

scriptions were receiving their necessary assistance and support from this institution, while the active industry of these excellent ladies made the requisite provision for them.

Matters remained in this situation until the year 1754, when an event occurred which called forth new efforts of zeal on the part of these benevolent females. It was in the winter season, as Madame Youville was going into town on business connected with the hospital, that she discovered an infant in the ice on the little river. The poor innocent was hard frozen, with a poniard sticking in its throat, and one of its little hands raised through the ice, as if in the attitude of demanding justice against the perpetrator of so atrocious a crime. Her benevolent feelings were dreadfully shocked at witnessing so horrid a spectacle; and after consulting with her pious companions, who were all deeply affected at such an event, notwithstanding the heavy additional expense it would occasion to the institution, they came to the determination of extending their charity and protection to orphans and foundlings. It was an established custom under the French government, that children in this unfortunate situation were provided for at the expense of the Crown; and his Majesty and higher officers had carefully executed this part of their duty; soon after this event, the revolution which placed this country under the British dominion took place, and that government did not consider it necessary to furnish the means of defraying this charge; hence it happened that many children, some of them the offspring of indigent parents, but more frequently the fruits of vice, were left exposed in the streets and highways, their lives in imminent danger from the inclemency of the weather or the attacks of wild beasts, and their immortal souls in peril of being lost by their being thus deprived of a Christian education. Thus we have an instance of the maternal tenderness to which they would consent to abandon these innocent victims, and of the encouragement which the favouring such institutions is thought by some to give to licentiousness and corruption of manners. These are but a feeble barrier against that shame, misery, discord, domestic troubles, and inhumanity of heart, which extinguishes the voice of honour and religion. On the one hand, the passions tend incessantly to keep their victim under the yoke; on the other hand, the sentiments of honour and justice which are engraven in the heart will induce man, even at the time he abandons the paths of propriety, to search for every means he can find to preserve a fair appearance in society. The abandonment of those infants to chance or caprice, whatever may happen, must be considered as a remedy worse than the disease.

The contemplation of this melancholy event had so great an effect upon the benevolent minds of these pious ladies, that they were induced to offer again to take infants situated under these circumstances under their charge; and that without infringing upon the performance of the other charitable duties for which their institution had been originally established. Their proposal to this effect was accepted by the Governor in Chief at the time; and he likewise gave them an assurance that the expense of this undertaking should be defrayed from the moiety of fines received for the Crown in the various judicatory courts of the province; but some new changes in the administration