

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

THE GREY NUNS IN CANADA.

[Note.—For the following sketch of the Grey Nuns, the first religious order of women founded by a Canadian, we are indebted to the *North West Review*. It is from an address delivered by the venerable Archbishop of St. Boniface, on occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Sister St. Joseph, one of the founders of the Order in the North-West. ED.]

Deus sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.—Ps. 67.

IV.

Nowhere is good accomplished without some difficulties, even when there are pecuniary resources: here, there was an entire want of money, everything was wanting. I have seen the Sisters with sickle in hand glean some wheat in order to have a little bread. I have seen them and see them still armed with a hoe to break up the soil in order to get from it vegetables and other necessary products to sustain their establishments. I have seen them and we all see them every day after the example of their indefatigable foundress, giving themselves up to all sorts of work and industry in order to have the means to do a little more good. I have heard them, whatever may have been their offices, beg as a favour and diversion to be allowed to pass their nights and their recreation at the bedside of the sick. I have never known any hesitation when it was a question of spending themselves in works of charity. In a word I owe it to justice as well as to truth to say. The daughters of Madame Youville, at St. Boniface as well as in the dependent missions, are all animated by the spirit of their venerable foundress; under the wise direction of their superior at Montreal, they do all the good which it is possible for them to do, and they do it with such good will that to the exterior view one has not even a suspicion that the accomplishment of these various ministrations necessitates self-denial and imposes sacrifices and labours. Many people seeing the result falsely believe in the existence of unknown resources and often say:—The Sisters are rich, for if they were not rich they could not do what they do. In fact, they are rich in their devotion, their generosity, the spirit of their institution, the example of their foundress, the direction which guides them; yes, they are rich in all this and these riches advantageously supply the place of the goods which ordinarily go by the name of a fortune.

What then have these Grey Nuns done since 1844?

The habit of seeing in large towns immense edifices, the mass of super-abundant population bringing before one's view their long list of children of the necessitous, the abandoned, the infirm and the sick, this double habit ill-prepares the judgment to appreciate what is done in a country where the want of resources does not permit of large constructions and where the small population does not furnish these in numbers.

For those who reflect sufficiently, in order to form a just idea of the real position of our Christian heroines, this inconvenience need not be feared.

Forty-four years ago the idea of sending *religieuses* to the Red River Settlement astonished the world and it is the expansion of this idea which brings it about that the Grey Nuns are on the banks of the Saskatchewan since thirty years ago; that their companions, beyond the Great Slave Lake, see, since twenty years ago, the waters of the great McKenzie River beat upon the shore near which their establishment is situated.

Ask the venerable prelate (Mgr. Grandin) whom I have the honour to have at my side, what he endured to reach Ile a la Crosse with the Sisters, what he suffered to lay the foundations of the Providence Mission. If the ears of Father Maisonneuve could speak, they would tell you that they lost their use in the midst of labours accomplished at Lac la Biche, labours shared in by the Grey Nuns. Father Lacombe is here; he could tell you that, besides what he has done at Lake St. Anne and at St. Albert, he has had the happiness of seeing the work of the Sisters of Charity so successful that, when it became a question for the Government of the country to found an industrial school for the Indian children, the zealous missionary united himself with me to beg the authorities to secure the assistance of these

worthy daughters of Madame Youville, and together we had the consolation of hearing the Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada tell us that we could not do better than secure for ourselves so powerful an assistance, and beg us to name the necessary expenses to obtain that incomparable advantage. This is how it happens that, there are Sisters of Charity at Qu'Appelle and at High River at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. If the venerable parish priests who have come to add to the lustre and sanctity of this *fete* were to speak this moment, some would say how much they themselves and their parishioners appreciate the services which are rendered them by the Sisters; others would ask the Venerable Mother-General who is present what some have already asked of me: Sisters to instruct the children of their parishes, to console the afflicted, to care for the sick. And you yourselves, my brethren, if it were permitted you to speak in this sacred place, would you not rise up to proclaim that these good Sisters render you incalculable services; that their schools, their hospices, their hospitals, are never-failing sources of good, that all this, like visits in the day of trial and affliction, brings to your hearts sweet consolations and powerful encouragement.

When the Reverend Sister St. Joseph left Montreal with her three companions, she did not expect that she would have the consolation of seeing in her own lifetime sixteen foundations of her order in Manitoba and the North-west Territories; nor that she would see one day in this country, besides their Venerable Mother-General's visit, 104 professed sisters, 7 novices and 2 postulants; she did not believe that she and her companions would be able in 1888 to care for and nourish nearly 200 orphans and infirm and instruct more than 1,100 children.

God, after having called to Him three of the foundresses of the Red River Mission, left one of them surviving in order to give us the consolation of seeing that the whole of what we have just spoken of has been accomplished during one missionary life, and to afford us the happiness of looking forward to a prosperous future for our holy religion, since the proportional progress of what has already been accomplished will necessarily produce the happiest results. These results will, moreover, be the more abundant that the Grey Nuns are no longer alone. Other communities have come to join them, and all together, in perfect charity and harmony, have at heart to prove that God is holy in His works. Let us rejoice, then, my dear brethren, let us bless, let us thank God for His solicitude for His children and for the means of sanctification which He has put at our disposal. And you, Reverend Sister, you who are a Grey Nun, professed fifty years ago, a missionary to the Red River Settlement for forty years past, accept the feeble expression of my gratitude as bishop of the diocese for all the good which you have done, for the examples of virtue which you have given to all.

As a pledge of your gratitude to God renew the vows which you have made to Him, those vows which have been for you a source of happiness and a means of sanctification, those vows which have been the occasion of so much good to others and which justifies the cry of our hearts to-day: God is holy in all His works.

THE END.

IN QUEBEC.

My first thought on arriving at Quebec was to see how much the chromo-loving spirit of the age had left us of our ancient landmark, the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires, for, on the occasion of the two-hundredth birthday of that venerable sanctuary, it was swept and garnished, and then, alas! fresco painters were let loose in it. The exterior does not appear to have been tampered with, and the interior is not absolutely disfigured, but it is modernized, and its *cachet* of antiquity is obliterated. The pictures, "fearfully and wonderfully made," in the little side chapel of Sainte Genevieve are the same as of yore, and on the wall is a tablet stating that in 1688, in the reign of Louis the Great, the first stone of this chapel of Ste. Genevieve was laid by "Illustrissimis vir Dominus D. Joannes Bochart, D. de Champigny, Noroy."

The old gilt and turreted altar is the same, though surrounded with the splendours of the paint pot. Under one of the lateral windows of the church, in large capitals, is set forth the inscription:—