

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF MRS. SETON,  
FOUNDER AND FIRST SUPERIOR OF THE SISTERS  
OF CHARITY IN THE UNITED STATES.**  
(Continued).

The care of her invalid sister Cecilia, and the organization of her increasing community, was entirely engaged the attention of Mrs. Seton, who was careful to derive from all her occupations, and from the scenes of trial that took place around her, an occasion of advancing her own sanctification and of inculcating a holy desire of perfection among her spiritual daughters. In the mean time the carpenters and masons were actively employed in erecting a more commodious dwelling, and the small community performed their exercises as regularly as circumstances permitted. Archbishop Carroll visited them on two occasions at the stone house, administered confirmation, and was much consoled and edified by the piety and happy cheerfulness that prevailed among them. Their poverty they seemed to look upon as a mark of the divine protection, while charity flourished in its perfection. On the 20th of February they removed to the frame house, the present residence of the sisters. The family went in procession, following the B. Sacrament, which was carried by the Rev'd Mr. Dubois. On the 22d of February a regular course of studies was commenced, and the school was attended by many pupils from the village and surrounding country. Mrs. Seton's piety had induced her to place herself and community, her sisters and children, under the special protection of St. Joseph, the faithful guardian of the Son of God. The first high mass was celebrated in the new chapel on his festival, March the 19th, 1810. A change of air being again recommended to Cecilia Seton, she was taken to Baltimore by her sister, and two weeks after died calmly and happily. Shortly before her death she had become a member of the community which her sister superintended, a happiness which she had fondly desired, and her remains were laid in the grove at St. Joseph's next to those of her sister Harriet.

Released from her care of the sick, Mrs. Seton applied with unremitting zeal to the duties of the opening school and the care of her spiritual children, leading them, by her example as well as precept, to a love of holy poverty, self-abnegation, and great fidelity to their practices of piety. In the month of May she received her first boarders, and now and then one or two candidates joined the community.

August the 10th, 1811, Bishop Flaget returned from France, bringing with him the rules and constitutions of St. Vincent of Paul. These rules were translated into English and some changes made, with the approbation of the Most Rev'd Archbishop Carroll to suit them to the manners and customs of this country. Shortly after this it was found necessary that the person exercising the protectorship of the sisters should reside in the vicinity of their establishment, and Mr. Dubois, president of Mount St. Mary's, was nominated to that office, in January, 1812. At the end of that month he went to Baltimore, where he obtained the rules and constitutions that had been lately received from France, and presented them to Mrs. Seton, during the retreat of the following February (the first that had taken place in the new house), that she might adopt and practice them with all her community. It was made known to them that twelve months after the adoption of these rules, all who were willing to be governed by them would bind themselves by annual vows, according to the spirit of their holy author, St. Vincent of Paul. Mrs. Seton received them as a sacred deposit; her love and veneration for them continued unchanged through the whole course of her life, and her last words were an exhortation to her spiritual children to love and keep those holy regulations. They require that the community be governed by a superior and vice-superior, called mother and assistant-mother, and two counsellors. These officers are elected every three years by a majority of votes. No one can hold the office of mother for more than two terms consecutively. An exception, however, to this rule was made in the case of Mrs. Seton, the first superior, whose continuance in office for life was the unanimous desire of her companions. The sisters are not permitted to bind themselves by vow, until after a probation of three years, and then they make their engagements for twelve months only, at the expiration of which they are at liberty to leave the society, if they think proper. In the duties and spirit of their vocation

the sisters of St. Joseph's do not differ from the communities that follow the original constitutions of St. Vincent of Paul. This holy man of God imposed no other duty on his spiritual daughters than an unremitting exertion for the relief of suffering humanity. They were to have, as he tells them in his constitutions, no other monasteries than the dwellings of the poor, no other cloisters than the streets of towns and wards of hospitals, no other enclosure than obedience, no other veil than a holy modesty. Such was their wide and benevolent sphere of action; such were the maxims by which they were to be governed. Faithful to the dictates of their holy founder, these visible angels of Providence have excited the admiration of Europe, becoming a mother to the orphan, devoting themselves to the education of children, assisting the sick, the widow, the aged, the infirm, visiting the prisoner and the galley-slave, the bashful and retiring poet, and even on the field of battle ministering consolation to the dying soldier. Nor has their devotion to the service of their neighbour been less heroic and admirable on this side of the Atlantic. We shall perceive in the sequel of this notice that they who have imbibed the sentiments of Mother Seton, are actuated by the same generous spirit that delights in labor for the comfort of the poor and the afflicted.

God, as a wise and tender Father, apportions to his faithful children in their journey through life, a mixture of trials and consolations. Thus it was with Mother Seton. Her eldest daughter, Anna, had grown up under her care all that the heart of such a parent could wish, and had become a member of the community about a month before the reception of the rules. In her 18th year she was attacked with a pulmonary disease, and died on the 12th of March, 1812, universally regretted, and leaving behind her a deep and lasting impression of her many bright and attractive virtues. What her mother's grief was under this melancholy dispensation, God alone knew; for the most attentive observer could only discover in her a calm submission to the will of God, a peaceful resignation into his hands of that amiable child, who was ripe for heaven, and whose sanctification had been the unceasing object of her maternal and anxious care.

Mother Seton was a daily visitor to the different classrooms of her academy, and contributed as much as possible by her own exertions to diminish the labor of the other sisters. The more effectually to succeed in the education of her pupils, she studied their disposition, and endeavored to gain their affections. When she had obtained an ascendancy over their hearts, she embraced every opportunity of inspiring them with a love of virtue. In her conversations with the elder boarders, her object was as much to instruct them in the qualifications that become mothers and mistresses of families, as in the virtues that adorn the life of a Christian. Every attention was bestowed upon their physical and moral welfare, and during a few days that she was confined to her room by indisposition, her only regret was that she could not devote herself more constantly to their service. Whenever she appeared among the pupils, every eye beamed with gladness and spoke a welcome, for her presence was a signal that every one would receive a word of kindness, of edification and encouragement.

In the course of the year during which the new regulations were tested, many young persons offered themselves as candidates for the sisterhood, and after an examination of their vocation were admitted. The 19th of July, 1813, was a day of thrilling interest for Mother Seton and her rising community. On that day, the feast of St. Vincent of Paul, she with seventeen of her sisters, presented their first vows at the foot of the altar, publicly professing the generous consecration to God, in the service of their fellow beings. The same festival is annually observed by the sisters at St. Joseph's, as an occasion of renewing their religious engagements.

Mrs. Seton's assistance in the academy being no longer necessary, Mr. Dubois, well acquainted with her talents, turned her attention to the translation of the conferences of St. Vincent. This she did with a perfect submission of her own will; for had she followed her own inclinations, she would have taken a more active part in the duties of the school and sisterhood. But her director knew well that she could not be more profitably employed, than in preparing a

treasure for her community, in the translation of some useful works. She also compiled a course of instructions for the use of the sister who had the charge of preparing the children for their first communion.

The continual accessions to the number of boarders and candidates for the community, gave full employment to the zeal and charity of this good mother; for a long time she herself instructed the novices and candidates. The manner in which she delivered her exhortations and the union of her words, were strong and unequivocal evidences of the ardent love of God that filled her own heart. On such occasions she commonly used a French book, and read from it with as much facility as if it were her vernacular language, adding her own reflections to inculcate a spirit of sacrifice, of mortification, and a generous and willing conformity to the will of God. Her words were doubly impressive, strengthened as they were by the force of her example. A spirit of holy poverty was to be seen in her clothing, her furniture, and even in the use of her paper and pens. The coarsest and the cheapest paper was her choice, and she invariably made use of the refuse of the pen from the class-rooms, to impress upon her spiritual daughters by her example the same virtue of abnegation. She rose generally with the community at four o'clock in the morning, and was one of the first in repairing to the hall of prayer and meditation, where she remained in a kneeling and devout posture during the performance of those exercises. In assisting at the divine sacrifice she dwelt in spirit on the sufferings of our Lord during his passion, particularly the last stage of it on mount Calvary. The prayers of St. Bridget were among her favorite devotions, as well as the recitation of the Te Deum after mass, the Magnificat, the Apostle's Creed, the Psalms, and more especially the canticle of the three children. She frequently read the history of our Saviour's passion and always on her knees. The feast of Corpus Christi she celebrated with peculiar sentiments of piety, and during its octave her lively faith and ardent love of God were strikingly visible in her deportment, and were a source of edification to all around her. Her's was the silent piety of the heart, though her expressive countenance indicated the interior joy that dwelt within, and at times the fervor of her soul would gush forth as from an overflowing fountain. They who frequently accompanied her in her walk to the cemetery, still retain the impression of the glowing piety she often exhibited on this occasion, when casting her eyes upon the glory and majesty of the setting sun, she exclaimed with extended arms and deepest emotion, "my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my heart rejoiceth in God my Saviour." Her manner in governing the sisters and children was mild but firm and equal. She was in the fullest sense of the word, a mother. If at times she had occasion to administer reproof she never manifested any quickness of temper in her admonitions. Peace and order characterized all her movements. Her uniform kindness to all was the bond which concentrated all hearts in her's. In her conversations with the tutors as she would exhort them to forbearance, and recommended to them the practice of invoking the guardian angels of their pupils, adding: "be to them as our guardian angels are to us;" she took a special care of the invalid sisters, visiting them frequently and procuring for them every relief and assistance in her power, often saying that the sick were a source of blessings to the house.

(To be concluded in our next.)

**BIRMINGHAM.**

**THE LATE RIGHT REV. DR. WALSH**—The solemn obsequies of the Right Rev. Bishop Walsh, who for twenty five years was the Catholic Bishop of the Central District, and was within the last six months translated to the London District, took place at St. Chad's Cathedral, on the 2nd inst. His lordship's death took place at his episcopal residence in London, on Sunday, the 18th ult., and a solemn Requiem was celebrated over his remains at St. Mary's Moorfields, in the metropolis, on Wednesday the 28th ult.; but on the request of the Bishop and Clergy of the Central District, Bishop Wiseman (who has succeeded Bishop Walsh in London) consented that the remains of this venerable prelate should be deposited in the crypt of the Cathedral Church of St. Chad's, Birmingham, which he had himself erected. The body arrived from London on the Thursday evening,

and was deposited in the cathedral, when the matins and lauds for the dead were solemnly chanted. On the Friday morning, by ten o'clock, the cathedral was crowded, the sanctuary was lined with black, and in the centre of the church was erected a catafalque in the ancient form which canopied the bier, and was decorated with shields and escutcheons, bearing the arms and other devices of the deceased prelate. The coffin was covered with purple velvet, and richly ornamented, the body of the prelate being, as we understand, clothed in his episcopal ornaments, as when celebrating High Mass, as prescribed by the ritual. Upon the coffin were placed the mitre and crozier of the departed. Around the catafalque were placed tall stands of brass, bearing torches of yellow wax. Soon after ten the long procession of the Clergy of the District issued forth from the sacristy, closed by the Bishop in pontifical habits of black, with white mitre. The Assistant Priest was the Rev. Dr. Wetzel, the Vicar General, in black cope. The Assistant Deacon and Subdeacon to the Bishop were the Rev. Mr. Bagnall, of Oscott, and the Rev. Mr. Brown, President of the seminary of Sedgley Park. The Deacon and Subdeacon of the Mass were the Rev. Mr. Ivor, and the Rev. Mr. Molloy, of this town; the Master of the Ceremonies, the Rev. Mr. Meath, assisted by Mr. Estcourt and Mr. Powell. The Clergy took their places partly in the stall of the sanctuary, and partly around the catafalque, thus connecting it with the ceremonial in the sanctuary. Bishop Ullathorne, the successor of Bishop Walsh in the Central District, chanted the Mass *de requiem*, and the dirge was sung by the choir of St. Chad's, in the Gregorian Chant, which is of a very solemn and pathetic character. At the close of the Mass, the Bishop exchanged the chasuble for a cope, and leaving his throne, took his seat, accompanied by his attendants, at the head of the bier, when the Very Rev. Dr. Woodall, an intimate friend of the late Bishop's, from his youth, ascended the pulpit, and delivered the funeral oration of the departed prelate. We understand that this beautiful discourse, in which the Vicar-General unfolded the character, the virtues, life, death, and public works of the late Bishop is to be published. After the discourse, the pathetic conclusion of which moved many to tears, a solemn rite, called the *absolutiones*, was performed at the bier; this rite, as then performed, is peculiar to Bishops and Princes. Four of the dignitaries present were clothed in black copes, and took their stations at the four angles of the bier, the Bishop remaining at the head.—Torch bearers were arranged along the sides, various attendants, exercising different functions, took their places, and each of the five dignitaries, viz., the Bishop, the Abbott of Mount Saint Bernard's, the General of the English Benedictines, the Vicar-General, and the President of the College of St. Mary's Oscott, after an antiphon had been sung encircled the bier, each in succession first sprinkling it with holy water, and a second time incensing with the thurible the remains of the departed Bishop, and then, chanting the prescribed prayers of the ritual.—After the Bishop, who was the last to circle the remains, had sung the last prayer, the funeral procession proceeded through the great doors to the entrance of the crypt. Here, in the great chapel of the crypt, which was entirely filled with Clergy bearing lighted tapers; the funeral service was performed, and the procession then returned to the church. We understand that a very beautiful monument, designed by A. Welby Pugin, Esq., in the style of the fourteenth century, will be erected to the departed Bishop by subscription, in St. Chad's, to perpetuate his memory; and that, being the founder of the cathedral, this monument, which is to be enriched with various sculptured figures, as well as by the reclining effigies of Bishop Walsh, will occupy a conspicuous position near the Lady Chapel.

**PROSELYTISM.**—We have it on unimpeachable authority that in the neighbourhood of Lismore, visits have been paid to the homes of some of the distressed poor, and the sum of one shilling a day offered to each person who would conform to the Protestant Church. Will not the Christian world pronounce its indignant condemnation of this nefarious system?—Correspondent of *Waterford Journal*.

**DIRECTORY FOR 1840.**

The Directory for 1840—just Published. Price 7s 6d—can be obtained at this Office.