



A CHAPLET OF YEARS



The young women, desirous of making trial of the new association, placed themselves under the direction of Mr. Paul Archambault, the parish priest, and began training for their threefold duties, May 24, 1848.

TRAINING FOR THE SISTERHOOD

Of paramount importance was the religious formation of the candidates. Even to the choicest of Catholics, such as those who now presented themselves for probation, Christ gave much to learn and do, when He taught, "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

This exalted ideal is very inspiring and draws many, but between ideal and practice, lie the difficult triple conditions, "If you would be perfect, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me." These rules are hard, and as we learn from the rich young man in the Gospel, few have the courage to follow them.

Of fifty probationists who began to train, only five persevered through the required two years' novitiate. On September 8, 1850, these heroines of self-denial, obedience, labour, and prayer, knelt at the altar in presence of the Bishop, of happy relatives, and the proud Vandreuil congregation, and with glad hearts pledged themselves to God by life vows.

Since that day, the Institute of the Sisters of St. Ann, by steady growth and adherence to the rules and customs tested by its first exemplars, has held an honoured place among the religious congregations of the Catholic Church.

FIRST FRUIT

Among the visitors in the modest parlour of the new Sisterhood, on that heaven-registered day, was the brother of Miss Blondin, the foundress. He looked with reverent admiration at the sanctified face, the consecrated features. More than any one else, he could share his sister's sweet emotions: he knew that she was the architect of an edifice with a stairway leading to the dome of Heaven; he saw an unbroken procession, ever coming, ever ascending to reach its goal at the feet of God. Manlike, he also grasped the meaning that new glory was attached to the family name, by the sacred event that day recorded in Catholic Church History.

It was a holy hour in a holy place, and his heart expanded wide to receive its abundant benedictions. Filled with a realization of God's signal favours, he looked around the room at the visitors, and there—