THE EARLY HOSPITAL HISTORY OF CANADA,
1535-1875, A. D.

BY

M. LOUISE MEIKLEJOHN.

I. *French Régime.*

The early hospital history of Canada is the history of the country itself; it is the tale of heroism and of martyrdom, of Indian massacre, of famine, fire and pestilence, of colonization, of war and of civilization.

The houses of the sick in this country, as in older civilizations, were called *Hotel, Hospice, Hôpital*, without discrimination, and each one endeavoured to fulfil the combined mission of modern institutions bearing the same names.

In the earliest days of the country they were built of logs, the chinks filled in with clay, the rooms planked and the roofs covered with bark. They were of necessity surrounded by palisades and fortified with cannon, for, "in all Canada, no man could hunt, fish, till the fields, or cut a tree in the forest without danger to his scalp. The Iroquois were everywhere and nowhere. A yell, a volley of bullets, a rush of screeching savages—and all was over."

The immediate neighbourhood of these primitive houses of the sick was utilized for a burying-ground, where the nuns themselves interred those of their order—and they were many—who did not survice its hardships. Here also were buried the hospital sick or any others who died in the colony. Nearby was to be found the vegetable garden and barnyard, which, too frequently, constituted their only source of subsistence. In describing the two chief communities, Parkman says: "It is difficult to conceive a self-abnegation more complete than that of the hospital nuns of Quebec and Montreal. In the almost total absence of trained and skilled physicians the burden of the sick and wounded fell upon them.

Of the two communities, that of Montreal was the more wretchedly destitute; while that of Quebec was exposed, perhaps, to greater dangers. The nuns died, but they never complained. Removed from the arena of ecclesiastical strife, too busy for the morbidness of the cloister, too