

OUR HOSPITALS.

HOTEL DIEU.—We purpose describing in this, and following numbers of the "Lancet," the principal Hospitals in the Province; and we begin with that which heads this article,—the largest and most important in Canada—nay, perhaps, on this continent. Its eventful history is that of embryo Montreal. The Hotel Dieu Hospital of this city, owes its existence to a few gentlemen, who, in 1640, incorporated under the name of "Société de Notre Dame de Montréal," obtained the cession of the island of Montreal from M. de Lauzon, intendant of Dauphiné in France, who had himself received it on condition of establishing a colony; but who could not induce persons to emigrate thither. On the 18th of May, 1642, these gentlemen, a Mlle. Mance, with a few hardy men prepared to act as soldiers, or in any capacity which circumstances might require, cast anchor at Pointe à Callières, opposite to where the Royal Insurance buildings now stand. The Iroquois—the most audacious among Indian tribes—soon manifested impatience at their presence, and kept up incessant warfare. The colonists were unable to gather fuel, fruits, berries or roots, without running the risk of being killed or wounded by the wily savages, who were ever lying in wait for them. In 1644, the first Hotel Dieu was constructed, on the site it afterwards occupied for upwards of 217 years, near what was afterwards called Little St. Joseph street, on the north-east side of the Catholic Cathedral. The original building was of wood, 24 x 60 feet, and consisted of a kitchen, a room for Mlle. Mance, another for the servants, and two for the sick. No sooner was it completed, than it was filled with wounded, for the Iroquois still kept up their incessant raids. A short time after its construction, the funds were exhausted; but Mde. Bullion, who had already contributed 20,000 francs from her purse, added 60,000 livres more, on condition the poor should ever be received and cared for, without charge. But even these funds were insufficient, and the exhausted state of the exchequer, and still more the small number to which the ceaseless activity of the Iroquois had now reduced the colonists, determined the latter to return to France. The energy of Mlle. Mance, however, deterred them. She visited her native country, and returned to the colony with men and means. In 1650, the Hurons, most of whom had been Christianized, were completely exterminated by the more warlike Iroquois. The latter, from recent successes, now become still more insolent, destroyed the houses erected around the hospital, and murdered the inmates. The history of the Hotel Dieu for many years subsequently is one of continued trials, dangers, and alarms. But now and again an Iroquois, wounded and captured in his attempt to murder, would be carried into the hospital, his wounds dressed, and when restored to health, dismissed with kindness, to tell his wondering comrades what the pale-faced women had done for him,—how they had watched by and prayed to the Great Spirit for him,—how they had carried food to his lips when he was hungry, and moistened them when parched with fever. And in this way, Christianity, baptized in blood, was insensibly introduced among them.

In not more than 21 years the seigniorship of the island was taken from the société. In 1695 the annual expenses were 7 to 8000 francs, and the income 10 to 12 hundred. At that time two surgeons attended and they received fifteen dollars a year between them. In 1721, the hospital was destroyed by fire;

and, notwithstanding the extreme poverty of the *communauté*, the necessity for accommodation was so urgent that another building (31 by 130 feet and 3 stories) was undertaken. Within three months of its completion it was also burnt, with all it contained except the archives. In 1723 an attempt was made to reconstruct the building, but without success; but in the following year the building was begun and completed. In 1734 a negro servant set fire to the house of a Madame Francheville, on the bank of the St. Lawrence, which, spreading from house to house, reached the hospital and entirely consumed it. In 1735 the hospital was again recommenced, assistance having been afforded by the French Government. The inmates of the Hotel Dieu had, during a few years, been visited with two epidemics, and the sisters had suffered severely. Nine of their number, on the first occasion, and twenty-one on the second, were victims of the disease. In 1760, Montreal passed into the possession of the British, and the General commanding thus marked his appreciation of the attention of the hospital nurses to his soldiers: "Amherst, grateful to the sisters for their care of the wounded English soldiers, sends them a couple of hundred half-dollars and two dozen Madeira. These are but pledges of the welfare he wishes to a society so respectable as that of the Hotel Dieu, which may rely for the same protection on the part of the British nation, which it enjoyed under French domination." In 1859, Montreal, the forest of 1640, had become the largest and most flourishing, and one of the most beautiful cities in the province, and the Hotel-Dieu was so closely surrounded by stores and warehouses, that, for sanitary as well as for economic reasons, it was deemed advisable to erect a new edifice at a little distance from the city. A large field at the head of upper St. Urbain Street was chosen for that purpose, and now, far above the city, on a shelving rock of limestone, the Hotel Dieu stands in majestic grandeur,—beautiful in external appearance, and elegant and chaste in its interior. It is built in the form of the letter H, and is surrounded at a distance of several hundred feet by a substantial stone wall. One side, and the connecting bar of the building are occupied by patients; the other side by old and infirm men, women, and children. Patients of every religion, and of every nation, are admitted on equal terms, and without question. The physicians too, have been protestant as well as catholic. Now, the professors in the school of medicine are the attendants; but three years ago, the St. Patrick's Hospital, (which had already gained a high reputation under the able guidance of Drs. MacDonnell and David,) ceasing to exist, the Hotel Dieu authorities set apart wards for English speaking patients. These were placed under the care of Dr. Hingston. There are at present five medical attendants, who visit the hospital daily at noon. Every kind of disease is there treated, and it has already become one of the most important (as it is the largest) field of medical and surgical observation and experience in the Province. There are operating and consultation rooms, a beautiful apothecary, private wards for patients of both sexes, &c., &c. The walls and ceiling are white, and the wood work is of oak. Every thing is light and cheerful, and the whole building is heated with steam. Ventilation, however, is not perfect; but we learn that means are soon to be taken to remedy this defect. The cleanliness which is observable throughout is remarkable. There are at present upwards of 200 patients,