenth century left the people restless and fearful. Along with this, the discovery of America in the year 1492 by Christopher Columbus, had awakened the spirit of adventure and many began to leave the Old World for the New.

Francis I, the brilliant and dissipated king of France, had become jealous of the enormous pretensions of Spain and Portugal in the New World, and in 1534 this enterprising king commissioned Jacques Cartier to find a short passage to America and claim a new dominion for France. Cartier succeeded in entering the Gulf of St. Lawrence and in the year 1535 erected a cross and planted the "*fleur de lis*" of France on the Indian Villages of Stadacona, now Quebec, and Hochelaga, now Montreal. The savages who swarmed about the French on their arrival, regarded them as superior beings endowed with supernatural powers. Cartier was called upon to "heal the sick, the lame, the blind and the maimed as if a god had come down to cure them".¹

That year the French visitors spent the winter at Stadacona where the dreadful scurvy broke out among them. Only after many of the crew died as a result of this hideous disease did Cartier discover, quite by accident, that the Indians possessed a remedy for this malady. He was told by one of the savages to make an infusion of the bark and the leaves of the hemlock spruce tree and then to administer copious draughts of this decoction to those who were

1 — BIGGAR, H.P., *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier*, Ottawa: Published from the Original with translations, notes and appendices (1924), pp. 164-165.

afflicted. The results were astonishing. Thus was established a record of the first disease as well as the first prescription in Canada.

This prescription, however, was not known to the French in Acadia some sixty-eight years later when Champlain and his party of seventy-nine persons spent the winter on the Isle St.-Croix and many of the men died from scurvy. Lescarbot, who came to Port Royal in the year 1605, tells us that the Indians there were not familiar with the "Tree of Life" or the hemlock spruce and that the physicians in France had not given any instructions to their apothecary, Louis Hébert, regarding this disease. Apothecary Hébert bestowed the most assiduous care on the sick; he studied the symptoms of this terrible "*mal de terre*"² and tried to stop its progress. The best of remedies were administered to Champlain's men but in spite of Hébert's knowledge of drugs he was unable to save them all: thirty-six died.

Louis Hébert, the son of an apothecary in the service of Queen Catherine de 'Medici, was born in Paris and he was the first white man to settle in Canada. The year was 1617. Marc Lescarbot, who wrote the first history of New France, tells us that Hébert, besides being a master in his profession "*secundum artem*" took great pleasure in tilling the soil and in growing corn and other vegetables.

Colonization of New France was slow and for the most part the inhabitants were Indians and Eskimos. The tribes which peopled the lower St. Lawrence and the Ottawa valleys at this time were the Algonquins, the Hurons, and their mutual enemy, the Iroquois. Exposed as they were to varying degrees of wind and weather, these savages were considered to be a stalwart race. From the Jesuit Relations we know that the Indians themselves had little knowledge of internal medicine. In certain cases, or if the immediate cause of the illness was known, they made use of potions, and emetics and of various waters which they applied to the diseased area. Even in this their knowledge was very slight; for it was limited to some powdered roots and some simples gathered in season³. Serious diseases, however, required supernatural help and could

2 — The term "*mal de mer*" refers here to the dreadful scurvy that broke out among Champlain's men in the year 1604.

3 — THWAITES, REUBEN GOLD, ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 Vols. Cleveland; Burrows Bros. 1896-1901, Vol. XXXIII, p. 203.

only be given by the Medicine Man. They believed that this type of disease was caused by some hidden desire of the patient's soul which must be divined with the help of dreams and riddles; or it was believed to be due to a spell or charm placed upon his body by a sorcerer acting from without, which must be exorcised and removed either by emesis or by blowing upon or incising and sucking the painful part and pretending to extract a small stone, twig or other object that had usually been concealed in the Medicine Man's mouth.

This is the land then, to which the early explorers came; and along with them came the missionary, eager and zealous to heal both body and soul of the native tribes. The first religious order to take up residence in Canada was the Recollet Friars who arrived in the year 1615. Before many months had passed, these grey-robed friars saw resentment in the faces of the Medicine Men who regarded them as rivals. Realizing that the scope of their task was too large and the diseases of the Indians too frequent for their small band to cope with, they decided to solicit the help of the most powerful and steadfast religious order in France — the Jesuits, founded in 1534 by the Spanish nobleman Ignatius Loyola.

In 1625, four members of this body of well-trained and disciplined missionaries disembarked on the coast of Quebec. They accepted the home offered to them by the Recollet Friars and immediately set to work to establish an infirmary for the sick and a school for the Indian children. These Jesuits, for the most part, were men of intelligence and gentle breeding, and in the life of these religious, self played no part. In the words of Francis Parkman:

“ . . . these men conquered every weakness of the flesh, braved the cold, the wet, the misery, the daily nausea of life in an Indian village, with its perpetual stench, its dirt, its bad and scanty food, with the prospect ever in the background of death by the most subtle and excruciating torture. Their ability, too, was high. A Canadian proverb ran: ‘ You can cut out a Recollet with a hatchet, a parish priest with a chisel, but for a Jesuit you need the pencil of an artist! ’ ”⁴

4 — PARKMAN, FRANCIS, *The Jesuits in North America*, Toronto, Frontenac Edition, 1900, Vol. I, p. 176.

The Jesuits laboured with unparalleled devotion among the Indians, teaching the children and caring for the sick and the injured to the best of their ability. The year 1633 saw an epidemic of smallpox sweep through the village like a devastating flame. The savages, to whom this disease was foreign, tried to alleviate their distress by the sweat-bath and many deaths ensued as a result. They ascribed small-pox to the medicine of the "blackrobes" as their own system of medicine broke down. But the Jesuits were not to be intimidated and the Relations record the following:

"... our men, singly or in pairs, journeyed in the depth of the winter from village to village ministering to the sick. Happily, perhaps, for their patients they had no medicine, but a little senna. A few raisins were left, however; and one or two of these with a spoonful of sweetened water were now eagerly accepted by the sufferers, who thought them endowed with some mysterious and sovereign efficacy.

Amid peril and discomfort they toiled on, their patience, their assiduity, their contempt of death soon won them respect of the natives and prospects for the future looked bright".⁵

It is interesting to note that it was before the missionaries of the cross, and not before the men of science that these savages finally gave way.

The year 1634 still saw these men of the cross trudging from one infected place to another through all kinds of weather. One great aim encompassed their lives, "*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*" (For the greater glory of God). One cannot help but admire the zeal with which they continued to pursue it.

CHAPTER III. THE ARRIVAL OF THE HOSPITAL SISTERS AT QUEBEC

Although the growth of the colony in New France was slow, by the year 1634 the need for a hospital made itself manifest. This need was met in the form of a generous and enthusiastic response from those in the circles of "*haute devotion*"⁶ who had read the

5 — TWAITES, *op. cit.*, Vol. XVI, p. 53.

6 — PARKMAN, FRANCIS, *The Jesuits in North America*, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1925, p. 284.

annual reports of the *Jesuit Relations* published in France and the appeal of Father Le Jeune — Jesuit Superior in Canada:

“ If only we had a hospital here, how the Indians would flock to us. We make efforts to take care of the men, but who will look after the women? ”

“ Again and again Le Jeune and Ragineau among the band of the early Jesuits look expectantly to the East for the coming of the hospital sisters, and plan to entrust many a young Indian girl to the safe-keeping of the nuns when they should arrive ”. ⁷

Most prominent among those who had read Father Le Jeune's appeal was the wealthy, aristocratic Duchesse d'Aiguillon, niece of Cardinal Richelieu. Through the Cardinal's influence and with his full consent, she succeeded in obtaining a grant of land from the Company of New France which had been established a few years previous. Three years later she engaged the services of the Augustinian Hospitallers of Dieppe to run her proposed hospital in Canada and a contract was drawn up to that effect. These sisters belonged to the same Community that operated the Hotel-Dieu in Paris and had adopted constitutions based on the rule of St. Augustine, which stated that “ hospital work exacts of every nun that she sacrifice herself for the service of the sick poor, seeking above all a heart open to charity and a soul tender and compassionate for the sick.”⁸ This spirit has not dimmed through the years.

The sisters chosen for this self-sacrificing mission to Canada were Marie de St. Ignace, Anne de St. Bernard and Marie de St. Bonaventure de Jésus. All three were nurses but the Archives of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec show that likewise all three had received some practical training in compounding and dispensing.

In May 1639, these Augustinians sailed from Dieppe accompanied by three Ursuline sisters and their benefactress, Madame de la Peltrie. Madame de la Peltrie was another member of the aristocracy in France who had responded to the appeal of the Jesuits for teaching sisters by procuring the services of the nuns from the

7 — Quoted from the Tercentenary of the Foundation of the Hotel-Dieu of Quebec, published by the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada.

8 — Translated from the Constitutions des Religieuses Hospitalières de la Miséricorde de Jésus, Quebec, 1878.

Order of St. Ursula. Mother Marie de l'Incarnation was chosen from the Ursuline group as Mother Superior.

The welcome given the nuns on their arrival at Quebec more than compensated for the three months of hazardous navigation they had to endure. But hardly had they landed when they found themselves besieged by patients; smallpox had struck the little colony. The trials and hardships experienced by the first sisters in Canada are best related by Father Viemont in the *Jesuit Relations* of 1640:

"The Hospital Nuns arrived at Kebec on the first day of August last year. Scarcely had they disembarked before they found themselves overwhelmed with patients. The hall of the hospital being too small, it was necessary to erect some cabins, fashioned like those of the savages in their garden. Not having furniture for so many people, they had to cut in two or three pieces part of the blankets and sheets they had brought for these poor sick people. In a word, instead of taking a little rest and refreshing themselves after the great discomforts they had suffered upon the sea, they found themselves so burdened and occupied that we had fear of losing them and their hospital at its very birth. The sick came from all directions in such numbers, their stench was so insupportable, the heat so great, the fresh food so scarce and so poor, in a country so new and so strange, that I do not know how these good sisters, who almost had not even leisure time in which to take a little sleep, endured all these hardships.

In brief, from the first of August until the month of May, more than one hundred patients entered the hospital, and more than two hundred savages found relief there one or two nights, or more. There have been as many as ten, twelve, or thirty of them at a time.

What I am about to relate is taken from the letters of the Mother Superior: 'The patience of our sick astonished me. I have seen many whose bodies are entirely covered with smallpox and in a burning fever, complaining no more than if they were not sick, strictly obeying and showing gratitude for the slightest service rendered them.

The remedies that we brought from Europe are very good for the Savages, who have no difficulty in taking our medicines, nor in having themselves bled".⁹

The indefatigable zeal with which these nuns continued to perform their duties has been aptly related by Francis Parkman:

9 — KENTON, EDNA ed., *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (1610-1791), New York: A. and C. Boni, 1925, pp. 169-170.

"It is difficult to conceal a self-abnegation more complete than that of the early hospital sisters. In the absence of trained and skilled physicians, the burden of the sick and the wounded fell upon them. . . they were models of that benign and tender charity of which the Roman Catholic Church is so rich in examples ".¹⁰

But devotion to duty, lack of sleep, insufficient food and foreign customs soon told on our little band of heroines as the following passage translated from the *Annales* of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec confirms:

"In 1640 our fatigue was so great that the three of us became ill. During that time, the Jesuit Fathers looked after our poor Indians, and as soon as we were able to be up, the one among us who felt the best, returned to the hospital, only to find a typical man's apartment — that is to say dirty and disorderly. The linen was ragged and ruined and everything was so full of filth that it would have been impossible to clean it ".¹¹

A typical feminine reaction it is true, but one that can well be appreciated in lieu of the fact that cleanliness was practically the only means of warding off infection and disease at this time.

This year saw the sisters move to a new and larger hospital at Sillery, about four miles from Quebec. Here they were free to emanate the true spirit of their order — to make their l'Hôtel-Dieu¹² as they appropriately named it, a place where old Indian women and children too, sick or well would find a ready welcome. An outpatient department was quickly established by the nuns, and it was here that they won both the hearts and the souls of the skeptical and not too friendly savages. As previously mentioned, none of the Augustian sisters were qualified pharmacists in the sense of the word today; but all three had a basic knowledge of the compounding and dispensing done in their times. It appears to have been an essential requirement for nursing sisters in the l'Hôtel-Dieu of Paris, France. Mixtures, electuaries, syrups, pills, powders and

10 — PARKMAN, FRANCIS, *The Old Regime in Canada*, 2 Vols., Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1885, Vol. II, pp. 157-158.

11 — JAMET, DOM. ALBERT, O.S.B., Rd., *Les Annales de L'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec*, (1636-1716). Quebec, Hotel-Dieu, 1939, p.24.

12 — The term *L'Hotel Dieu* meaning "House of God".

poultices were among the remedies prepared and gratuitously given to all who sought their aid, the cheerful smile and encouraging words dispensed with them accomplishing as much therapeutically as the medicine itself.

The drugs which the sisters employed to prepare their prescriptions were ordered from France periodically; aloes, senna and castor oil were used as purgatives; crude drugs like squill and scammony as emetics; others such as calomel, camomile, almond oil, turpentine and epsom salts found their proper places on the make-shift shelves of the out-patient dispensary. Many of these drugs are used today but to a lesser extent. Later on the sisters had their own garden and parts of certain plants were used therapeutically to make infusions and simples, the latter being employed by the Indians for wounds and disorders of every kind.

From the Indian women the nuns learned the art of making infusions and simples. The French were surprised to find that the Indians possessed a certain knowledge of drugs and medicine; and they had remedies such as expectorants, emetics, purgatives, even emmenagogues. For the most part, however, the prescription formulas were those used by the sisters in their French hospitals, many of them dating back to the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, the oldest Pharmacopoeia in possession of l'Hôtel-Dieu today bears the date 1676, earlier copies of books of *Materia Medica* and pharmaceutical recipes having been destroyed in the fire of 1755.¹³

Before the coming of the white man, contagious diseases among the Indians were rare. Inflammation of the lungs, dropsy and gout were the usual maladies. More than one case of the latter was treated by the application of a poultice prepared by adding barley flour, powdered flaxseed and oil of Lily to the extract and herbs of mallows, camomile and elder leaves. Apparently effective results ensued when the concoction was applied to the proper area. Diseases of the eye were common; we are told that the treatment of such diseases consisted in making "an infusion of euphrasia and with this they washed their eyes".¹⁴

13 — Personal interview with Sister St. Nazaire and Sister St. Elizabeth, o.s.a., Archivists L'Hôtel-Dieu de Quebec, June 1961.

14 — CHAMPAGNE, A. BEAUGRAND, "Les Maladies et La Medecine des Anciens Iroquois", *Les Cahiers des Dix*, Vol. IX, 1944, pp. 228-229.

"While at Sillery, the sisters availed themselves of the opportunity of learning the Indian language and the found that the singing of hymns to the Algonquins and Hurons in their native tongue had its curative value."¹⁵ A form of psychiatric treatment perhaps?

From 1640 until 1644 the little hospital at Sillery was operated by the sisters; but the attacks of the Iroquois on the Algonquin and Huron tribes were increasing daily and the lives of sisters were constantly in danger because of the help they were giving to the Hurons. It became necessary for them to abandon Sillery for Quebec where for two years they occupied the old hut which had originally housed the Ursulines in 1639; the new hospital was ready for occupancy in the year 1646.

CHAPTER IV. EPIDEMICS, WARS AND DRUGS

That disease and epidemics have played an important part in shaping the destiny of our country is a fact recognized by too few people; but a glimpse at the years between 1648 — 1760 have shown this to be so.

With the arrival of the kings' ships from France in 1648 there was an increase in the population of the colony and likewise an increase in the number of settlers requiring hospitalization. Once more the Duchesse d'Aiguillon came to the financial rescue of the Hospitaliers and in 1658 a second addition was added to the l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec in order to accommodate the influx of sick. Among those newly arrived from France was a Jesuit Brother — one Florent Bonnemere, a qualified pharmacist who had acquired the reputation of being an equally qualified doctor. From the History of the Ursulines of Quebec (Vol. I, p.194) we learn that in this capacity he had rendered to Mother Marie de la Troche de St. Joseph, an Ursuline religious, necessary services during her long and painful illness.¹⁶

So much so it seems that his superiors eventually put a stop to

15 — GIBBON, JOHN MURRAY and MATTHEWSON, MARY S., *Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing*. Toronto; The MacMillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1947, p. 10.

16 — ADHERN, DRS M.J. and GEORGE, Notes Pour Servir à *L'Histoire de la Médecine dans le Bas-Canada*, Depuis la Fondation de Québec Jusqu'au Commencement du XIX Siècle, Québec, 1923, p. 65.

it. The *Jesuit Relations* for October, 1659 records the following:

"Item: De frère Bonnemere, moderanda actio chirurgi circa foemen-eum sexam. En marge on lit, "chirurgus non curet foeminas." Le chirurgien ne doit pas soigner les femmes".¹⁷

In 1659, typhus fever was rampant in Canada for the first time, — the arrival of the French vessel the *St. André*, was thought to be responsible. According to the letters of Mère Marie de l'Incarnation in the year 1664 "there were no diseases in Canada except those which were brought us by the vessels of the king. About one hundred of those who disembarked died".¹⁸ The sisters laboured day and night to give the required medical attention to the unfortunate victims and where drugs and medicines proved ineffective which indeed they did, it became necessary to bleed their patients at the temple.

While the sisters saved many lives with their pharmaceutical knowledge, history has recorded an incident which shows that this was not their only means of curing the sick:

"At the beginning of the year 1667, a native of Toulouse. John Pradère, was admitted to l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. As a result of paralysis, this soldier had lost the use of one leg; and a stomach disease led the surgeons of his regiment to believe that his days were numbered. This soldier, who wanted so much to live promised God that if his health were returned to him. he would consecrate himself to the service of the l'Hôtel-Dieu until his death. After having prepared himself for death by receiving the Last Rites of the Church, he found that his stomach ailment has disappeared completely, but his leg remained paralysed. Pradère had heard of the miracles wrought at the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré and dreamt of going there to make a novena. It was the Hospitaller nuns that supplied the means to make his dream come true. His first few days at the shrine brought only a sharp increase in the pains in his leg instead of diminishing them. The fifth day, overcome by the pain, he became unconscious. It was during this time that his malady disappeared, for on regaining consciousness his paralysed leg was as supple as the other. He had been cured!"¹⁹

17 — THWAITES, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

18 — RICHAUDEAU, L'ABBE, *Lettres de la Mère Marie de l'Incarnation*, Paris, 1876, Vol. II, p. 274.

19 — ROY, PIERRE-GEORGES, *A Travers l'Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Quebec*, Levis, 1939, p.64.

One will have to admit these charitable women in the garb of the Augustinian, lost no opportunity when a human life was at stake.

The city of Quebec suffered great havoc in 1685 on the arrival of His Majesty's ships as typhus and smallpox epidemics once more took their toll of human lives. And it was to be ever thus. Sœur Françoise Juchereau, historian of the l'Hôtel-Dieu, writing of the arrival says:

"There were so many sick in these ships that the wards were soon filled as well as the chapel, the barns and all the hospital grounds, wherever a place could be found for them — even tents were put up in the yard. We redoubled our efforts to serve them and they had great need of our help. Fevers, terrible and burning, delirium and much scurvy. . .

We had many remedies to help them of which the best was to bleed them at the temple and we saved many in that way who otherwise gave no appearance of cure. . ."²⁰

In 1690 the English under Sir William Phips attacked the French led by Count Frontenac but were forced to retreat as hundreds of their men died from smallpox which had become prevalent among the troops while on the march. Here disease saved the day for Canada.

By 1692, Bishop de St. Vallier realizing the need for more hospital accommodation, built the l'Hôpital General at Quebec. The sisters had increased their numbers and he arranged to have four Augustinians transferred from l'Hôtel-Dieu to L'Hôpital General in order to care for the sick of both sexes. The sisters chose as physician of the hospital Michael Sarrazin, whose contributions to the pharmaceutical and medical fields are well-known, and without whom a knowledge of the history of medicine during the French Régime in Canada would be incomplete. As physician to the sisters he was indirectly connected with their work, and so I will mention him here.

Sarrazin was regarded as a modern surgeon imbued with the aphorisms of Hippocrates: "That which the medications would not cure, the iron would cure; that which the iron would not cure ought

20 — JUCHEREAU, SOEUR FRANCOISE, *L'Histoire de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec*, Montauban, 1751, p. 283.

to be regarded as incurable".²¹ In the line of research, he had been engaged along with the apothecary of the Jesuit College, to investigate the chemical composition of Glauber's Salts which he used in large quantities. The discovery of the curative properties of the pitcher plant (*Sarracinia purpurea*) in the treatment of smallpox has been attributed to him. His work in the field of Botany served to augment his knowledge of local remedies and "he never failed to note in his description of every plant, its pharmaceutical properties and uses".²² His death in 1693 was a great loss to the sisters as well as to the hospital.

The smallpox epidemic of 1702-1703 caused many deaths among the colonists, but the mortality rate reached its peak in the year 1710 when the *Belle Brun* anchored at Quebec harbour bringing with it that terrible plague "Mal de Siam" or Yellow Fever. As the science of diagnosis was little known then, bleeding, starving and purging were resorted to in all cases of fever and in the words of one writer "what the sisters lacked in modern methods of compounding medications, they made up for in hard work".²³

In the meantime, Bishop de St. Vallier of Quebec had established another hospital at Three Rivers. The nuns now numbered forty-six and we are told by the annalist of l'Hôtel-Dieu that in 1714 two religious from other hospitals came to l'Hôtel-Dieu in Quebec to take a course in dispensing. For a month or so Reverend Mother Genevieve Juchereau de la Chenay de St. Augustin of L'Hôpital General, and Reverend Mother St. Joseph, (Ursuline) from the new hospital at Three Rivers were taught the art of preparing and dispensing those medications most frequently prescribed. And just what did this entail? Poultices, purgatives, plasters, lotions, elixirs and simples were the order of the day, many of which required the long and tedious process of extraction before they could be dispensed.

21 — VALLÉE, ARTHUR, *Michael Sarrazin (1659-1735), Sa Vie, Ses Travaux, et Son Temps*, Quebec, 1927, p. 273.

22 — ABBOTT, MAUDE E., *History of Medicine in the Province of Quebec*, Montreal, McGill University, 1931, p. 25.

23 — HEAGERTY, J.J., *Four Centuries of Medical History*, 2 Vols., Toronto, The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1928, Vol. I, p. 271.

Further knowledge of the type of remedies prescribed at this time may be found in the Historical Museum of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. The fine Sèvres china apothecary jars and pots which long ago contained ointments, electuaries and theriacs on the shelves of the sisters' dispensary are today regarded as priceless treasures. Earthenware jugs about three feet high "*pour fabriquer l'eau de chaux*" would lead us to believe that lime water was used extensively. The early sisters carefully preserved such pharmaceutical equipment as ornate mortars, large pill rollers and slipper-type medicine spoons. In an era of comparatively little or no scientific progress, one is left with the impression that these sisters prepared many prescriptions "*secundum artem*".

Mention must be made too, of the numerous old volumes in the Archives of l'Hôtel Dieu pertaining to pharmacy, *materia medica* and medicine. From one old volume dated 1683, we learn that artificial leeching and poultices were commonly employed; and it suggests a formula for a pommade to be applied in the case of inflammation:

"Place an earthworm in the oils of rose, camomile and sweet almond, mix with elder and the white of an egg. This will be cooling and refreshing; if the pain be extreme, a little poppy oil added will act as an analgesic".²⁴

Here is a remedy for cancer, compounded from simple herbs, in use as early as the seventeenth century:

"... To an open cancer, which is the most common, the *Amara-dulis*, also called solanaceous wood (because in effect, this plant has woody stems) is a tried and true remedy. All one has to do is to pound the freshly picked leaves in a mortar with a wooden pestle and apply to the area in the form of a poultice which is changed every twelve hours".²⁵

This is a far cry from many present day treatments.

Certain explanations of simple drugs used in the practice of medi-

24 — CONSTANT DE REBACQUE, JACOB, *Le Chirurgien François Charitable*, Lyons, Jean Certe, 1683, p. 155.

25 — *Les Oeuvres Médicinales de l'Herboriste D'Attigna*, Lyons, Jean Thioly et Antoine Bourdet, 1695, Tome I, p.6.

cine at this time were very crude; others rather amusing. Witness the following examples:

"*Ciconia* (en François Cicogne) is an aquatic bird of medium weight. . . It has been said that she injects some sea water with her beak into "la dernière" of her little ones when they are indisposed. Our present-day enema is thought to have originated from this observation but one is not certain that this is true. . ." ²⁶

And from the same book:

"*Felis* (en François chat). . . the ear of a live cat resembles the felon and its progress can be hindered by placing the infected finger several times during the day into this ear and leaving it there for a quarter of an hour each time.

A cat, recently killed, opened and applied will relieve pains in the side " ²⁷

Superstition and medicine were certainly strangely combined in this Pharmacopoeis!

Malignant fevers continued periodically to ravage the colony of Quebec through the years 1718 to 1735. The wonderful care given by the sisters and priests in their hospitals was indicative of the low mortality rate which their records showed. Despite the frequency of these epidemics, good physicians were the exception, not the rule and many unqualified or "quack" practitioners carried on their activities. In a class by themselves however, were the infirmarians or apothecaries of the Jesuits who kept on hand a large stock of medications and drugs which they sold to those who were able to pay for them, and which they gave gratuitously to the poor. It was the apothecary who prepared and distributed these drugs; thus it was that several of the Jesuit apothecaries had acquired the reputation of being skilful doctors.

But for the most part, the physicians at this time had very little knowledge. It was so true in fact that James Bowman ²⁸ when

26 — LEMERY, NICHOLAS, *Traité Universel des Drogues Simples*. Paris, Laurent D'Houry, p. 232.

27 — *Ibid.*, p. 341.

28 — BOWMAN here referred to is Dr. James Bowman, who later became physician of Hotel-Dieu du Précieux Sang, Québec, and who established observations regarding the disease "*Mal de la Baie St. Paul*" in 1785.

writing to the Governor was able to say to him: "In few parishes of the Province can there be found anyone in the practice of medicine and surgery who is better educated along these lines than the priests; and where the contrary exists, the latter could easily become more learned than their physicians".²⁹

Such was the case with the Boispineau brothers, Jean Jard and Charles, both apothecaries in the Jesuit Order. Particularly was this true of the elder of the two, Jean Jard who had a great reputation in the medical field and was very often consulted even during the lifetime of the great Sarrazin. Not only did he compound and furnish remedies but he performed operations as well, at one time removing a tumour from the cheek of one of the Jesuit novices. Boispineau also acted as agent ("*Homme d'affaires*") for the religious of l'Hôtel-Dieu and in 1735 made a trip to France which involved a business transaction with Messieurs Dupas et Fils at La Rochelle. There is no indication given that this transaction involved drugs, but it may well have.

In this respect careful accounts of all merchandise imported from France were kept by the sisters. The following pages are photostatic copies of the originals supplied by the Archivist of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec. They serve to illustrate the drugs most commonly used at this time and, to a lesser extent, the frequency of their use.

From the "Lettres de Mère Marie-Andrés Duplessis de Sainte-Hélène we are given some idea of the correspondence that was carried on between the sisters in Quebec and the "*maître apothécaire*" in France.:

"Memoire of the remedies or drugs to be charges and sent to the poor of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec in 1735 by Monsieur Feret:

- 3 x sweet almond oil
- 1 x anise oil
- 1 x camomile oil
- 4 oz. Elixir Theriaca
- 2 oz. aromatic spirits of ammonia
- 4 oz. essence d'absinthe
- + 1 x green balm
- ½ x essence of canelle
- 6 good lancets

29 — ADHERN, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

- + 5 x turpentine
- + 2 x epsom salts

The articles marked with a cross may be omitted if this order exceeds the amount of money sent.

We ask you Monsieur, to make sure that those items which we cannot obtain in Canada are in good condition when they leave France, such as the essence of d'absinthe, essence of canelle, elixir theriaca, anise oil and aromatic spirits of ammonia. If it is satisfactory and convenient for you to do so, we would appreciate your putting the oils, essences and other powder in white metal powder jars, all five inches in height and of the same width. Then we can use them to decorate the shelves of our apothecary shop. The syrups can be put into smooth, tin containers of uniform height, like that of the sample.

Our sisters also wish to know how to order the different types of apothecary jars with the name of the drug stamped right on the jar.

- 2 dozen bottles, five inches high
- 2 dozen bottles, two inches high, white glass and flat in shape
- 3 apothecary jars for holding syrups, with the name of the drug right on the jar. Send two and keep one for a model.
- 3 apothecary pots eight or nine inches tall, with the names of the electuaries. . . ³⁰

and another time
Sir:

" Captain (Helie) is bound to surprise his friends by his departure, because the last time I saw him, I had asked him to let us know in advance when he was leaving. However, he sent a sailor for some vegetables in the garden of the poor who told me that he plans to leave to-morrow. For this reason my letter to you will be written in a hurry. Part of what I have to send you is a little stalk of capillary (fern), this year's crop, which has just been picked and which is very dry. I do want to include some red spruce gum whose properties are marvelous for all kinds of pain, even pains in the chest and in the stomach. You use it by rubbing it on. Put it over the fire with some olive oil and this will make a kind of clear salve which you can rub

30 — " Nova Francia ", *Organe de la Société d'Histoire du Canada*, Montréal, Granger Frères, Jan.-Feb. 1929, Vol. IV, pp. 236-238.

on, and apply to soaked blotting paper on the parts with a cloth. This is esteemed very highly in our country and is much sought after. The buds of this spruce steeped in brandy are a good remedy for stomach ache. You can try it if you like sir. This brandy *is good for mouth diseases too*

(Mr. Feret, Master druggist and apothecary in Dieppe) 1749

Your very humble and obedient servant,

MÈRE DE L'ENFANT JÉSUS

Dépositaire des pauvres ".³¹

From this letter of Mère de l'Enfant Jésus, it appears that information regarding certain substances used in the compounding of prescriptions as well as the actual substances were exchanged between the two countries.

The years from 1740-1750 saw several of the sisters fall victims of haemorrhagic smallpox, reducing their numbers to the least extremity. Those remaining, though worn out with fatigue and twenty-four hour vigils, seemed to welcome and embrace this contact with suffering as a means of augmenting their own strength. Pierre Kalm, noted European Scientist, from his travels throughout Quebec in the year 1749 tells us:

"... The nuns took care of the sick, brought them their meals and looked after their every need. The hospital also had its attendants and surgeons besides the sisters. The King's physician, François Gaultier visited the patients at the hospital once or twice a day; he went from one bed to the other, followed by the nuns to whom he gave his prescriptions ".³²

The details of these prescriptions were not disclosed.

Six years later the Hôtel-Dieu was almost completely demolished as a result of a fire thought to have been set by a group of sailors. Miraculously all of the patients were saved and moved to L'Hôpital General, but one of the sisters lost her life in the terrible disaster. The Jesuits quickly came to the rescue of the nuns and an entire section of their own quarters was made ready for the use of the sisters. Thanks to the Bishop of Quebec, Monseigneur de Pontbriand

31 — *ibid.*, Vol. p. 109.

32 — *Mémoires de la Société Historique de Pierre Kalm*, Québec, 1749, p. 102.

and the Marquis de Vaudreuil, governor of Canada, the hospital was reconstructed and ready for occupancy by the year 1757.

Immediately a number of typhus victims were admitted; "twenty two of the sisters caught the disease and five died."³³ To add to their misfortunes, rumour had it that the English were making extensive plans to take New France. By 1759 war had been declared; the British led by General Wolfe laid siege to Quebec and at the famous Battle of the Plains of Abraham fought against the French General Montcalm. Both Generals were fatally wounded and the history of the Ursulines of Quebec indicated that it was an apothecary, who attended Montcalm's wounds after the battle:

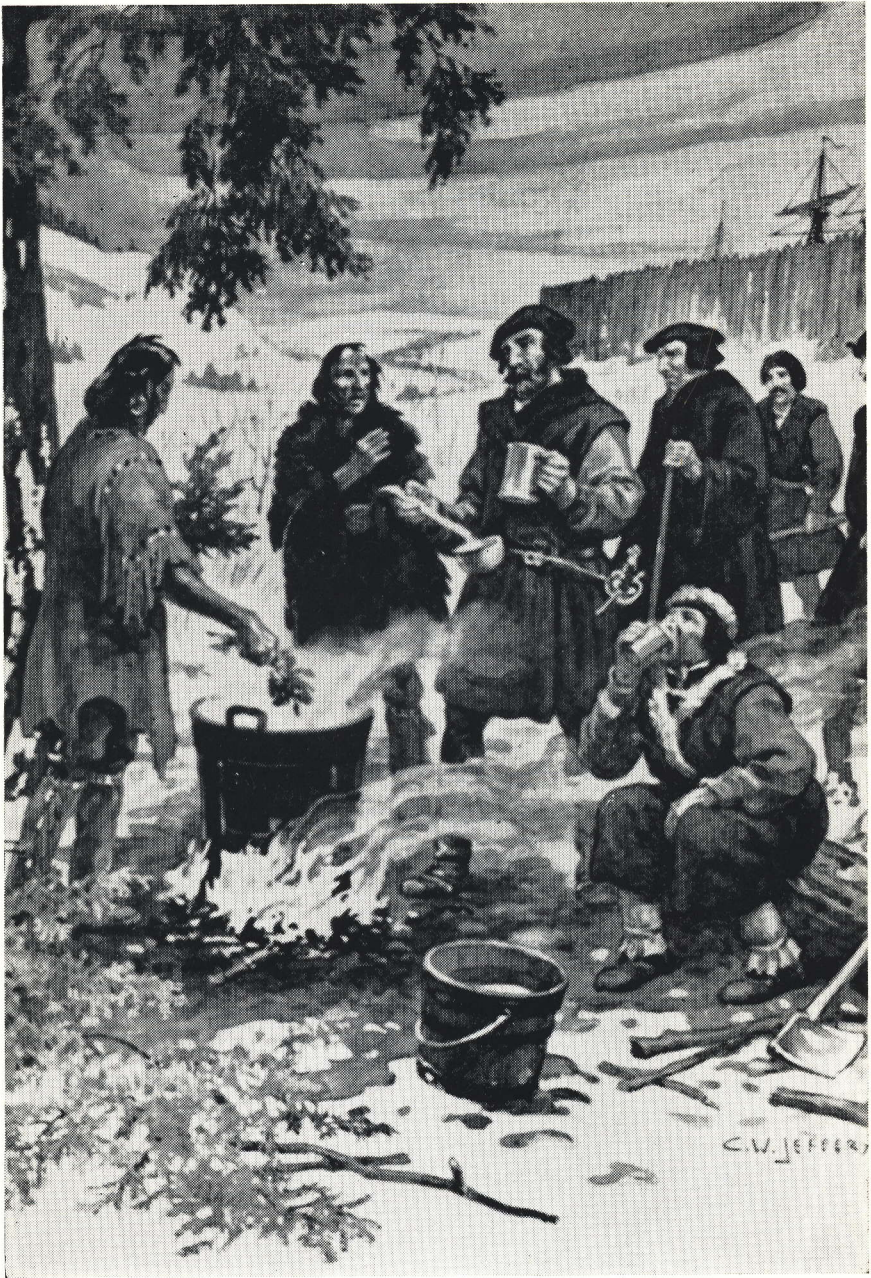
"When Montcalm, wounded by a bullet in the throat on the Plains of Abraham returned to the city of Quebec, he was taken immediately to the home of the surgeon, Arnoux, on St. Louis Street. But Doctor Arnoux was with Bourlamaque at Ile-aux-Noix, so it was Joseph Arnoux, "*Marchand apothecaire de Québec*" and brother of the surgeon André who examined Montcalm's wounds, pronounced them fatal and predicted his death within twenty-four hours. The apothecaries then, had the habit of caring for the sick. That Joseph Arnoux had this habit is proven by the dépositaire of the Ursuline sisters of Quebec, who, in writing to the Ursulines of Paris said: "No one knows better than he of the exact state of our affairs in every respect, and of the great number of sick and infirm in this country which he has attended for some years. Without making open profession of being either doctor or surgeon, his ability and his good qualities have won him our confidence, and we regret very much his departure from our country".³⁴

The occasion for Monsieur Arnoux's visit to France is not disclosed, but that he did deliver a letter to the Ursulines in Paris from those in Quebec is evidenced by the following:

"In view of the scarcity of money, I have taken the opportunity which Monsieur Arnoux has given to me to draw on you a bill of exchange. I do not wish to embarrass you, but Monsieur Arnoux has promised to remain in Paris for two months, and he is much too good a friend of ours to go back on his word. We have asked him to visit you in the name of our community".

33 — L'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, ed., *Esquisses*, 1939.

34 — *Les Ursulines de Québec, Depuis leur Etablissement Jusqu'à nos Jours*. Québec, Des Presses de C. Darveau, 8, rue Lamontagne, Basse-Ville, 1866, Vol. III, p. 203.



The First Prescription in Canada, 1536 by C. W. Jefferys

*Courtesy C. W. Jefferys
Imperial Oil Collection*



Louis Hébert, the Apothecary by C. W. Jefferys

*Courtesy C. W. Jefferys
Imperial Oil Collection*



Insignia of the Augustinian Sisters of Dieppe

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Québec



The Arrival of the Augustinian Sisters at Québec, 1639

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Québec



Earthenware Vessel in the First Pharmacy, Hôtel Dieu, Québec

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Québec

1746

La Rochelle le 20^{me} may 1746.

HDKB

Doivent les Pauvres de l'Hôtel Dieu de Québec a Michel
 Derigny pour le montant de legs sur, (chargé pour leurs comptes)
 et blisque dans le navire la vierge de France Capitaine Martin
 Lareguy, le tout marqué et numéroté comme en marge, et
 adressé a Madame J. De L'Esperance Jesus Depositaire des dits
 Pauvres sçavoir

N^o 4... deux caisses Emballées ensemble (contenant ensemble)

net 38^{te} minime fines de ficelle a 6^{te} 228.

5... un ballot cont^{re} net 40^{te} senné a 7^{te} 280.

6... une caisse cont^{re} net 30^{te} crème de tartre a 20^{te} 30.

7... un petit ballot cont^{re} net 20^{te} jalap en poudre a 4^{te} 80.

8... un petit Caisson contenant

50^{te} suc de réglisse a 20^{te} 30^{te}

6^{te} aloès a 4^{te} 24

5^{te} scammonée a 16^{te} 80

14 on^{ces} tartre Emétique fevant a 4 grains a 12^{te} 22.10

2^{te} ypecacuanha a 8^{te} 16

pour Boites, Emballage, toile, caissons, Maçon 8^{te} 12.16

823. 6

pour fret payé a m^{re} Soumbriem suivant le Connoissement 63. 8. 9.

L 886.14.9

Enus oul bmisson a la Rochelle le 21^{me} may -

1746

Michel Derigny



Drug Order from Québec to France, 1746

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Québec



Embarkation of Hospitallers of St. Joseph, La Rochelle, 1641

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Montréal



Arrival of the Hospitallers of St. Joseph at Montreal, 1642

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Montréal



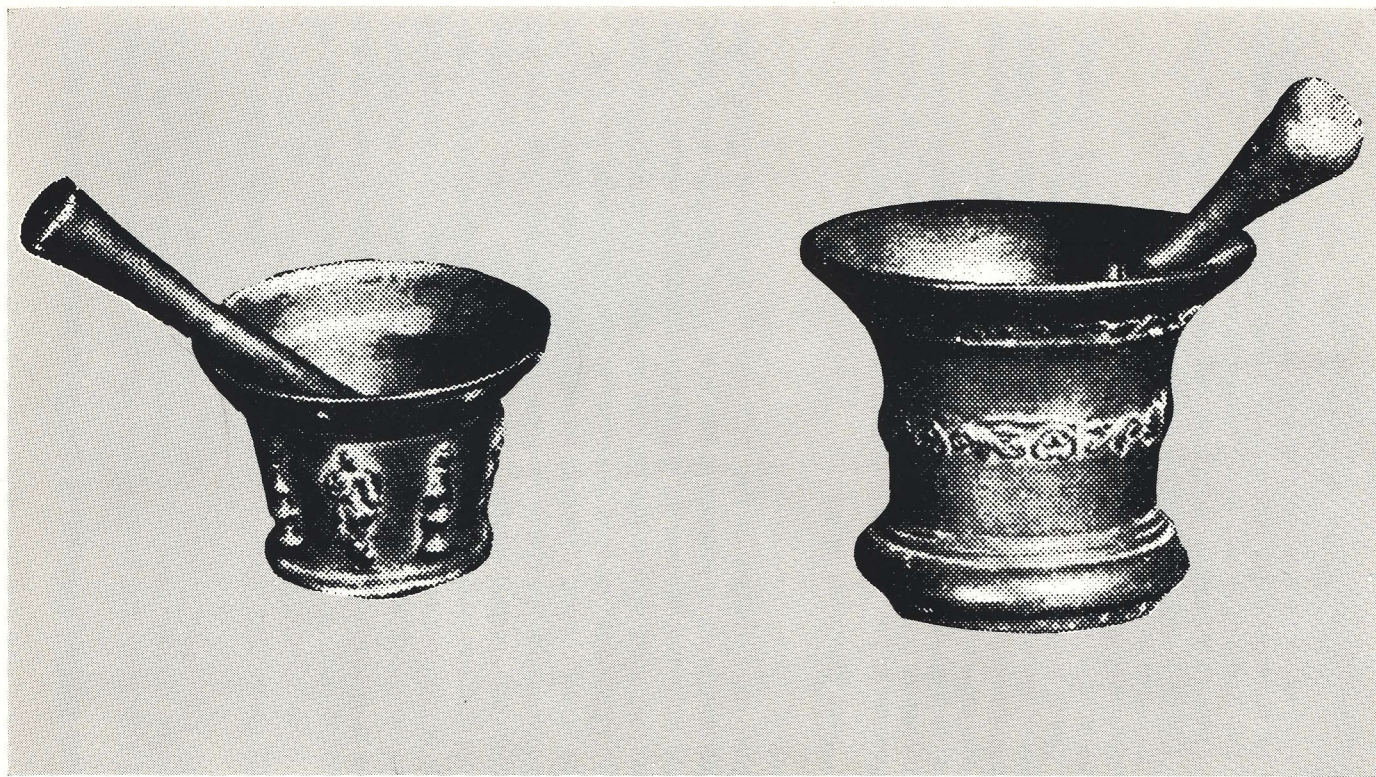
Sister de la Dauversière, with early Pharmaceuticals Utensils

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Montréal



Sèvres Drug Jars, probably Seventeenth Century

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Montréal and Public Archives of Canada



Bronze Mortars, Seventeenth Century

Courtesy Hôtel Dieu, Montréal and Public Archives of Canada



To which Mother St. Saturnine of Paris made the following reply:

"I have honoured your bill of exchange. We have conversed with Monsieur Arnoux from your community of which he speaks very highly. I sympathize with you at the loss of such a good friends".³⁵

Judging from these letters it appears that the powers of the apothecary were unlimited at this time.

To say nothing of the Priest-Physician! Ordinarily we think of the priest as the physician of souls; but Pierre-Joseph Compain was healer of both body and soul. Most of his studies for the priesthood had been completed at the Quebec Seminary when he was obliged to leave during the siege of Quebec in 1759. Later he went to Montreal, where he studied surgery under Monsieur Feltz, Surgeon-Major of the troops. At the same time he got married, but was left a widower so soon after this that he applied for re-admission to the seminary. This done, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1774.

We are told that all his life he was occupied with medicine and pharmacy, and that he had an infallible remedy for cancer. When he became coadjutor of Quebec in the year 1799, the following letter was sent to the Superior of the Augustinian sisters at Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec:

"Very Reverend Mother:

Allow me to pay my humble respects and at the same time to offer you my secret cure for cancer. This may serve to increase your income as well as facilitate your efforts to relieve the poor, miserable creatures who are suffering from this fatal disease.

Their number is increasing everywhere every day. For the general welfare of the province and to show my sympathy toward the human race. I have decided to send my secret remedy to the three communities who look after the sick — that is, your own community (Quebec), Montreal and Three Rivers.

If you wish to receive it, here are my conditions:

- 1) The poor will be cured or looked after gratuitously.
- 2) Those in a position to pay for this service should do so; in this way you will always have something to draw on.
- 3) In recognition for this service, I ask only one thing, namely, that every month you and your community will say a prayer

35 — *Ibid.*, p. 203.

for the sanctification of my soul and the health of my body.

- 4) I reserve for myself the right to look after patients when I so desire.
- 5) This secret will be confined within your community without being made public during my life.

If this meets with your approval, please let me know and I will send you the formula with instructions as to its use.

Your very humble and obedient servant,

P.J. COMPAIN, PTRE., *curé*,
St.-Antoine de Chambly".³⁶

It would be interesting to learn just what his secret remedy was but no details have been disclosed.

In the meantime, the majority of the sisters and all of the sick at the Hôtel-Dieu of Québec were forced to retire to the L'Hôpital General which was situated in such a position as to be less exposed to the dangers of enemy fire. The nuns who remained at Hôtel-Dieu saw death and destruction as the entire property was obliterated by bombs and cannon balls. The English troops proceeded to storm Hôtel-Dieu henceforth claiming it for their own; and Quebec became a British possession in the year 1760.

36 — ROY, PIERRE-GEORGES, "Un Prêtre Médecin", *Les Petites Choses de Notre Histoire*, 2e serie. Levis, 1919, no printer, pp. 128-132.

PART III

MONTREAL

CHAPTER V. JEANNE MANCE AND THE MISSION AT MONTREAL

At the same time that the Jesuits and the Augustinian Sisters were courageously labouring to heal both body and soul of the savage tribes at Sillery and Quebec, other equally courageous men and women attempted to and succeeded in planting the cross of Christ on the pinnacle of Mount Royal.

Like those of Quebec, the founders of the little mission at Montreal received their inspiration from the annual reports of the Jesuit Relations. Two very devout Frenchmen, independent of and unknown to each other, felt a strong desire to establish a mission in New France. Providentially, Abbé Jean Jacques Olier of Paris, a young priest, and Jérôme le Royer de la Dauversière, tax collector of La Flèche in Anjou, met near Paris and exchanged confidences as to the proposed mission at Montreal. Olier's apostolate was concerned with the establishment of a Religious Community of Priests to look after the spiritual welfare of the new colony while that of de la Dauversière was to organize a group of Hospital Sisters and provide a hospital for the settlers. With the financial aid of several wealthy gentlemen in France, an organization was formed known as the Company of One Hundred Associates and both of these dreams were well on the way to becoming realities.

The Jesuit Relations had also roused the interest of a very saintly woman, Jeanne Mance. Although never a Religious, she had a strong desire to devote her life to the care of the sick poor and the Montreal mission looked like the answer to her prayers. With the assistance of Madame de Bullion, the rich and charitable widow

of Claude de Bullion, former Minister of State and Finance in France, Jeanne Mance volunteered to assume the responsibility of doctor, nurse and pharmacist in the proposed hospital in Canada, having done similar work as a member of a charitable organization in France some years before.

In the year 1641, under the leadership of Paul de Chomeday, Sieur de Maisonneuve, a man of staunch and firm faith as well as physical prowess, Jeanne Mance and a small band of settlers set sail from La Rochelle. Several months later, they reached Quebec where they were obliged to spend the winter; the erection of their own mission was delayed because of the inclement weather. So Jeanne Mance lodged in the home of Monsieur de Puiseaux, which was close to the Augustinians at Sillery as well as to Madame de la Peltrie. We are told that during the winter months Jeanne visited the Augustinians often, and availed herself of the opportunity to learn the hospital procedures necessary to cope with the many and frequent diseases of the Indians. She studied the Indian language too, in order to be fully prepared for her new mission.

Meanwhile in France, Abbé Olier was busy with final preparations for the building of a seminary to house the little band of men who had joined with him to devote their lives to the service of God. They called their seminary the Seminary of St. Sulpice and were henceforth known as the Sulpicians.

In 1642, with the arrival of the warm May weather, Jeanne Mance and the little band of settlers left Quebec for their original destination, Montreal. While in France, it had been an established fact that Maisonneuve would become governor of Montreal; in Canada, however, this arrangement did not meet with unanimous approval and only after much controversy was he finally declared official governor of Montreal. From that time the little settlement began to materialize, and the mission that the industrious settlers established was given the name of Ville Marie. In the absence of Abbé Oliers' Sulpicians who were still being trained in Paris for their future life in Canada, the Jesuits were prevailed upon temporarily to assume responsibility for the spiritual life of the colony.

At Montreal as in Quebec, the Iroquois were not long in making their presence known. Reluctant and slow to forget the wrath which Champlain had incurred, they seemed to be always lurking in the

background. For this reason, the fort or mission which Maisonneuve had erected was flanked by a picket palisade, and although Jeanne Mance had her dispensary inside the fort, the beginnings were bleak and rather discouraging. As the numbers of the sick and the injured increased, it became necessary to enlarge the dispensary and in 1645 a new hospital was built which was called the Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal. It was of wooden construction, sectioned into two large rooms which were used as hospital wards; a kitchen, and two extra rooms, the latter occupied by Jeanne Mance and her assistants. Succeeding years saw these wards filled with both Indian and white settlers alike, for whom Jeanne Mance compounded medicines and treated wounds. The natives especially had implicit faith in her ability to cure them even though there were times when it was necessary for her to wound first before she could cure. Proof of this was borne out in the lancets and razors that were found in her private room following her death. In the inventory of her property was found a number of pharmaceutical instruments: a mortar and pestle, a syringe for giving injections, a prescription balance, numerous graduates and silk strainers, all of which confirmed the fact that Jeanne Mance had acquired a certain amount of professional skill both in pharmacy and medicine.

The need for more help in hospital as well as in the mission made itself manifest in the year 1655 as the colony was increased by more than one hundred newcomers. For the most part, the Iroquois attacks had subsided and Jeanne Mance persuaded Maisonneuve to go to France and bring back the much-needed hospital sisters from La Flèche as was originally planned by de la Dauversière. When Maisonneuve returned to Ville Marie in 1657, he had with him not the hospital sisters, but the Sulpician priests. Having completed their training, these men of the cross were eager and ready to strengthen the faith of the settlers and to preach the faith to the heathen Indians. They immediately relieved the Jesuits of their duties and from this time on, the spiritual welfare of the colony of Montreal became their entire responsibility. With regard to the sisters, Maisonneuve related that at a special meeting of the Company of One Hundred Associates, a contract had been signed permitting the sisters of La Flèche to come to Canada.

Jeanne Mance received this news with a mixture of joy and sadness as the contract did not stipulate provision for the Hospitalière Sisters financially. Their community was new, in fact, so new that it had not yet adopted a religious habit nor had their rules been approved by Rome. It was an absolute necessity that they be self-supporting as they were to receive no remuneration for their work in the dispensary and hospital at Montreal. With this in mind Bishop de Laval of Quebec, sought to co-ordinate the Hospitalières of St. Joseph with the Augustinian Sisters of Dieppe, whose rule and habit were approved and firmly established, and who had successfully administered the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec for the last twenty years. Nevertheless, his attempts to discourage the maintenance of the Montreal hospital independent of that of Quebec went unheeded by Jeanne Mance who made plans to go to France with the intention of soliciting funds from Madame de Bullion in this regard. The Bishop, learning of her intended departure, sent two nuns from Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec to Montreal in order to take charge of the Hospital during Mlle Mance's absence. They arrived a day or so before Jeanne Mance's departure for France. This lovely creature greeted them graciously, but instead of entrusting them with the care of the hospital during her absence as Bishop de Laval had so subtly planned, she placed it in charge of some pious women in Montreal. The Quebec Sisters were invited by Marguerite Bourgeoys, who had established a school for the Indian children at Montreal, to teach these children in her place, as she too was planning to go to France. This they did until September 1659.

It was only after the Bishop learned the Company of Montreal threatened to withdraw their charities to the hospital if it became associated with the one in Quebec, that he ceased to pursue the matter further. When Jeanne Mance and the Hospitalière Sisters of La Flèche were returning from Europe a few months later, they passed a boat carrying the two Quebec sisters from Montreal, having since been recalled by the Quebec ecclesiastics.

CHAPTER VI. THE ARRIVAL OF THE SISTERS HOSPITALIÈRES
AT MONTREAL

*Thou hast planted them and they
have taken root; they prosper and
bring forth fruit.*

Jeremias XII: 2

In July 1659, Monsieur de la Dauversière, founder of the Religious Hospitalières of St. Joseph, bid farewell to the first group of Sisters leaving La Rochelle for the mission of Ville Marie. Jeanne Mance, whose business in France was now completed, accompanied them.

The Sisters chosen for this self-sacrificing and challenging work were Marie Maillet, Catherine Macé and Judith Moreau de Brésoles, the latter a qualified pharmacist.

Arriving at Montreal some three months later, they were given a royal welcome by M. de Maisonneuve and the colonists. Room was made for them temporarily in the residence of Jeanne Mance as their own headquarters had not yet been completed. Sœur de Brésoles was chosen as Superior.

Of Sœur de Brésoles there is much to be said. She was born in the city of Blois of aristocratic parents, and at the early age of six expressed a true desire to do all that she could to help others. Hence she was often seen accompanying her parents on their visits to the sick poor ; usually she brought them little delicacies which she had made with her own hands. By the time she had reached the age of fifteen, she had successfully completed a course in the art of compounding and dispensing remedies from simple herbs; her skill and proficiency in the use of the blood-lancet was well known as the practice of blood-letting was strongly recommended at this time.

From the frequent visits which Mlle de Brésole made to the L'Hôpital de Blois, there grew in her an increasing desire to become a Religious Hospitalière of St. Joseph. Although this met with direct opposition from her family when it was disclosed, Judith was adamant and at once sought the advice of Father Dubreuil, a Jesuit priest and Spiritual Director to the Sisters of L'Hôtel-Dieu de la Flèche. With the assurance that God had chosen her to serve

the sick and afflicted in the role of a religious, the undaunted Mlle de Brésoles left her father's luxurious home in the year 1645 for the solace and comfort of the cloister, accompanied by an old servant.

It was under these circumstances that Judith de Brésoles was received into the community of the Religious Hospitalières of St. Joseph. From the *Annales of L'Hôtel-Dieu of Montreal* we learn that after receiving the habit.

"... she was sent immediately to the apothecary shop where she worked extraordinarily well because the Sisters with whom she was working undertook to learn from a competent and qualified chemist the secret of preparing spirits, tinctures and other very difficult things of pharmacy. So well had she studied that she had become most skilful in this art, and she practised pharmacy with so much success that I have known people educated in these sciences who believed and mentioned several times, that what she made with her hands in this regard was miraculous...³⁷

Small wonder that Sœur de Brésoles was chosen to be one of the first three to establish the hospital at Montreal; it is equally easy to understand why the sisters in France were reluctant to lose her to Canada, as trained pharmacists were not easy to come by in this era.

The first Canadian winter spent at L'Hôtel-Dieu was one of many hardships; and the cold climate demanded more substantial and wholesome food than the frugal menus imposed by the poverty of the sisters. Notwithstanding certain privations, the good nuns were happy. Their smiles as well as their charity offered great consolation and cheer to the sick whose wounds they dressed and whose ills they attempted to cure. We are also told despite their lack of expensive furnishings, the two rooms of their simple lodging were neither dull nor drab. "In the spring, country flowers decorated and adorned the windows and tables; the rule of the Hospitalières prescribed this kind attention which the refinement of their charity inspired".³⁸

The multiplicity of duties performed by these religious was always geared to the better care and well-being of the patient; and while

37 — MORIN, SOEUR, *Les Annales de l'hôtel-Dieu de Montréal*, L'Imprimerie des Editeurs Limitée, Montréal, 1921, p.198.

38 — MONDOUX, SOEUR, *L'Hôtel Dieu, Premier Hôpital de Montréal, 1642-1942*. Montréal, Hôtel-Dieu, 1942, p.168.

many necessities were lacking in the diet of the sisters, this situation did not exist for those to whom they administered. Indeed, Sœur Morin the Annalist assures us that the poor were better treated than the religious in this respect.

If food was such an important factor in maintaining a healthy body, to Sœur de Brésoles medicines and remedies were equally so. To this end she set up a pharmacy and out-patient department in a very small corner of their meagre hospital. The utensils, shelves, boxes, ovens and tablets for the dispensary were the work of her own hands, as both time and money were at a premium. Later on Sèvres and Rouen china jars and apothecary pots were sent from France and Sœur de Brésoles lost no time in filling them with powders, lotions and medications; glittering steel in the form of utensils and surgical instruments hung on the walls.

It was here that Sœur de Brésoles spent her happiest hours, prescribing, compounding and dispensing medicines from the plants which she grew in her own garden. Such prescriptions as simples,³⁹ electuaries and expectorants were taken with confidence by both rich and poor alike. Sœur de Brésoles herself had faith in her own medications and was convinced the cures which they effected were recompense from God, bestowed on her for her charitable work among His poor and suffering. Her reputation as a physician became so well established that those who sought her help believed that death was impossible if they followed her advice. Be that as it may, we do know that she was an expert pharmacist, and stopped at nothing if there was a possibility of saving a human life. On one occasion when her own garden lacked the simples necessary to prepare her medications she went to the garden of Mlle Mance which was adjacent to hers and returned with her arms full of simples which really did not belong to her! Such substances as sweet almond oil, camomile, epsom salts, jalap and spirits of ammonia which she could not grow were obtained directly from France.

We are told that the Iroquois often slept in the hospital garden (*ils couchèrent dans de grandes herbes appelées moutardes*),⁴⁰ where they were well hidden. Later it was disclosed that their plan was

39 — Simple was the name given to a herb used in the making of medicines; classified as drugs (entities) containing only one property or compound therefore "simple".

40 — MORIN, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

to attack those who found it necessary to be out at night for some reason. This might be a possible explanation for the many "scalpings" which Sœur de Brésoles was called on to treat; often these unfortunate victims had to be admitted to hospital as patients. It mattered little as to the race, colour or creed; what was important was that their suffering and distress be alleviated.

The Iroquois seemed to take a fiendish delight in scalping, and their victims did not always die. To begin with, the skull was not always crushed; it might be pared and ruined beyond perception which gave the enemy the opportunity of raising or lifting the cap of the skull from the head having first cut the skin with a stone. By means of a circular movement, the stone was traced from the roots of the hair in front, over the ears on the sides and then behind. With the knee pressed firmly into the small of the victim's back, the skull cap was removed by a quick jerk of the tuft of hair on the head. It was the most serious of wounds because hemorrhage was sure to follow the scalping and render the person incapable of looking after himself. If he survived, a kind of skin or integument formed and the person took on the appearance of a Franciscan with his crown of hair.⁴¹

Brutal as the Iroquois were, Sœur de Brésoles continued to administer to their needs, reserving the most difficult and most dangerous jobs for herself. The head wounds inflicted by this tribe were very often fatal and twenty-four hour duty was no stranger to her. On one occasion an Iroquois patient whom she had treated attempted to choke her ("étouffer"),⁴² but was prevented from accomplishing his task by the other Indian patients. She was obliged to discharge him after this, even though he insisted that he was only trying to instill some fear of the Iroquois into her. The crux of the matter was that she had won the esteem and affection of all the savages. They called her by an endearing name which meant "the sun that shines" because they said that "she returned life to the sick by her care and her medicines in the same way that the sun gave life to the plants of the earth".⁴³ Little did they realize

41 — CHAMPAGNE, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, p. 231.

42 — MORIN, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

43 — MORIN, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

the terrors that seized her when it was necessary for her to sound the alarm bell in the old tower to warn all of the advancing Iroquois!

And the Iroquois were not the only menaces that threatened the colony of Montreal. As in Quebec, the arrival of the King's ships brought diseases and epidemics which filled the small hospital to overflowing. In most cases drugs and medicines were of little use and it was necessary to resort to blood-letting. By 1687, Sœur de Brésoles never very strong, was forced to relinquish some of her duties; July of the same year witnessed her death.

The steady increase in the population during the next few years brought an increase in the number of settlers requiring medical attention. The hospital and pharmacy were no longer adequate to meet their needs and in 1694 the Sisters moved into a new and larger hospital made possible by wealthy benefactors in France. Sœur de Brésoles was replaced in the pharmacy by Sœur Catherine Denis, one of the first two Sisters to make profession in Canada.

The other was Annalist Sœur Marie Morin, who was only thirteen years old when she entered the Religious Hospitalières of St. Joseph. Sœur Catherine Denis "had worked for a long time in the pharmacy, composing herself little remedies according to the experience which the knowledge of their effects had given her, there being no surgeons at this time".⁴⁴

Three months later, February 1695, the new l'Hôtel-Dieu was partly destroyed by fire. Many of the sick fearing to be consumed by the flames, jumped out the windows. The Sister Hospitalières were forced to surrender their quarters and leave many things behind. Those remedies and pharmaceutical preparations that it was possible to save were placed in the yard of Monsieur de Collière, next door to the Hospital and guarded by the governor's soldiers who were on duty. These soldiers were regular "gourmets" as far as liquor was concerned, and believing that the jars and bottles which they were guarding contained alcoholic beverages "they drank the medicines and the vomitifs which purged them to excess. Others, thinking them to contain preserves, ate different electuaries and found them to have the same disastrous effects".⁴⁵

44 — MORIN, SOEUR, *Annales de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal*, Tome II, p. 132. Typewritten only, not included in the printed edition.

45 — MONDOUX, SOEUR, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

Despite the heavy losses that the sisters encountered in the fire, they were not to be intimidated, and in 1697 a larger, more comfortable Hôtel-Dieu arose from the ashes of the old. With the destruction of the old building priceless documents were lost along with the heart of Jeanne Mance which had been carefully preserved in a pewter box in the chapel. Hence much of the story of Hôtel-Dieu was passed on by tradition. There remained but one eye witness of the early scenes. This was the new superior, Sœur Morin, commissioned by Mother Superior to write down her reminiscences. As previously mentioned, Sœur Morin was the first Sister to make profession in Canada, having entered the Hospitalières of St. Joseph when a mere thirteen years old. Without her, the history of the early years of l'Hôtel-Dieu would never have been revealed.

CHAPTER VII PRICELESS TREASURES OF MONTREAL HOTEL-DIEU

Those of us who are historically minded, would find many priceless objects and relics at the Archives of l'Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal — out of their setting perhaps, but nonetheless carefully preserved. The pharmacy still offers one a glimpse of the past with its old china apothecary pots and glass jars "*tous pareils*". Even more interesting to us is the fact that these jars are at present being used in the pharmacy for bulk ointments such as sulphathiazole, calmitol and petrolatum.⁴⁶

Among the early records relating to the pharmacy were accounts for June 1699, which recorded the purchase of "*pots de faïence*" for the making of simple remedies "*pour les malades*" of the day. Whether or not any of these were from the Royal Pottery at Sèvres, we do not know; but one such jar may be found in the present pharmacy. A photograph of this jar was used as a menu cover for a banquet dinner sponsored by the l'Hôtel-Dieu in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the School of Nursing. Apparently Dr. Leo Pariseau, one-time physician of the hospital and president of the Section of Historical Medicine, Canadian Me-

46 — Personal interview with Sister de la Dauversière, Chief Pharmacist, L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, June, 1961.

dical Association, thought it important enough to warrant the following biographical note:

"This beautiful vase is one of the treasures of the Hôtel-Dieu. We do not know if it was brought over from France by Jeanne Mance or not, but in any case it is a very beautiful and valuable relic. Not to admire it would show a lack of taste; not to cherish it would mean a lack of sentiment.

Pharmacy is as old as humanity. From time immemorial there has been special care displayed in the preservation of drugs, and all kinds of material have been used as receptacles for them from wood to porphyry. Before our modern glass containers came into use the apothecary used clay vessels, glazed or not. The earliest of these came from the East then from Spain and from Italy. In France they made them at the beginning of the 17th century. This specimen is, of course, at least as old as our hospital. (1644).

What did it contain? That has long been a mystery to me. The Dictionary of Inscriptions of apothecary jars by Dorveaux says that "Bac. Lau" is an abbreviation of *Baccae Lauri*, but the question that troubles me is - what is the "EI?" Does it stand for elixir, or electuary? This is a deep question for a crank, a fascinating problem for a searcher. I have solved it because I am both. Learn then, Ladies, that it should read "*Electuarium de Baccae Lauri*." I can show you the formula for an electuary of which I have found in a Pharmacopoeia of 1676. It is a fairly simple preparation since, in addition to laurel, there are only seventeen other ingredients! This is child's play beside the Theriaca, which includes more than sixty different substances. As Moise Charas⁴⁷ says: "The preparation will be found quite easy (!) if, having ground up the gums in a large bronze mortar with the other dry medicaments and having strained them through silk, one gradually adds three times as much honey well warmed. One should keep the electuary in a pot when it is cold."

Who can tell whether our good Sisters will not someday refill the "*pot de faïence*"⁴⁸ which has been empty for the last two centuries? I must hasten to furnish my confrères with the indications for its use. It is "strongly recommended for the relief of windy colics and especially the Ibacus. It is also useful in urinary troubles and for the hysterics".⁴⁹ "It can be taken by the mouth but usually it is used in clysters".⁵⁰

I have little to add of interest to historians. But I would draw their attention to the presence of castoreum used in prescription formulas. This costly drug was extracted from the glands of the beaver. Charas

47 — MOISE CHARAS, 1618-1698, author of the *Pharmacopée Royale, Galénique et Chimique*, Paris, 1676.

48 — *Pot et faïence* - earthenware, crockery or china jars, very often artistically decorated.

49 — Hysterics, this is not the modern hysterics, but refers to uterine disorders.

50 — Clyster - injection or emema.

sometimes used the Canadian beaver. Since they imported this Canadian product into France at much expense we may be permitted to believe that in Canada they had great esteem for French pharmaceutical formulas which included castoreum.

Finally, let us note that these pharmacists jars changed their name with their shape and use. When they were tall and cylindrical they were called "cannon pots". When they were more rounded and had a neck they were called "chevrettes". "Bottles" and "Cruets" are self-explanatory. Lastly there were "*vases à theriaque*" of rounded form, often beautifully decorated. They were used for other things than the theriaca: it is among these that we must place our cherished old vase".⁵¹

These jars are still very much in demand for their beauty, their characteristic style and artistic symbols.

Not to be overlooked in the Archives of l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal was a collection of seventeenth century style mortars and pestles, some of them highly ornamented with full length figures. Old books included the Works of Ambrose Paré as well as recipes and remedies used by the first sisters in the pharmacy. Here is a prescription for Alopecia or falling hair prepared and applied in the form of a liniment:

"The excrement of a goat, reduced to ashes and mixed with egg oil and a few drops of oil of cloves, is an infallible remedy for elopecia or falling hair".⁵²

This prescription was found jotted on the cover of a Manuscript of a Medical works used in the days of the French Régime:

"A white onion, boiled and cut up into milk acts as a sharp appetizer and expectorant. Nothing is better to make an expectorate and pass the thick, viscous substance which embarasses the bronchi and the vessels of the lungs".⁵³

J. Martinet (dit Fonblanche), one of the first surgeons to practice in Montreal tried this prescription in 1670. It was entitled "*Signet*

51 — *Le Catalogue d'une Exposition de Cent Objects Divers Tirés du Trésor Historique et des Archives de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal*. August, 1934, pp. 31-33. Translated from a biographical note of a speech given by Dr. Leo Pariseau on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the foundation of the School of Nursing.

52 — *Les Remèdes des Maladies du Corps Humain*. Nouvelle édition augmentée d'un grand nombre de Remèdes Spécifiques et Experiments, et de Plusieurs Figures Chimiques, Paris, Jean Couterot et Louis Guérin, 1685, p. 1.

53 — ASTRUC, Prof., *Le Traité des Maladies du Bas Ventre*. Paris, Collège Royal, 1736.

pour faire accoucher une femme prontment" ((Secret remedy for inducing labour.)

"Take a handful of sting-nettles, choosing the sharpest, and grind them up. Give some of the juice to the patient. Then mix with this juice some thistles, again choosing those with the sharpest points, making an infusion of the roots and minister this to the patient. This will bring forth the child, dead or alive in twelve hours".⁵⁴

It is evident that the prescriptions compounded in our old-time pharmacies were a combination of the bizarre, the repugnant and in many cases gruesome.

CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION

The years intervening between 1700 and 1760 saw the Hospitalière Sisters continue to nurse the sick and administer medications to the fast-growing colony of Montreal. Here, as in Quebec, the hospital was always filled to capacity, and never was there enough time to adequately care for the infections that each arriving ship brought. Those whom the sisters bled during these epidemics were usually cured. At this point their difficulties were many and even greater ones were to come. Although the Iroquois had long ceased their attacks, the English were making extensive plans to attack Canada and claim it as a British possession. The prospect of living under British rule was not a favourable one for the Hospitalières whose sole support came from France.

Rumours of war were pending and in the year 1759 these same rumours became a reality as General Wolfe led the British troops to victory at the battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec against General Montcalm, leader of the French. The following year saw the English flag planted firmly on Canadian soil. Immediately all French settlements in Canada passed under British rule and the financial aid from France for the Canadian missions ceased. What the sisters had feared some months previous had finally come to pass. This meant that their hospital would have to be abandoned unless they could devise some scheme for supporting it themselves.

54 — *A Catalogue of an Exhibition of One Hundred Objects Chosen From the Archives and Historical Treasures of the Hotel-Dieu of Montreal* Montreal: 1929, p. 32.

After much praying and debating they decided to open a bake shop. So successful did they become in the culinary arts that some learned to make soap and candles while others took up the art of sewing. The remuneration was small but gratifying; and most of all they were able to carry on their hospital duties for which they were grateful.

The life of the early religious in New France and the part they played in hospital and pharmacy has not been an easy one, but one that has reaped many rewards. These religious suffered from the attacks of the Indians, lived frugally and were forced to make many social adjustments in order to serve God in the care of the sick poor. Boredom had no place in their lives, but rather happiness; the happiness that inevitably follows the helpful spirit characteristic of community life. Their life was based on charity for the poor, the humble and the rich regardless of race or creed. Truly then, did the pioneer religious, exemplify the theory of St. Teresa that "all things are passing and God only is changeless".

APPENDIX

Old prescriptions and remedies supplied by Librarian, Hotel-Dieu of Quebec and the Dominion Archives of Canada.

Remedies published in the June 1934 edition of the "*Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*", a learned compilation of the popular remedies used in the Champlain County:

"*Corns* - crush a frog between the large and the second toes of the foot."⁵⁵

"*Consumption* - Drink the urine of a black cow."⁵⁶

"*Inflammation of the Intestines* - make three zeros on the skin of the stomach with bluestone."⁵⁷

Doctor's Bill in 1785 (McGill Medical Library)

Account Rendered by Dr. P. Mount, U.S. Loyalist

To Mlle. de la Valtrie

Oct. 9, 1784 -	Tincture Antirheumatic volatile	3
	Ingredients for fomentations	2
Oct. 12	Laxative powders	3
Oct. 16	Anodyne embrocation	3
	Antirheumatic liniment	
	Antiphlogistine lotion	
Oct. 29	Laxative potion	2.6
	Pectoral Emulsion	3.0
Nov. 1	Blood letting	2.6
	Haemorrhoid powder	3
Nov. 9	Thirty-five visits with diagnosis	5.5
Nov. 13	Aromatic laxative potion	3.0
	Carminative for flatulence	4.0
	Large vesicatory plaster	7.6
Dec 1	Camphor ointment	5.0
	Repeat on diuretic drops	
Dec. 9	Two night calls (visits)	15.0
Dec. 12	Neutral Julep	5.0
	Repeat on lotion	

55 — TANQUAY, DR. RUDOLPH, *Les Vieux Remedes au Tribunal de l'histoire*, (Document Historique No. 11 de la Societe Historique du Nouvel Ontario, 1946), pp. 10-11

56 — *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

57 — *ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

No therapeutic "nihilism" here!⁵⁸

This volume contains neither index, chapter nor plan. It is simply an alphabetical list of the terms used in medicine and surgery. The names anaesthesia, antibiotic, etc. are not found in this book. Instead one finds: "The Pelican is a surgical instrument which one uses to extract teeth."⁵⁹

"Pitch is a kind of endemic gangrene in Brazil."⁶⁰

"Torture is a kind of tumour that forms in the head."⁶¹

"Phrenesie is a delirium which is continual and furious."⁶²

This old volume was dedicated to Monseigneur Pajot Chevalier, King's Counsellor. One finds many internal and external remedies here.

External - Poulitice for Gout

Take the roots of wild horseradish
the roots of garlic
the tops of the Rue plant
the excrement of a pigeon aa 1 oz.

Mix all these ingredients together in a mortar while moistening with vinegar; finally add 3 oz. of good table mustard.

With this make a poulitice and apply it under the soles of the feet, where it can be replenished when it becomes dry.⁶³

This volume was compiled principally for the poor people in the country, who were often obliged to treat themselves. It advocates remedies which are of reasonable price and easy to prepare.

Remedy for ulcerated chilblains:

Burn a rat until it becomes calcined; then reduce it to ashes. Sprinkle this on the ulcers twice a day until cured, which will be prompt.

This powder contains saline material which renders it excitatory or stimulating.

58 — Le Catalogue de Tresors L'Hotel-Dieu de Montreal, *op. cit.*, p.47.

59 — M. ELIE COL DE VILLARS, *Dictionnaire Francois-Latin des Termes de Medecine et de Chirurgie*, (Paris: Le Mercier, Rollin, Herissant, 1753), p.318.

60 — *ibid.*, p. 327.

61 — *ibid.*, p. 444.

62 — *ibid.*, p. 446.

63 — *Le Manuel des Dames de Charite ou Formules de Medicaments Faciles a Preparer*, Troisième Edition, (Paris: Chez Debue L'aîné, Quai des Augustins, à l'image S. Paul, 1755), p. 234.

But there are a great many more efficacious remedies for these ulcers than the powder of a calcined rat such as luke warm wine, camphorated spirits, aromatic lotions etc.⁶⁴

Some Prescriptions:

"*Children's teeth* - To extract teeth without pain, cut a little of the cock's comb with a scissors and rub the child's gums with the blood which flows from it once or twice or more."⁶⁵

"*Jaundice* - Take as much as you please of the excrement of a male bird which has been nourished on herbs in the spring; dry this in the sun or otherwise; then put a dram of this very fine powder into a glass of white wine, adding a little sugar and canelle at your discretion. Give this to the sick person to drink on an empty stomach for nine mornings.

It should be noted that the excrement of a chick or of a white hen will have the same effect."⁶⁶

"*Cirrhosis of the Liver and the Spleen* - Apply a live Tench directly to the stomach of the sick person, holding the head of same erect in a way that the tail touches the navel; hold it in this position with a towel in such a manner that it remains covering this area. After seven or eight hours, it will cause a terrible odour; leave it there for twenty-four hours almost until it is dead. Then remove it and bury it in manure. The swelling of the body will decrease according to the extent that the Tench has decayed. This remedy was tested on a person suffering from this malady for more than a year and a half at the end of which medicines were discontinued on the advice of a fellow countryman."⁶⁷

"*Open Cancer* - When the cancer is an open one, one must take a live toad and apply it immediately to the affected part without cutting into it, - a big one if the wound is large; a small one if the wound is small.

Pick up the toad with a towel and apply it to the cancer area with the same towel, which also serves to hold the toad in place. Thus bound, the toad will not harm you. The toad is left on the wound for twenty-four

64 — CAPURON, J. *Le Manuel des Dames de Charite ou Formules de Medicaments Faciles a Preparer*, Nouvelle Edition, Revue et Augmentée, (Paris: Chez Thomine, Leriche, 1816), p. 441.

65 — *La Medicin et la Chirurgie des Pauvres*, Nouvelle Edition, (Lyon: Chez F. Savy, 1822), p. 66.

66 — *ibid.*, p. 130.

67 — *ibid.*, p. 140.

hours. When it is removed, it must be checked to see if it is still intact and not eaten away. If it is not eaten away, then this is a sign that the cancer is dead and hence forth you must dress the wound with a black lint plaster. However, in order to be assured that the cancer is dead, you should apply other toads, until you observe that they are no longer eaten away."⁶⁸

"*Prescription for the bite of a dog which is not mad*—Mix the white of an egg with the hair of a dead dog or of another cut short and fine, and apply to the bite by spreading it on cotton."⁶⁹

Leprosy — Means of recognizing it — Place the suspected person in the moonlight in such a way that the light beams will shine in his face; look at a healthy man simultaneously and compare the two. Then the healthy man appears pale or white and the leprous man diverse colours.

In brief, these remedies recommended certain ingredients within the reach of all of us, but their preparation and method of treatment would not fail to amaze modern physicians.⁷⁰

The works in this book were not exclusively medical, but specialized in pharmacology and botany. One finds throughout the volume an impressive list of abbreviations, affixes, suffixes. The Latin root and sometimes the Greek root is given for each term.

The definitions do not fail to arouse curiosity:

- "*Sounds of the heart*: 1) squeak of new leather
 2) sound of a bellows
 3) noise of a saw
 4) rasp of a grater
 5) rustling of a cat."⁷¹

"*Grippe* — a French term applied to various epidemic forms of gastro-bronchitis. It was used by Laennec to denote an epidemic of catarrh which occurred in 1803, and which was characterized by a peculiar glutinous sputum observed in acute pneumonia."⁷²

"*Lupus* (in Latin a wolf) — a slow tubular affection, occurring especially about the face, commonly ending in ragged ulcerations of the nose, cheeks,

68 — *ibid.*, p. 337.

69 — *ibid.*, p. 386.

70 — *ibid.*, p. 437.

71 — HOBLYN, RICHARD D., *A Dictionary of Terms used in Medicine and the Collateral Sciences*, Revised by Isaac Hays, Philadelphia: Balanchard and Leo, 1859, p. 61.

72 — *ibid.*, p. 200.

forehead, eyelids and lips. It is so-called from its eating away the flesh like a wolf."⁷³

"Sardonic — a term applied to a convulsive kind of laughter, which according to the ancients, was occasioned by inflammation or wounds of the diaphragm. Virgil has "*Sardois amarior herbis*"; this Sardonian plant was perhaps a species of ranunculus, the juice of which, when drunk, produced madness, together with distortions of the face, so peculiar as to resemble laughter."⁷⁴

Eighty-four lessons of clinical medicine treat with observations, prognosis, case histories and explanations.

Purulent Pleuresy — is cured by applications of iodine to the back, which often terminated in fatalities. The author, Michel Peter strongly opposed this practise of relying on nature as "that which is like the sky — which helps only those who help themselves."⁷⁵

Consumption — One speaks of revulsions, vesicants, cauteries and hygiene. In the words of Fontgrives speaking of pulmonary consumption, we leave to conjecture the scope of the problem: "This is a sickness which one does not cure, but about which one thinks."⁷⁶

We are led to believe that Fontgrives was somewhat of a pessimist! More medical terminology:

"*Alphonsin* — (from Alphonse Ferri of Naples, its inventor) an instrument for extracting balls from wounds."⁷⁷

"*Coccyx* — (gen. *Coccygis* — from the "cuckoo" because it resembles its bill) — The small triangular bone appended to the point of the sacrum."⁷⁸

"*Medicinal Hours* — those hours in which it is considered that medicine may be taken to best advantage, being in the morning (fasting), an hour before dinner, four hours after it, and it bedtime."⁷⁹

73 — *ibid.*, p. 261.

74 — *ibid.*, p. 398.

75 — PETER MICHEL, *Lecons de Clinique Medicale*, Tome Deuxième, troisième Edition, (Paris: Asselin et Cie 1882), p. 292.

76 — *ibid.*, p. 588.

77 — THOMAS, JOSEPH, *A Complete Pronouncing Dictionary Embracing the Terminology of Medicine and the Kindred Sciences*, with an appendix, (Philadelphia; J. B. Lippincott Co., 1893), p. 37.

78 — *ibid.*, p. 142.

79 — *ibid.*, p. 398.

Article obtained from the Dominion Archives, Canada, and translated from the Latin Edition of 1664, *Historiae Canadensis*:

"Now this is that famous moose, the hoof of whose left hind foot possesses such remarkable potency that according to the statements of physicians it is almost miraculous. In the first place, it is remarkably efficacious in epilepsy, if applied to the heart or worn on the ring finger of the left hand, or held in the palm of the left hand with the fist closed, or applied so as to tickle the inner part of the left ear; most authorities add that it must be close to and touch the skin. Johann Schenk adds that a powder made from the same hoof and drunk in water is equally potent, better still in liquor of lily-of-the-valley or of "*nardi Celticae*." ⁸⁰ Secondly, even a fragment of it next the heart has a wonderful effect when there are purple spots indicating poisoning; it is also used in flatulency, pleurisy, diarrhoea, biliousness, vertigo, running at the eyes, worms and colic; it has a wonderful effect in offensive discharges, the origin of so many diseases, in distressing palpitations, in head-ache, in running sores, and when there is swelling and cramp, especially in the legs. And if anyone accuses us of rash statement and assertion, if he is in doubt, he has the plain witness of several eminent authorities most of whom are physicians — Antonio Maria Venusti, Huii Caesaris Cardini, Juliani Mercuriali, Lemnius, Agricola, Cardanus, Menaboeni, Johann Schenk, whom we have quoted, Francis Berigardus, Andreae Guerinonis, M. Antonii Cyprii and Georgii Transylvani."⁸¹

At least six of these "eminent authorities" are to be identified in reference works of medical history such as Arturo Castiglioni, *History of Medicine* (Trans. E. B. Krumbhaar, New York, 1941), *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Aerzte aller Zeiten und Volker* (Berlin, 1929-34), *Surgeon General's index catalogue* (Washington, 1880—). According to Castiglioni, Johann Georg Schenk von Grafenburg (1530-98) was one of the most distinguished physicians of his time, and author of a number of valuable medical works. It may be noted that neat's foot oil, a popular modern medicine, is obtained from the hooves of cattle.

80 — "*nardi Celticae*" — a name given by the ancients (Celts), See above to various aromatic plants, Plin, or Balsam of nard, Hor.

81 — DU CREUX, *History of Canada*, (Robinson and Conacher — The Champlain Society, 1951), Vol. I, p. 80. (Translated from the Latin Edition of 1664 *Historiae Canadensis*).

"*Hotel-Dieu*— This establishment is the oldest of the hospitals of Paris; the history of this foundation goes back to the seventh century, and it is of all our hospitals, generally considered to be the best. Today, it is also one of those where the sick are, according to all reports, the best cared for but there was a few years when it was otherwise. Toward the middle of the last century, the sick were still crowded together in numbers of four or even six in the same bed, and, in extraordinary cases, even this number was increased by placing other unfortunates on the top of the bed (canopy bed); the amount of air which each person had to breathe in was only three or four metres.

"In the year 1833, the number of sick admitted to *Hotel-Dieu* was 16,992; the number of deaths 1,783."⁸²

Of interest to us is this resume of their formulary:

General considerations on the art of formulation including an abridged study of affusions, baths, pommades, plasters, bougies, pills, waters, potions and other preparations used in pharmacy.

In the formulary itself, the prescriptions followed strict nomenclature without a single comment. Sometimes, there were several lines of documentations on a plant or other substance, breaking the monotony of formulas.

A table of authors followed by a table of well-stocked substances gave the reader access to numerous secrets regarding pharmacy of the time. Some excerpts concerning legalities of medicine :

"Benoit Franquet, married woman, gave birth prematurely to an infant of seven months; there was no flowing from the vagina; one observed neither fever, lactation nor sensible diminution of the volume of the stomach. At the end of three weeks, the woman became aware of appreciable movements which seemed to indicate that there existed another child; in fact, she gave birth to a second child in good health, five months and sixteen days after the birth of the first."⁸³

82 — MILNE-EDWARDS, M. M., et VAVASSEUR, P., *Nouveau Formulaire Pratique des Hopitaux ou Choix de Formules*, Quatrieme Edition, (Paris: Fortin, Masson et Cie 1841) notice pp. XII-XIII.

83 — ORFILA, M. *Traite de Medecine Legale*, Troisieme Edition, (Paris: Brechet Jeune, 1836), Tome I p. 338.

Ode to an Apothecary (Dictionnaire Pharmaceutique)

Les animaux, les végétaux
Sont compris dans ce beau volume,
Les minéraux et les métaux
Y monstrent ce que peut ta plume;
L'on y voit leurs doses, leur poids
Ce qu'il en faut prendre à la fois,
Ce qu'on doit pratiquer et faire,
Comme on en use en temps et lui,
De forte qu'un Apothecaire
Ne sera pas sçavant pour peu.

Enfin tous les médicaments
Sont decris dans ce docte livre,
Et même tous les aliments
Qui sont nécessaires pour vivre;
Les poisons et leurs qualitez
Y font tous amplement traitez!
Rien ne mangue dans cet ouvrage,
Il fait la narque à tout venim,
D'où son Auteurs n'est pas mon sage
Qu'il est un parfait Medecin.

Adieu donc poisons, adieux maux,
Adieu la fièvre, adieu la goutte,
L'on N'entend que des Animaux
Crier que nous n'y voyons goutte;
De Meuve contraire à cecy
En tout a si bien reussi
Qu'il enseigne comme on les traite
Et sans se faire un grand effort,
Il trouve à tout une recette
Si non seulement à la mort.

Le Grand Hippocrate et Galen
Sont en abrégé dans ce livre
Et qui l'examinera bien
Connoistra qu'il n'a qu'a le fievre
Marthiole, Label et Baubin,
Fernel, Reolan, Bartholin,
Y sont avec Paul Aeginete
Ce livre n'est point du commun
Et s'il faut que quelqu'un
Il y aura vingt Auteurs pour un.

Il est charmant et curieux
Il est bon, il est nécessaire,
Il se rencontre peu de lieux,
Ou souvent l'on n'en ait affaire;
Les gens d'un eminent sçavoir
Chacun le loue à sa manière
Et l'estimé un des excellens
De ceux qu'on à mis en lumière
Depuis cent, ou cent cinquante ans.⁸⁴

No Author.

84 — DE MEUVE, M. *Dictionnaire Pharmaceutique ou Plutost Apparat Medico Pharmaco-Chymique*. (Paris: Chez Jean D'Houry, 1678).

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