



A CHAPLET OF YEARS



"My dear Sister," said the Superior, "go and shell the peas in that basket and think while doing so, that the greatest glory of an Order depends on the humility and obedience of its members."

The Superior knew that the good Sister had these virtues, and being herself a woman of whom it was said she bordered on genius, she could appreciate the younger Sister's gift. The lesson was not meant to stifle it, but rather to give pre-eminence to the example of Christ, who having it in His power to do great things was, as the Evangelist tells us, "subject to them."

Because Sister Mary Elizabeth walked in these footprints of her Divine Model, she heard the voice of God in that of her Superiors when they told her that, after much prayer and deliberation, they had named her for the Vancouver Island missions. She gladly acquiesced and diligently prepared for the voyage and her future employments. Shortly before the departure from the Mother House it was noticed that Sister's energy had slackened, but this was attributed to fatigue and suppressed emotion. When the final hour of farewell came there was no disguising the fact that Sister was combating illness. There were some who thought the long sea voyage would do her good; others, that she would soon come back. Among the latter was Sister Mary Providence, who went so far as to say to Mother General, "Do not hesitate if you want a substitute for Sister Mary Elizabeth; I am quite ready to go in her stead."

The Sisters tried to hush her, so apprehensive were they that one so dear and necessary to them, would be taken at her word.

Mother General accompanied the two Sisters (Mary Bonsecours and M. Elizabeth) to Montreal, where they were to join the party of other religious bound for the West, and finish preparations for the voyage. While Mother General was attending to business, both Sisters were gaining whatever hurried knowledge they could in hospital training from their kind hostesses, the Sisters of Providence. There wanted but forty-eight hours for the embarkation when, late in the evening, after a strenuous day's tramp in the city, buying and packing and shipping. Mother General was gently informed by the Providence Superior that Sister Mary Elizabeth was down with typhoid fever. Poor tired Mother General, it was no time to rest; she must think quickly and act quickly, and be back at the Mother House by next forenoon. She hired a vehicle where she had to drive, and a rowboat where the St. Lawrence was to be crossed, and a cart for the country roads. At the river crossing so wild a storm raged that it was by sheer force of will she got the boatmen to row her over.