

I.—*An Ursuline Epic.*

By LT.-COL. WILLIAM WOOD, Author of "The Fight for Canada."

(Read May 26, 1908).

I.

In the heart of Quebec is an oblong block of houses, about a quarter of a mile long and half as broad. The streets on three sides of it bear the names of St. Ursula, St. Louis and St. Ann. But saints' names alone are nothing unusual in Quebec. It is only the crooked little street cutting off the fourth corner that shows you the sole point of contact between a convent and the outside world. This oblong is the property of the Ursulines; the houses in it all face outward; behind them stands the convent wall; and within the wall the cloisters and a garden of some seven acres.

You wonder what the nuns think and talk about during their few spare moments in that little inward-dwelling world apart, when they never leave the precincts and never read a paper. But since before Confederation they have had one topic of absorbing interest to their whole community. And now they are on the very tiptoe of expectation for the first rumour of decisive news from Rome, about the long-sought beatification of their first and greatest superior, La Mère Marie de l'Incarnation. They explain how many, many difficulties they have had to overcome; how dishearteningly slow their progress was for so many years, because they did not know the proper method of procedure; and how often they had to begin over and over again. At last, the assessors appointed by the Court of Rome appeared to put the nuns through the final cross-examination. One sister, who had made a special study of La Mère Marie's life, can tell you how she occupied the witness box for thirteen days, and that it is the hardest thing in the world to get the very best of women made a saint. But now even Rome itself must be satisfied; and the Holy Father will soon proclaim a saint throughout both worlds. Yes; the Ursulines have something to talk about, after all!

But why should La Mère Marie become a saint; and what did she really do for Canada? The following pages are an attempt to answer this question from French and French-Canadian sources and a Roman Catholic point of view. It is, in fact, her eulogy. There is no devil's advocate to plead against her; no outside public in the jury; no doubting critic on the bench. But the well-attested evidence in her favour is so strong that it would be worth stating for its own sake; while, quite apart from every question of the beatific life, she claims attention from