

SISTERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

The thousands of citizens of New York and Brooklyn who recently have climbed the stone steps of the new monastery building in Putnam avenue, Brooklyn, have seen the Stars and Stripes fluttering, both in sunshine and rain, from the top of two slender poles erected in front of the edifice. In the interior, where has been in progress a successful church fair, they have seen more American flags plentifully used for festoonery.

The new building, to which throngs have journeyed night and day, is the monastery of the Adoration of the Precious Blood, the substantial home of a noted Roman Catholic sisterhood, and the display of the American national emblem has been the most conspicuous and impressive feature of the ceremonies attending its formal opening. It has helped to lend patriotic interest to an event which, but for the recent sectarian A.P.A. agitation, might have been purely religious. In this particular instance, as in many other, the Catholics of the future Greater New York have by outward sign given proof that they are patriotic Americans as well as good Christians.

The monastery building will be one of the handsomest of its kind in this country, and its erection is evidence of the popularity of the Sisterhood for whose use it was built. It is the New York branch of the Order founded by Mlle. Aurelie Caouette, a Canadian of St. Hyacinthe, of whom it is related that while still an inmate of the Convent of Notre Dame she gave evidence of a remarkable manifestation of religious consecration, particularly to the devotion of the Precious Blood, a devotion then widely practised in England, but little known in the New World.

A number of distinguished clergy men visited Miss Caouette and the convent, and it was agreed that she was fitted to establish a new religious community of the contemplative order, and in September, 1861, the Right Rev. Joseph Larocque, Bishop of St. Hyacinthe, began in Mlle. Caouette's humble home the monastic work of the Precious Blood. Three devout young women joined with the foundress of the Order in a life of adoration, immolation, and reparation. She received the special approbation of the Holy See in 1889, and has seen the Order extend to Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Three Rivers, Mount Tabor, Oregon, and to Brooklyn.

The Brooklyn Order was established directly after the blessing from the Pope upon the work of the Order had been bestowed. It was started in an old frame building called "The Cobble Stone Cottage" by the Rev. Mother Aurelia, the foundress of the Order, and Mother Gertrude was installed as Superior of the Mission, with three Sisters to aid her. A year later the Order moved to an adjoining convent in Sumpter street, and thence moved to the wooden edifice of the old church of St. Francis, in the Fields. This was in 1892, when the Order had the energetic support of Father Porcile, S.P.M.

The monastery was designed by Architect Rudolph Vaux, who designed the Thirteenth Regiment Armory, and outside of that portion of it devoted to the use of the Sisterhood it will be handsome in its interior decoration.

All of the building is practically completed with the exception of the chapel. It is shaped so that the ground plan looks like a cross. It was begun in October, 1892, and may be completed next year. It occupies a plot of ground 100x200 feet, facing Putnam avenue, and is built in the Romanesque style, of Pompeian gray terra cotta brick, with foundations of Warsaw stone, with terra cotta trimmings. The chapel, which at present is about 80 feet square, will be extended to a depth of 80 feet, and will be divided into two sections, the first, with a seat-

ing capacity of 100, being for public use, and the rear, separated by iron gratings, being set apart for the exclusive use of the Sisters.

The public chapel will be richly decorated and will have a wainscoting of marble and mosaic imported from Paris. It will be lighted by six stained glass windows. One of these, a life-sized design representing John the Baptist, was presented by a Mrs. Stephens, who has promised to give two others.

An oriel window in a small balcony over the entrance has also been finished. The basement of the monastery is occupied by the dining rooms, kitchen and laundry rooms. On the first floor are located twenty-six "cells," as they are called, for the Sisters, rooms for the "retreatants," and parlors for the reception of guests. There are more "cells" on the second floor for novitiates, and a "community" room, and a dispensary on the third floor.

All the rooms save the dispensary and the reception parlor on the right entrance will be closed from the public by grated doors.

For the retreatants are three sleeping rooms, which will be comfortably furnished. These rooms have a corridor and separate stairway, and have no communication with any part of the monastery used exclusively by the Sisters. In this wing a small room has been set apart for the accommodation of any priest who visits the monastery to conduct services or perform other religious work. Here he will be served with his meals after he has celebrated chapel Mass. The room has a private entrance.

The religious cells are small and narrow rooms, but into most of them plenty of sunshine can pour when the shutters are opened. They are ten feet long, six feet wide and eleven feet high. Each cell has a single wooden slab corresponding to a bed, with no mattress. The slab is covered with a white spread, and a pillow stuffed with excelsior. The cell is furnished with a wooden chair, a stationary washstand and an oratory with its crucifix, a writing desk, and a clothes press. All three are one piece of furniture. Upon the door of each cell is hung a small blackboard, surmounted by a red cross, containing on one side the name and motto of the occupant, and on the other side an announcement saying that the occupant cannot be seen.

All the supplies of the monastery will be kept in the basement, where the procuratrix will have an office, separated by an iron grating from an apartment where the poor of the neighborhood may obtain food, medicine or advice in their trouble. The Sisters themselves attend to all the details of the cooking and laundry work. All the floors of the monastery save those occupied by the retreatants will be uncarpeted. The walls are of white plaster with a wide dado of German mosaic.

Women who desire to make a Retreat in the monastery will be accommodated as long as they care to stay. Retreatants follow the example of the Sisters in cutting themselves off from all communication with the outer world.

The daily life of the Sisters is severe in its simplicity. When they join the Order they forsake the world utterly. An iron grating or a door separates them always from their friends, and they can receive visitors only at certain stated times. A pretty garden in the rear of the monastery will afford them whatever exercise they may take in the open air. The Sisters pray frequently, and they are regularly awakened for prayer at midnight. But if any of the Sisters are unable to rise from the wooden sleeping slab through weariness or sickness she is not required to leave her resting place. The retreatants assist in these midnight monastic devotions, which have been

a feature since the Order was established.

Three different habits are worn by the Sisterhood. The choir Sisters wear white serge, red scapulars and a black veil, with a tiny red cross resting just over the face. The lay Sisters wear the same habit, with a black serge, while the touriere Sisters all wear black habits.

Bishop McDonnell, of Brooklyn, twice visited the monastery during the fair, and Bishop Hennessy and Mgr. Doane, of Newark, and a host of priests from New York, Brooklyn and vicinity inspected the building. All but the public chapel was closed last Wednesday, when the Sisters went into a cloistered life from which they cannot be relieved save by another special dispensation.

Priests will conduct services in the public chapel, but the Sisters can never be approached at service. They may be seen at their chapel devotions through the grated partition in the rear of the public chapel, thus carrying out an ancient monastic custom. They are all skilful at embroidery and sewing, and employ themselves after their devotions and when the day's duties are finished in embroidering clerical vestments or in other needlework.

Archbishop Duhamel, of Ottawa, said in explanation of the monastic peculiarities of the Sisterhood that the love of prayer and the confidence in it when offered through the Precious Blood have proven a salutary means of procuring God's grace and of strengthening the steps in the path of perfection. He added that could but a few only of the pious relations between the cloistered nun and the child of the world be recorded they would prove effectual in showing the large amount of good that may be accomplished through the invocation of the blood of the cross and the altar.

"These prayers are a means of grace so potent," he added, "that often a whole life may be changed thereby."—*Philadelphia Standard*.

Religion in the School.

Mr. A. J. Balfour, speaking at Beswick, Manchester, in connection with the laying of the foundation stone of a new Wesleyan school, said the Wesleyans had always been most honorably distinguished by the earnestness with which they had advocated the view that the training of the young in the matter of religion could not and ought not to be left wholly either to the family or the pulpit. Beyond those instruments of education they required the Sunday School. Those who thought the school was intended merely for secular purposes made in his opinion, a profound mistake. The broad issue between religious and secular education was one of the questions looming in the future. Those who had as their ideal of education nothing beyond secular learning were little better than Secularists.

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