

## CHAPTER XVII.

Occupations of Men and Women on Nuns' Island—A Heart-broken Woman—Conversation with her—My Departure from the Island, and Return to the Hotel Dieu.

It would be impossible for me to form any estimate, on which I could place reliance, of the number of men or women I saw on Nuns' Island. There was no regular time for breakfast, dinner or supper. No bell was rung, no notice was given for meals, any more than for retiring at night, or rising in the morning. Food was always prepared and ready, when any of us were disposed to eat; and we went when we chose, alone or in company, to the eating-room, at one end of the building, and helped ourselves in true Canadian style.

Many of my readers may not be aware of the style of eating practised among many of the lower Canadians. So many of the priests are of Canadian origin, that their meals in the nunnery, and on the island, are often disposed of in a rude and unmannerly way, with but little use of knives and forks. We often ate standing, while on the island, and it was common to take even meat in the fingers.

As there was no general call, or occasion for assembling at any time, the inmates resorted to their rooms, or lounged about the galleries, yard, or sitting-rooms, as they pleased: so that it would have