

In August, 1643, d'Aillebout arrived from France, bringing news of an "unknown benefactress," who had given 42,000 livres for the building of a hospital. This "unknown" later turned out to be Madame Bullion. It was true that a hospital was not needed; no one was sick at Ville Marie, but the colony had been established in order that a hospital might be founded.

The hospital, therefore, was built on the street afterwards called St. Paul Street, surrounded by a palisade, and part of the garrison was detailed to defend it. The building was sixty feet long and twenty-four feet wide, with a kitchen, a chamber for Mlle. Mance, others for the servants, and two large apartments for the patients. It was amply provided with furniture, linen, medicines, and all necessities, and had also two oxen, three cows, and twenty sheep. A small oratory of stone was built adjoining it. The enclosure was four arpents in extent.

There, on October 8th, 1644, Miss Mance took up her abode and awaited patients. Soon there was no lack of them, for blood and blows and scalps were rife at Montreal. The woods were full of Iroquois, and when not caring for wounded Frenchmen, Miss Mance was kept busy by the wives and children, who went to the hospital for refuge while the men fought the savages.

At Ville Marie it was usually dangerous to pass beyond the ditch of the fort or palisades of the hospital. "Sometimes a solitary warrior would lie concealed for days, without sleep and almost without food, behind a log in the forest or in a dense thicket, watching like a lynx for some rash straggler. Sometimes parties of a hundred or more made ambuscades nearby and sent a few of their number to lure out the soldiers by a petty attack and a flight. The danger was diminished when the colonists received from France a number of dogs, which were trained to recognize the Iroquois and give the alarm. Then the nuns rang the belfry to call the inhabitants together.

The little colony of Ville Marie was not very prosperous at first. By 1648 there were forty houses and two hundred and fifty persons. Maisonneuve and Mlle. Mance constituted its sole vitality. When funds and interest flagged, it was Mlle. Mance who went to France to stir up the zeal of the Company. There, in 1647, we shall leave her for the present.

By 1648 the Jesuits had pushed their way as far as Sault Ste. Marie, and established a Mission for the Hurons. There they built a hospital, to which Indian women, as well as men, were admitted. We find no mention of nuns as nurses. The hospital was destroyed, within the year, by the Iroquois, who burnt the mission station.