

## The Church in Canada.

Under this heading will be collected and preserved all obtainable data bearing upon the history and growth of the Church in Canada. Contributions are invited from those having in their possession any material that might properly come for publication in this department.

### THE GREYNUNS IN CANADA.

[Note.—For the following sketch of the Grey Nuns, the first religious order of women founded by a Canadian, we are indebted to the *North West Review*. It is from an address delivered by the venerable Archbishop of St. Boniface, on occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Sister St. Joseph, one of the founders of the Order in the North-West. Ed.]

*Deus sanctus in omnibus operibus suis.*—Ps. 67.

#### III.

#### (3). Forty-four years of work at the Red River Mission.

The conquest of Canada by the English paralyzed for a long time, the consequences to the Verandrye from the discovery of the West by Monsicur de la Verandrye. Numbers of Indian tribes inhabited this distant country; missionaries had accompanied the parties of the discoverers, partaken of their fatigues and intermingled their blood with theirs, while falling under the tomahawk of the ferocious Indians; but the conquest put an end to these French expeditions, and the missionaries could no longer betake themselves to the North-West. The Holy Catholic Church wishes the sanctification of souls, thus those who directed it in Canada ardently longed for the time when they might send Evangelical workmen to establish themselves in the lands discovered by La Verandrye and already watered by the blood of martyrs.

Insurmountable difficulties retarded the accomplishment of this precious design until 1818, the date at which Messieurs Norbert Provencher and Severé Dumoulin came to establish themselves at Red River.

This is not the time to speak of the work of those apostles, but it certainly is the time to speak of one of the constant aims of that one of them who, having become bishop, gave irrevocably his heart and his life to that portion of the Lord's vineyard which confided to his care.

Mgr. Provencher, in spite of his efforts and the indefatigable zeal of the generous priests who seconded him, comprehended that there was one thing wanting, one thing essential to his work to complete it and to ensure its success for the future.

The young girls of the country were not receiving the care with which the Church wishes to surround their inexperience in order to prepare them to accomplish the duties which God demands of the Christian woman. A community of *religieuses* devoted to the instruction and domestic education of young girls appeared to Mgr. Provencher the only and the necessary means to supply a want which had for twenty-five years so often afflicted his heart—the heart of a true shepherd. But where was he to find the *religieuses* who would consent to come to Red River.

Red River! In the country away up North! In those lands so far away, so ill spoken of, so dreaded, where, it seems only the purest heroism, sustained by the most vigorous strength can endure to remain. Mgr. Provencher wrote hither and thither to ask information; impossibilities presented themselves to his project. He went to Canada, addressed himself to the institutions devoted to instruction, they answered him that they could not come. The foundation at St. Hyacinthe encouraged him—perhaps the Grey Nuns would do so. The holy prelate who presided over the destinies of the Church of Montreal, which he has so greatly developed, knew the devotion of the Grey Nuns; he highly approved the thought of the Bishop of the North-West, and encouraged him to betake himself to the General Hospital, where he had prepared their might to share in his views and to be that another refusal might not be afflicted on him. His demand astonished at first, it was not a question of housing infirm old people, rescuing abandoned infants from death, sustaining orphans; it was not a question of those excellent works. The new lands, whose population was so sparse, had no pressing need of those works, which great populous centres demand with so much urgency and necessity. What there is need of in a new country is *Christian Education*, penetrating into the family as yet but little enlightened, modifying the manners and customs, giving birth to industry, seizing affectionately everything which happens

around the family fireside, in order to impress upon it a Christian seal, and practicing the population in such a manner that they should practice virtue and prepare themselves for heaven, utilizing for their true happiness everything of the earth and of time. These high aspirations can be realized only in a family in which the spirit and heart of the mother is endowed by instruction and education which becomes her sex. This was the constant idea of Mgr. Provencher, he laid it before the administrators of the General Hospital and they favourably received the request of the pious prelate.

On the 23rd of April, 1884, four Sisters of Charity, named by their superior, under the obedience and with the benediction of the holy bishop of Montreal, went forth from the pious asylum where they had made to God the sacrifice of their persons, betook themselves to Lachine and embarked on a frail bark canoe *en route* for the Red River Settlement, without even the thought of ever again seeing either the people or the places so dear to their hearts. For my part, I do not see a grander nor more complete heroism than that which shows itself in this circumstance. Heroism on the part of the community, which gives its subjects for a mission so distant and perilous; heroism on the part of the subjects, who accept for themselves all the consequences and all the sacrifices which it imposes. After the heartrendings of separation and departure, came the difficulties of the voyage. To-day, one comes from Montreal to St. Boniface in sixty-two hours, one can have palace coaches at his service in day time and at night palace sleeping cars, and without putting his feet to the ground one has his meals where are comfort and the luxury of the most sumptuous appointments, and yet I have heard young people complain of the length and fatigue of such a voyage. Let us form an idea, if we can, of what this long journey was when done in a bark canoe. The light skiff had to follow the sinuosities of the course of the water, and had to brave the fury of the great lakes, swept by the tempest, and that, for two long months, when they had no other shelter than a tent pitched on the humid shore, were exposed all day to the heat of the sun, to the buffeting of the winds, and day and night to the attacks of insects which appeared in great numbers everywhere. Add to this all the fears of timid persons, all the repugnance of delicate persons, all the distress of fatigue, food coarse and scarce, and you would have a feeble idea of what the *religieuses* underwent coming from Montreal to St. Boniface forty-four years ago.

If you wish to know it let me tell you that they faced and bore all these difficulties without complaints, without murmurs, without regrets, and without a desire to change their lot. It would not to astonish us, if God, who is holy in his works, was pleased by such heroism undertaken, sustained and consummated for the sanctification of souls.

The mode of travel between Montreal and St. Boniface has been much changed since forty-four years ago, but one deceives himself greatly if he believes that this is the only change that has taken place in this country, and that voyaging in bark canoes has been the only trial imposed on the sisters who travelled here. During more than thirty years, all those who have come have had to make extremely painful voyages; when, for example, some of the sisters have taken fifty-two days in coming from St. Paul here in Red River carts, it is easy to conceive that they had much to suffer, since their sufferings were not confined to the time of the journey.

(To be concluded).

### THE FLOWER MIRACLE.

Seek ye a miracle? Behold these seeds,  
These tiny, dusky spheres, scentless and dull,—  
I drop them in the sombre soil, and pull  
A veil of earth athwart them. Pluck the weeds,  
And water the dry loam.—Thence there proceeds  
No hint of bloom or fragrance; all is dull  
And scentless as the fresh-sown, soulless seeds.  
But hither come in June. How beautiful  
The radiant flowers bloom!—God's chemistry  
Hath drawn from dusky seed and sullen clay  
Rarest of flowers, scents of Araby—  
A fragrant vision fairer than the day!  
Bow down, proud heart, and bless the gracious Power  
Which works a miracle in every flower!

—Eleanor C. Donnelly.