

1659. sons of her sex, no matter how poor or destitute, an education which many girls, even of good families, do not secure in the best-ordered kingdoms. She succeeded to that degree, that you constantly behold, with renewed astonishment, women in the very depths of indigence and want perfectly instructed in their religion, ignorant of nothing that they should know to employ themselves usefully in their families, and who, by their manners, their manner of expressing themselves, and their politeness, are not inferior to the most carefully educated among us. This is the just meed of praise rendered to the Sisters of the Congregation by all who have made any stay in Canada.¹

Foundation
of the Con-
gregation
Sisters.

It would seem that at a later date there was an idea of making them cloistered nuns; for, in 1709, they were forbidden to cloister themselves or take vows. They replied that they had never entertained the intention of shutting themselves up, a cloister life being absolutely incompatible with their institute; that for the same reason they did not ask to take solemn vows, that their only wish was to be permitted to take simple vows; but as it was believed that these vows would perhaps, in time, lead them to adopt the cloister, which would render them far less useful to the colony, the council refused its consent.²

The Ursulines at Quebec also contributed greatly, on their side, to give young persons of their sex a suitable education; but out of the precincts of that capital, few girls are enabled to frequent their schools, and the poverty of the country prevents their keeping a large number of boarders. At the time of their establishment in New France, it was proposed to confide to them the education of Indian girls; but the result did not meet the expectations that had been conceived, and many reasons induced

¹ See note 3, ante, vol. II., p. 250. 1852; *Histoire de la Colonie Franç.*, Vie de Marguerite Bourgeoys, 12mo, ii., p. 174.
Montreal, 1818; Faillon, Vie de la ² Edits et Ordonnances, ii., p. Sœur Bourgeoys, 2 vols. 8vo., Paris, 268.