



ORIGIN OF THE SISTERS OF ST. ANN



in the bloom and blush of sweet sixteen, he saw "her" and, like Jacob, loved. She, too, had come to the religious festival to congratulate her eldest sister, one of the five that day espoused to the Divine Lover.

"Esther," asked the fond brother—he could not yet call her Sister Mary Ann, her name in religion—"who is that young girl talking to the Sister yonder?"

The foundress smiled; intuitively she knew that happiness, new-born, came to two young people at that supreme moment.

"She is Miss Margaret Pinault."

After this, the comely young man and the fair young girl often met in the Convent parlour, then in the home parlour, and finally in the House of God where, by solemn contract, they agreed to meet to part no more. The sequel was as blessed as the time, place, and persons which saw the blossoming of their acquaintance. Their sons and daughters took rank with the priesthood, the cloister, the army, the hearth.

It is significant that this union, in the fullest sense a model one, which developed under the sanctioning patronage of two holy nuns, began almost at the same hour as St. Ann's Institute, whose chief aim is to fit young girls for their place in the world.

In the household of the pious couple, where religion, happiness and affluence blended beautifully together, conversation was more on conventual matters than on societal gossip. There we learned much of the gifts and graces of

MARIE ESTHER, THE FOUNDRESS,

who had been appointed by Heaven's decree to do the greatest work that can fall to woman.

She was the third child in a family of twelve. So frail was she that her parents, when bending over her cot, held their breath lest it should extinguish her feeble spark of life; but God, who had a grand organization for her to lead to happy issue, preserved her existence, even to the age of eighty.

From her tenderest years, Marie Esther bore the credentials of those to whom God entrusts important missions. The neighbours and others who observed her remarkable bearing, her expressive countenance and her precocious mind, knew that she was destined for things of the highest order.

While still very young, she began to practise self-control, and soon she acquired a degree of fortitude which enabled her to bear annoyance and physical pain without betraying them even to her parents, who were extremely watchful of her because of her delicate constitution.