

interment in the cellar; sometimes I think I can hear the shrieks of helpless females in the hands of atrocious men; and sometimes almost seem actually to look again upon the calm and placid countenance of Saint Frances as she appeared when surrounded by her murderers.”—*(Preface.)**

Thus the authoress confesses that she is afflicted with terrific dreams,—that she imagines herself to be pursued by enemies,—shut up again in the ‘black convent,’—present once more at the hideous scenes she describes,—about to be conveyed to the ‘secret place of interment in the cellar,—that she hears ‘the shrieks of helpless females in the hands of atrocious men.’ Well then, if the lady be subject to visions of this description, is it not just possible that some of them might have found their way into her book? A glance at her early history, as it stands recorded by herself, will throw some further light upon her character. Her parents, she tells us, were both from Scotland, and resided in Lower Canada. She was born at St. John’s, and has spent the most of her life in Montreal. Her father was an officer under the British Government. He is dead, and her mother has a pension. The latter is a Protestant. Our heroine, when about six or seven years old, went to a school kept by a Mr. Workman, a Protestant, who taught her to read and write, and arithmetic as far as division. A number of girls of her acquaintance went to school (as day scholars) to the establishment of the Congregational Nunnery, or Sisters of Charity, as they are usually called.

When she was ten years old, being anxious to learn French, she obtained permission to attend the schools of the Sisters of Charity. The ‘terrible Black Nunnery’ is adjacent to that of the Sisters of Charity, being separated from it only by a wall. The Black Nunnery “professes to be a charitable institution for the care of the sick, and the supply of bread and medicines for the poor; and *something is done in these departments of charity*, although but an insignificant amount compared

* All quotations from *Maria Monk* are from the book above mentioned.