

Album of Saint Anne

THE DEVOTION TO SAINT ANNE IN CANADA

XI. — The Brotherhood of Joiners and work



TO make a tabernacle, to erect an altar was formerly considered by the Joiners as the master-work of their corporation. In many instances, this was the test to which journeymen were submitted before becoming masters of the craft. Far from making a servile and mercenary work of it, the workman, on the contrary, devoted all the resources of his skill and all the inventions of his mind to it, in the minutest details. Nothing that could render it more worthy of its exalted destiny was neglected. For himself he was well satisfied with very scanty furniture, but he wished everything that was intended for purposes of divine worship to be rich and beautiful. Happy times when all works were thus inspired by faith!

Such, assuredly, was the spirit that animated the Quebec confraternity and it may easily be imagined that the joiners were anxious to set about decorating their chapel. But they were delayed by difficulties that arose and had to wait three long years before doing so. The chapel walls remained undecorated during all that time; the pictures without frames; the altar itself without other trimmings than those supplied by the piety of the faithful. Jean Levasseur, always so devoted to his work, suffered probably more than any other from this, because he saw in it a breach of honor on the part of his corporation: so he hastened to remedy it on the first favorable opportunity.

All his colleagues were convened in a meeting held for the purpose. Each one expressed his opinion and threw the light of his experience upon the subject, and in the end, it was resolved that, in view of the slight ornamentation of St. Anne's chapel at present, an altar-screen be made nineteen feet or