

gers on their shoulders. The Bishop was carried over first, then the priests and brothers, the Sisters looking on with dismay, to think they, too, must be borne on the shoulders of those mulattoes. Nothing had daunted them so far, but to be hoisted on those naked shoulders, to grasp those mulatto necks, and to be grasped by those brawny arms, ah, this was too much!

The annals relate that the Sisters submitted, but their experience was not without incident. Sister M. Angele, being very stout, the porter demanded a double fee, much to the amusement of her companions. Sister M. Conception, with the independence of a true Celt, tried to weigh little upon the arms of her porter, and was nearly upset in the water.

The first week in May, the John Ellis sighted the coast of California, much to the joy of all on board. On May 14, they entered the Golden Gate, and beheld the far-famed city of San Francisco. The hospitable daughters of St. Vincent de Paul welcomed our travel-worn Sisters with great affection. Very soon the announcement was made that the regular steamer for Victoria had left that morning, and would not return before a month.

The five hundred miners who arrived on the John Ellis would brook no delay, they begged Bishop Demers to join a delegation to represent their needs to the Navigation Company.

Their request was granted, and May 24th saw our party on board a new vessel, and bound for Vancouver Island, via Portland, Oregon.

On arriving in Portland, the Sisters were greeted with acclamations of joy, the good people of the little town gathered at the wharf, and a delegation entered the saloon and asked the Sisters to accept a tempting proposition, viz., to leave two of their band to open a school in Portland; good Bishop Blanchet was very emphatic in expressing his need of Sisters, so much so, indeed, that Bishop Demers was much concerned, for the former had attractive inducements to offer, many Catholic families, resources to support a school, and a fair future in promise. To follow their original plan meant the embracing of severe hardships, but the Sisters attest that the thought of changing never entered their minds, much less penetrated to their hearts. They had been told by Bishop Demers, that, like himself, Providence was to be their treasury, poor food their sustenance, and teaching Indians, half-breeds, and the few white settlers in Victoria their hard occupation, yet they never wavered. Mr. McCormick, the well-known Catholic editor, whose name is identified with the best work done in the pioneer days of Portland, called upon the Sisters, and even brought his wife to assist him in persuading the Sisters to share their number, and to accept Portland. When, after repeated refusals, the people resigned themselves to their unsuccessful attempt to induce the Sisters to disembark, Bishop Demers appeared upon the scene, and with unconcealed happiness, congratulated his little band for their staunch loyalty to him. This little experience seemed to enhance his esteem of the Sisterhood a thousandfold.

It was on June 5, 1858, at 3 p.m., that the Sisters of St. Ann first set foot on the soil of Victoria, and walked through the bush to the Bishop's residence. The Bishop was overjoyed to be home again. As the faint sound of a church bell was heard, he turned to the party, asking pleasantly, "Do you hear my chimés?"

It was not in this obscure way Bishop Demers had been received in Europe. There, his noble bearing, shining talents, and great virtue had opened the doors of the nobility, yes, of royalty itself. Count de Chambord, rightful heir to the throne of France, held him in the highest regard and invited him frequently to his board. There is in the diocese a portable altar, a gift to Bishop Demers, from the exiled prince.

When these two noble friends were together, it was puzzling for a stranger to distinguish the missioner of the North American Indians from the regal descendant of the Bourbons; the Bishop of Canadian birth was so distinguished in appearance that when he visited colleges, seminaries, and European Court circles, he was taken for a nobleman. This fact we have personally from Bishop Seghers, his successor, who, when a student, had first seen and heard him in the American College of Louvain.

Bishop Demers combined the qualities that make a man illustrious in any sphere—manly beauty, culture, episcopal dignity; aptitude for any work, from the intricacies of a watch to the mechanism of a pipe organ, there were no mysteries for his deft fingers; to the highest refinement, he united the modest bearing of a person of deep piety and long practised recollection.

Victoria was smiling her maiden beauty to the skies that June morning, fifty years ago, when the "Sea-bird" entered Juan de Fuca, and revealed this "Eden of the Pacific" to the passengers who crowded the steamer's deck.

To the many among these in quest of the yet far away Cariboo gold, the place presented few attractions; they cared little for a country the topography of which offered no signs of quartz or placer. To the party in religious garb, standing somewhat aloof of the adventurers, it was, however, the land of milk and honey—the Land of Promise—Victoria.

Who were the members of this party, come a two months' journey over land and sea to take mystic possession of this fair region? Such names deserve to be chronicled.

They were: Bishop Modeste Demers, Reverend Fathers Rondelet and Vary; Brothers Michaud and Thibodeau, candidates for the priesthood; four Sisters of St. Ann: Sisters Mary of the Sacred Heart, Mary Angele, Mary Lumina, Mary Conception, with their lay assistant, Miss Mary Mainville.

Animated with one and the same sentiment, when the land was sighted, every heart bowed in oblation to God, and good-will to mankind,

while all on board waved greetings to the people of Vancouver Island.

Loyal, as it was earnest, has been the surrender of these messengers of peace, to this portion of their inheritance; ten years—twenty—see them exercise their noblest efforts in promoting its glory; thirty years—Death has thinned the ranks; fifty years—and two alone of that zealous band are left to recognize in the city of 1908, the Hudson Bay fort of 1858.

By a pardonable digression we have left our main subject, but we gladly resume it again, and re-live that fair June day.

The sturdy Seabird has entered port, and the work of disembarkment has begun. From 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. passengers, freight, and baggage are lowered into the boats and rowed to the shore.

The Bishop and nuns had given the right of way to the excited crowd, and were the last to leave the steamer; apparently courteous, held them in the background; there are but few secrets which are inviolate, and this one, like so many others, eked out. It is on record that the fatherly Bishop said, "Be in no haste to disembark before dinner, because I do not know if there will be anything for us to eat at my house."

Little did he know that a good-hearted lady, Mrs. Helmcken, wife of Dr. J. S. Helmcken, had provided a generous haunch of venison for his table that day; the beginning of a chain of benefactions which extends unbroken from that first meal of the Sisters of St. Ann in Victoria to the brotherly services they are receiving at the present time from Dr. J. Helmcken, the worthy son of such a mother.

After the Sisters' first meal in the colony, the Bishop and the priests led the four Sisters and Miss Mary Mainville, a lady companion and teacher, through the bush, across what is now South Park street, to a log cabin 20 by 18 feet on the west side of Humboldt street.

At the door, the Bishop stepped courteously aside, and addressing himself to the Superior, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, said, "This is your possession, Sister, enter." A large stone did duty as a step; it was awkwardly high, so one of the priests stood on the door-sill to help the Sisters up. Here the clergy, with good wishes, left them. The Sisters set to work with a will. Their first hour of work in British Columbia had begun.

While the Sisters are busy taking aprons from the trunks to put up as curtains, and preparing for the night, we may inspect their house and learn its history. The windows were broken, the door was without a lock, there was no stove, a small fire-place served the place of a heating stove, as well as a cook stove. The Bishop had bought the Convent for a hundred dollars, prior to leaving for Eastern Canada and Europe, he had left directions to have it made as comfortable as circumstances permitted in those days, for its future occupation by the Sisters, but his directions, from force of circumstances, had not been followed.

From among the baggage bought in San Francisco, the priests brought over the mattresses, and made themselves as helpful as could be to the Sisters; indeed, all along, these priests who had known the first Sisters, did all in their power to assist them; like the Bishop, they considered that the best was poor for the Sisters.

Two days were taken to put their small abode in order. Mrs. McDonald, one of the three white women then living in Victoria, brought the Sisters a pail of water, a tea-cup, and some kindlings; three years later, the kindly service met with the reward coveted by the donor, that of being attended by the Sisters in her last moments, and of being laid out by them.

The first Sunday in this Promised Land was spent in true Catholic fashion. The Canadians turned out in full force—thirty strong at High Mass, the Bishop who, to his many accomplishments, added those of singer and musician, presided at the little organ. Brother Thibodeau blended his trained voice with the rich tones of Messieurs Leclerc, Gendreau and other Canadians. Our pioneer Sisters assure us that the service was very impressive. The Indian women and the majority of the assistants escorted the Sisters to the convent, and the catechetical instructions began that very day.

On the 28th of July, 1870, Right Reverend Modeste Demers, the first Bishop of British Columbia, passed from the sorrows and labor of this life to the joys of heaven. Ceaseless toil and exposure, during the pioneer epoch of the diocese, had undermined his constitution. Paralysis had overtaken him in his declining years, and, though ably supported by his co-adjutor, trifles now preyed upon his mind, once so courageous and lofty, and, while ready at his Master's beck, to live and labor, no one could blame him that he welcomed death. The Indian Missions he had established were in a flourishing condition, the Orphanage, and the Convent schools, all monuments of his indefatigable zeal, were centers in which God's glory was daily increased. The glories of the golden days of these foundations were, however, shrouded in that hour, that a soul so noble might escape a thought of self-congratulation, though surely it would have been a pardonable pride, were such a retrospect indulged in, for one brief moment. The evidence of a purifying desolation of soul, even to the last, is evinced by the following words, uttered two hours before his edifying death. Engaged to the last in ejaculatory prayers and familiar addresses to his Divine Maker, he was heard to say: "Ah, how empty are my hands; my God, how little I have done as a Bishop, and now I can do no more. I have done nothing good; but one thing, I brought the good Sisters here." When, some days after the funeral, the tenure of his will was made public, it developed that not the least important of the things stated therein was a clearly defined statement concerning the erection of a more suitable and commodious Convent. The school

then in existence having been erected by him on View street, in 1860. In this last will and testament, there was made an appeal to his flock to assist in every material way to further the realization of his ideal; and, to his administrator and conferees, he left not only this long protection of the Sisterhood. Aware of the scant resources at hand, he spoke prophetically, indeed. His implicit trust in God and our Blessed Lady had stimulated him to undertake the establishing of the school in the crucial period of '58-60, and we may well say the present Academy was an enterprise started upon faith in the power of prayer, and hope in the future of Victoria.

Bishop Demers always looked upon the Sisters as his proteges and willing auxiliaries. In all his difficulties, he appealed to them for whatever aid they could give, and their assistance was ever a most ready one. A project



dear to his heart was the erection of a new church in 1859. Brother Michaud, who later became the architect of the beautiful Cathedral in Montreal, drew the plans for his Lordship's miniature cathedral. The work advanced peacefully and rapidly until there was a dearth of ready cash. The revenues of the diocese were very scant, and assistance from the Society for the Propagation of Faith was often delayed. The tradesmen demanded their wages weekly, and the embarrassed Bishop knew not what to do to satisfy the men. On asking the Sisters to pray that pecuniary aid might soon arrive, the Bishop was told that the little revenue received for instruction from the few pupils then in the school was at his disposal. His appreciation of this act of generosity, at a time when the Sisters were too poor to afford meat more than once a week, was sufficient reward for those who found pleasure in helping a kind father and devoted prelate.

Never was the saying, "Cast your bread upon the waters, and it will come back to you," more truly verified than in the history of this little church. In 1888, the Administrator of the diocese decided to donate this same Church to the Sisters, who were then adding the eastern wing to the present Academy. "When

A VISION REALIZED
Sterp duty blew his trumpet from the West,
And four brave nuns responded to its sound,
They left their home and all they loved the best;
Their way to trackless wildernesses found.
From foaming breakers to a desolate shore,
With dauntless courage, faith, and hope,
They gazed,
And each of them the smile of Heaven wore,
As murmured low each heart, "Thy name
be praised!"
Then one cried out with a prophetic soul:
"The curtain of Fatality is rent!
A view of our life-work comes to console,
Behold it now, as in a vision sent:
A double row of poplars, limes and tall,
And lawn and shrub, and gardens with their fruit,
Stretch from the gate unto the convent wall,
And there, green hedges smiling skies salute.
Before its portals sits an Angel fair,
Who holds a waxen tablet closely lined,
That tells of tribulations and of care,
Thus Jesus to His Heart our own may bind.
While on the other hand, old Father Time
Lifts back the mystic veil of fifty years,
He tells of rocky ways that we must climb,
Up, up, through cloud and shadow, mists and tears."
But with her task each one is satisfied,
For Calvary's road by each one must be trod;
Their wills in Christ's own school were "crucified."
They pray: "For these thy little ones, O
God!"
K. P. LYTHER, Class '08.

May 2, 1880, with great delicacy, Father Jonckeaue handed a deed in full to the Superior as a birthday present, the pioneer Sisters then, for the first time, revealed their trilling aid in the erection of the Church, and took the gift as the greatest interest that could ever be received for pecuniary assistance rendered a friend and protector, in an hour of trial.

THE FIRST CONVENT AND ITS FOUNDRESSES

Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, one of the first band of Sisters who came to Victoria, held the office of Superior of the humble log cabin convent, the initial institution, which is still to be seen on South Park street. She was born at Vaudreuil, P.Q., June 12th, 1830. Her parents, descendants of the early

French settlers, were highly respectable, virtuous and opulent.

At the age of twenty-one, Miss Valois, for such was her name in the world, overcame all family attachments, and attractive inducements, to carry out her cherished wish to embrace a life of missionary work. From the first days of her Novitiate, her generosity in the service of God and her neighbor was unsurpassed.

Among the many bits of wisdom and piety inscribed in a diary faithfully kept by this saintly religious, is found the sentence which is the key-note of a character great in the acquisition of that most precious of virtues—humility.

"My God, grant me the grace ever to choose the worst part for my own share."

was the resolution taken by this fervent religious early in her career of self-sacrifice. So well was this motto carried out that her co-laborers testify to its perfect fulfillment. When, in 1858, Sister Mary was named as a missionary for British Columbia, she joyfully accepted the sacrifice, her nomination as Superior being the only drawback to her complete happiness. In her humility she was not aware of the sterling qualities of character which induced her Superiors to place upon her young shoulders the grave responsibilities of founding a Convent in this western province.

Within a week after her arrival, she opened a school for white children, and soon after, another for Indian children. Both schools prospered very well.

In 1859, this brave pioneer was succeeded by Sister Mary Providence as Superior. After a few years' rest from responsibilities, Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart was named Superioress of St. Ann's Orphanage at Quamichan. This devoted foundress spared herself neither fatigue nor privation to give the Indian girls who were the first placed in her care, all the love for our holy religion that their hearts were capable of possessing. After six years' devotedness in a sphere most dear to her heart, frail health necessitated her resigning her post. In each instance, Sister Mary yielded her place to another just when the days of consolation dawned—after the trials of foundation work were over.

Like another John the Baptist, she felt it hers to decrease, and that another might increase, she gave her advice, prayers, and devoted labor to make the work a success.

Called to labor in St. Joseph's Hospital, she gave every moment of her time to her office, and the poor patients and those most afflicted were ever the object of her tender compassion. The infirm old men, of whom she had charge, were in her eyes like so many ailing children. To relieve their sufferings was her constant endeavor, and she found genuine pleasure in replenishing the meagre wardrobes of her charges, by repairing for them such old clothes as charitably disposed friends sent her proteges. Year after year, this humble, reticent religious toiled for the good of humanity, daily edifying her companions by her piety and spirit of penance, until time's hand showed heavily in her bent form and slow step, and she had to surrender her charge. Only once during her long term of labor did she consent to take a well-earned holiday.

In 1864, Sister Mary was invited by her Superior to visit the scenes of her youth after thirty-six years' absence.

After enjoying the time spent in sweet intercourse with the companions of her novitiate days, as well as the joyous family reunions of her numerous relatives, Sister Mary earnestly solicited the privilege of returning to her field of labor, happy in the thought of laboring yet longer in a sphere so exacting and so noble.

On the 12th day of November, 1866, this self-sacrificing soul passed from the sorrows and labors of earth to her eternal home. Physical suffering afforded long weeks of keen suffering, all of which she bore most resignedly. Surrounded by her Sisters, who loved her and who appreciated her consummate virtue and heroic sacrifices in pioneer days, Sister Mary's life ebbed peacefully away. Requiesscat in pace.

SISTER MARY ANGELE

Sister Mary Angele, or "Sister Angele" as she was called, was the idol of old and young, rich and poor. Her ever cheerful disposition and unflinching kindness to the pupils of St. Ann's Academy, where she spent many years, are often recalled by former pupils.

Many a refractory minion of those days recalls with delight the providential passing of dear "Aunt Angele," as the children called her; the throes of a merited punishment were forgotten, tears were quickly dispelled, when Aunt Angele's hand went into her pocket, for the consolatory tit-bit, an orange, an apple or a piece of candy effected instant happiness. Sister's pockets were veritable magic caves, so readily was the exhaustless supply yielded up, when a heart needed to be reached through that unflinching avenue in the young, the appetite.

Her special delight, however, was to work among the orphans and the Indian children. She never wearied in her efforts to make all around happy, and she is endeared by many ties to those children among whom she filled the hallowed place of their own mothers. They loved her whilst on earth and long will they cherish her memory.

Her admirable qualities of mind and heart fitted her to occupy the highest place in the councils of the order, but her humility was such that she ever sought the most menial labor.

During the early days of organization, she filled the honored office of Superior General. However, no sooner was she relieved of this onerous charge than she offered herself for the missions of the far West. Unable to speak English, she had to make

herself useful in other employments than that of teaching.

For the post of housekeeper she was admirably suited, and her largeness of heart was ingenious in inventing various ways of giving pleasure.

Her picnics were famous, so much enjoyment did these events bring about for the school-children. Not that these holidays were a success because of the sumptuous menu she provided; on the contrary, the matter of a bill of fare was often the weakest point; it was her good cheer and warm sympathy that made the outings so pleasant for all.

The annals of the convent state that the first "conge" of this kind took place on July 26, 1858, a day known in the Sisterhood as St. Ann's Day. The "picnic" consisted of a trip to the beach and a luncheon there; the latter consisted of a few dozen store cookies contributed by good old Bishop Demers, and some home-made candy, which was made at a camp-fire, kindled at the place of rendezvous. The originality of the day's programme, the privilege of rambling unrestrainedly in the company of the Sisters, and enjoying an outdoor repast, was voted a "fine picn" in those days.

Edifying incidents of this dear Sister's abiding trust in Providence are legion; not a few, however, are of touching interest. The good people of the Hudson Bay fort were accustomed to receive their money from the home country at stated intervals; with the Sisters, as with citizens, there was often a lack of cash. Thus it happened that the resources of our good Sister Angele were once so exhausted that there was not even bread in the larder. Grieved to the heart's core to see her young teachers laboring in the schoolroom with no more than a slice of bread and a glass of water for breakfast, and for dinner, a glassful of water only, which the survivors assure us, was taken with good cheer, the good guardian of the household resolved to ask for "our daily bread" in true earnest. During the afternoon Sister Angele busied herself to an unusual extent that she might lessen her anxiety; meanwhile she prayed earnestly to God that aid might come speedily. Before supper time she saw the baker approach, his arms full of tempting bread.

Responding to his knock, Sister Angele hastened to inform him that she did not order any bread supply; the driver's reply was indeed unexpected: "This bread is a present, a lady customer told me to deliver it in her name, to the Sisters." Needless to say, the recipient of the gift did not fail to recognize the answer to her prayer.

In later years the ease with which food could be procured did not alter the occasions this ardent soul found for asking God to supply her wants. One week, she needed some fish for Friday, and no vendor appeared. Before the day dawned, Sister Angele's petition was waited above and her confidence in an answer not concealed from her companions. Her childlike faith was rewarded; opening the kitchen door early next morning, she found a fish of prodigious size, suspended from the door frame, and labelled: "For the Sisters"; the name of the giver, doubtless some kindly disposed angler, was never made known.

To seek a service at her hands was to do her a real favor, and she was never happier than when serving the poor. A poor fisherman presented himself at the door to solicit trade; instantly, Sister's sympathetic eye noticed his sore hand, and on her charitably offering to bandage the same, she was horrified to find the wound in a state of mortification. Very tenderly she cleansed the painful spot, and after dressing the hand, exacted a promise that the old fisherman should return daily for a like treatment. Long years afterwards, this grateful old patient returned to pay his respects to his kind benefactress.

On May 25th, 1898, this venerable religious died at St. Ann's Orphanage, forty miles from Victoria, after forty years of labor in the Master's Vineyard in the Province of B. C. During all these years she had shed everywhere the light and joy of her beautiful character on all who came within her influence. Hers must needs have been a rich reward, indeed, when the white-robed messengers of the eternal court conducted her into the presence of her King and Spouse.

A CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD

A chronological record of the building efforts of the Sisters of St. Ann's in British Columbia is as follows:

- St. Ann's Convent, Victoria..... 1858
- St. Ann's Orphanage, Quamichan..... 1863
- New Westminster Convent..... 1865
- Mission City, B. C., Indian School..... 1868
- St. Joseph's Hospital, Victoria..... 1875
- St. Ann's Convent, Nanaimo..... 1877
- St. Ann's Convent, Kamloops..... 1880
- St. Ann's Convent, Juneau, Alaska..... 1886

Sister Mary Providence, the first superior, established an orphanage in Victoria before she undertook any other work, although there was at that time an excellent opportunity of founding a convent in New Westminster, then the capital of the province. The need was so insistent that although the nuns did not belong to a teaching order, they gave the orphanage the preference of all other work. They have had their reward, for the girls cared for have become good and useful members of the community. Most of them are now mothers of families, and have proved the wisdom of their benefactor.

The work of industrial education was carried on among Indian children by the sisters in Mission, B. C., twenty years before they received the government grant. They were assisted by the Oblate Fathers and by generous residents in the vicinity of the school.

DAWSON, YUKON T. HOSPITAL (ON)