

Those who remember the excitement about the famous Maria Monk, or who have read her book, will remember her statement that an underground passage existed from the Hôtel-Dieu to the Seminaire, and that the purposes for which it was chiefly used were not such as to tend to edification!

This statement received last autumn a curious confirmation and contradiction.

In September last when the sewer along St. Paul St. was being relaid, the workmen, on coming opposite the eastern gable wall of Messrs. Thibaudeau's building on the corner of St. Paul Street and St. Dizier lane, struck a crust of rude but very hard masonry. This had been nearly cut through when one of our older citizens, Mr. P. S. Murphy, appeared upon the scene and explained the origin and use of this remnant of OLD MONTREAL.

As shown on some old maps, the Hôtel-Dieu property originally ran from St. Sulpice Street, formerly called little St. Joseph Street, eastward to the property of the Sisters of the Congregation, and from the River Bank, back almost to Notre Dame Street, the road being originally along the River bank.

In building their laundry, "la Buanderie," the Sisters naturally placed it not far from the water. When, however, it was found necessary to open St. Paul St. on account of the river road being liable to be blocked by the shoving of ice, the new road was run between the main buildings of the Convent and the out buildings. This placed the Sisters in an awkward predicament, for the simple reason that being cloistered nuns they were cut off from the wash house. However, they saw that though they could not cross the street, there was nothing in their rules or discipline to interfere with their going under it, hence this tunnel was made, giving access to the separated property.

This sketch gives a fair idea of the style of construction as far as one could see, for the excavation was not carried down more than about one third of the height of the tunnel.

The sides or walls of the passage-way were the ordinary rubble masonry of the time, about eighteen inches thick, and the top was the depressed arch of the period, formed of thin slabs of stone, with thick layers of very hard flinty cement, giving an appearance of ancient Roman work, the slabs being about as thin as the old Roman tiles.