

"One only among the sons of men has carried out a perfect work, and satisfied and exhausted the mission on which He came. One alone has, with His last breath, said, 'Consummatum est.' But all who set about their duties in faith, and hope, and love, with a resolute heart and a devoted will, are able, weak though they be, to do what, though incomplete, is imperishable."

K. B. C.

The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department

A PIONEER TRAPPIST.

THE life of a Trappist is not what would be considered an interesting narrative. The ceaseless round of prayer, penance, and labour; the perpetual silence broken only to praise, propitiate, or petition the divine Majesty, furnish scant matter for the biographer. Every hour of every day has its appointed duty, and the life of the monk glides on without vicissitude. The Trappist rule is the Trappist's history. Exceptions there are, however, and the founder of one of Canada's first monastic institutions—good Father Vincent de Paul—was one of these.

Of his early life we know very little. Born in France in 1768, his first years were passed in troublesome times, when his native land seemed given over to the powers of darkness, and her fair fields were reddened with the blood of her purest, noblest and best. His father, we are told, was a medical practitioner of Lyons—Dr. Mearl—who gave to his son in baptism the name of James.

There are chosen souls who shrink from the external world, and long for perfect retirement and continual converse with Heaven, yet they so love mankind, so wish to actively help men upward and onward, that they would fain remain in the world, though not of it, and engage in the conflict ever raging between darkness and light. Such was James Mearl. He saw the great need of labourers in the harvest fields of Christ, and, though yearning for the cloister, he girded himself for the active work of the ministry. In 1798 he was privately appointed priest by the Archbishop of Vienna, and for seven years he laboured assiduously in the field committed to his care. But he was weary of the world, and ever and anon his soul would cry out: "Who will give me in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men, and I will leave my people and depart from them?"

At the outbreak of the Revolution a number of Trappists under Dom Augustine, as he was called, removed to Valsainte, in Switzerland, where they established a monastery under a still stricter rule than that of De Raucé. Thither Father Mearl felt drawn, and in 1805 he renounced his possessions, bade adieu to the world, and donned the coarse habit of La Trappe, taking as his patron the apostle of charity, St. Vincent de Paul. But even here his life was not to be passed in the sweet solitude of the cloister; he had work yet to do in the world.

In 1812 Dom Augustine became apprehensive that the victorious and unscrupulous Napoleon would secularize the monastic institutions of the countries under his sway, and he accordingly sent Father Vincent and two other monks to America for the purpose of establishing a branch of their order near Baltimore. Before Father Vincent had well set to work, Dom Augustine himself arrived in New York and summoned Father Vincent and Father Urbain (who had come to America in 1805) to join with him in opening a house in New York State. But the establishment was as short lived as Father Vincent's in Maryland; for on the restoration of Louis XVIII, and the re-establishment of religion in France, Dom Augustine considered that his first duty was to return and gather together the monks of his Order, who had been scattered over Europe. He accordingly set sail for France in 1814, with all his community, except Father Vincent and some

Brothers whom he left behind to settle the affairs of the monastery, with orders to follow him when they had completed their work.

His business in New York being completed, Father Vincent, in company with the Brothers, departed for Halifax, whence he expected to sail for Europe. After some delay, he succeeded in procuring passage on the ship Ceylon. Everything was in readiness; the Brothers were on board and Father Vincent was hurrying to the place of embarkation when suddenly he met the venerable Bishop Plessis, who was on an episcopal visit to this distant part of his diocese—for at that time the Bishop of Quebec had jurisdiction over all the North American Colonies of Britain. The good Bishop was delighted at meeting a monk of La Trappe, and at once requested the religious to hear his confession. Father Vincent kindly demurred, and tried to explain the emergency; but His Lordship insisting, Father Vincent decided to risk the delay. Bishop Plessis was shriven, but the poor Trappist missed his passage, and was left a stranger in a strange land. The Bishop was not at all disconcerted over the accident, but rather rejoiced in obtaining, even for a time, the services of so excellent a priest. Father Vincent could not stand all the day idle where labourers were so few, and the harvest, indeed, so great. He asked to be given work while awaiting the commands of his superior, and was assigned missionary work at Halifax.

The spiritual wants of the Catholics of Halifax and outlying missions were then attended to by two priests. One of these—the Rev. Father Bourke—went to Europe shortly after the advent of Father Vincent,—leaving the mission in charge of the Rev. Father Mignault and the Trappist Monk. The former being in delicate health, the principal and most laborious part of the work fell on Father Vincent. Here he laboured untiringly about four years. In the meantime Father Bourke had returned as titular Bishop of Zion, and Vicar Apostolic of Nova Scotia, and Father Vincent had been instructed by his superior that, as God had so manifestly made known His will in the matter, he might remain on the American mission. Father Vincent entered upon the work with all the earnestness of his soul. He took especial pains in instructing and administering to the Mic Mac Indians, of whom there were then a great number in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. They were devoutly attached to the good Monk, who so unselfishly devoted himself to their spiritual and temporal welfare; and he in turn was much edified by the firm faith, sincere piety, and religious fervour of his tawny children. In 1815, Bishop Bourke placed Father Vincent in charge of the missions of Tracadie, Pamquette, and Havre-au-Boucher, in Western Nova Scotia. For a long time the inhabitants of these parts had been deprived of the services of religion, so that he found in this new field ample work for his zeal. But he was not satisfied; he made frequent excursions to other parts of the country and to the Indian encampments, on Cape Breton, preaching, teaching, and administering the sacraments to those who would otherwise have been destitute of spiritual aids; for at that time there were very few priests in this extensive vicariate.

Father Vincent's simple narrative of his missionary life is deeply interesting, and shows the apostolic character of the man. In 1823 he visited his superior in France, returning in 1824, with a Father and three Brothers of the Order, with whom he formed the monastery which still exists at Tracadie. He continued in charge of the missions till 1837, then came his longed-for retirement. The worldly strife was now over, and henceforth his home was to be the monastery's lone retreat,

"Where in the silent chant of holy deeds
he would praise his God.

"And tend his sick soul's needs,
By toils of day, and vigils of the night,
By gushing tears, and blessed lustral rite."

After sixteen years of this mode of life, which to us seems so unendurable, but to God's chosen ones is a joyous round of loving duty—of labour made light by prayer, and silence made indeed golden by a continual uplifting of the heart to God,—the good Father Vincent breathed