

COMMUNITY OF THE
SISTERS ADORERS OF THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

*Foundation of the Order—Dress—Mother Catharine—Jubilee Celebration—Mother St.
Joseph—First House in Toronto—Present Monastery—Industries—
Boarders—Retreatants—Reception—Chapel for Public—
Hours of Services—When Members May be Seen.*

"Jesus—thrice blessed be His most Holy Name!—is all our own, neither can we spare anything of Him. Yet it was not precisely His soul which was to redeem us, nor the Passion of His Body which was to be exactly our expiation. It was the shedding of His Blood which was to cleanse us from our sins. The remedy of the Fall was precisely in the Saviour's Blood. All the sorrows of His life grew up to the shedding of His Blood, and were crowned by it; and His shedding the last few drops of it after He was dead was significant of the work it had to do. The Soul and the Body and the Blood lay separate, and the sacrifice was thus complete." Precious Blood.—*Faith.*

SOME twenty years ago the writer was brought to Toronto to enjoy the privilege of a retreat in a convent in preparation for First Communion. There were friends in the different communities established in the city to be seen, that their prayers might be solicited for the young aspirant. One of these visits has ever remained a happy recollection. We rang the door-bell of a house of very modest pretensions—after the large institutions we had been visiting—and my mother began telling me that she expected to see here a nun who had been her music teacher long ago in St. Hyacinthe, Que., and whom she had not seen since she left school; how this teacher had joined a most severe order, contemplative, founded by one who had been a daily visitor at the convent in St. Hyacinthe, and upon whom all looked with awe and wonder as a remarkably holy and privileged person; how it was whispered among the girls that she never partook of any food, yet was she always joyous, cheerful, delightful; how the wonderful manifestations of her election by Almighty God to honor in an especial manner the Precious Blood had moved the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe and her director to assist her in the arduous labor of establishing a community devoted to the Precious Blood; how continued manifestations showed the Divine complacency in her work; and how inestimable would be the reward of seeing the beloved foundress, Aurelie Caouette—Mother Catharine Aurelie du Precieux Sang.

Duly impressed and in very great awe I waited for the opening of the door. How immaculate the simple, austere interior, how visible the extreme poverty of the nuns! But my mother's friend comes in and they have much to say, and as the conversation is all in French I have plenty of opportunity to note the peculiar dress of the

order—the habit or tunic of white serge, sleeves very full and long enough to completely cover the hand; the long red scapular worn over this reaching to the bottom of the skirt; the linens apparently in but two pieces—the forehead band one, the cap and guimpe the other; the veil black, with a small red cross stitched on over the centre of the forehead; the red girdle with red pendant, upon which are represented the instruments of the Passion; the usual rosary terminating in a tiny skull attached to the girdle; a silver cross containing relics hangs from the neck, a silver ring is on the third finger. I learned later an additional long white mantle of serge is worn in the chapel.

A bevy of convent girls now come, fill the small parlor and overflow the hall. We learn for the first time that Mother Catharine is visiting the house and is to receive the convent girls. We are so favored as to be received with them.

Mother Catharine is short and plain-looking, but possessed of a wonderfully attractive personality. One brings away a fixed idea of loveliness in her—it must be the loveliness of the soul that shining through makes us forget all else. Her manner is warm and affectionate, her sympathy quick and unfailing, her strong faith a refuge for the weakest. Her energy is shown in the personal foundation of houses at Toronto (1869), Montreal (1874), Ottawa (1887), Three Rivers (1889), Brooklyn, N. Y. (1889), Mount Thabor, Oregon (1892). In Brooklyn, N. Y., a fine monastery was completed and taken possession of May, 1894. These convents Mother Catharine visits from time to time in the spirit and wisdom of another Teresa.

Mlle. Aurelie Caouette founded the Congregation of the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood in her own home at St. Hyacinthe, Que., September 14, 1861, with the approbation and assistance of his Lordship Mgr. La Roche, and in conjunction with the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Raymond, whom the Sisters term their co-founder.

Three young ladies with Mother Catharine formed the struggling community; of these four but Mother Catharine and Mother St. Joseph—the latter superior of the Toronto house—remain.