

APPEAL
OF
The General Relief Committee,
IN BEHALF OF THE
University of Ottawa



View of part of the Main Building in ruins.

OTTAWA PRINTING CO. LIMITED.



131
1355



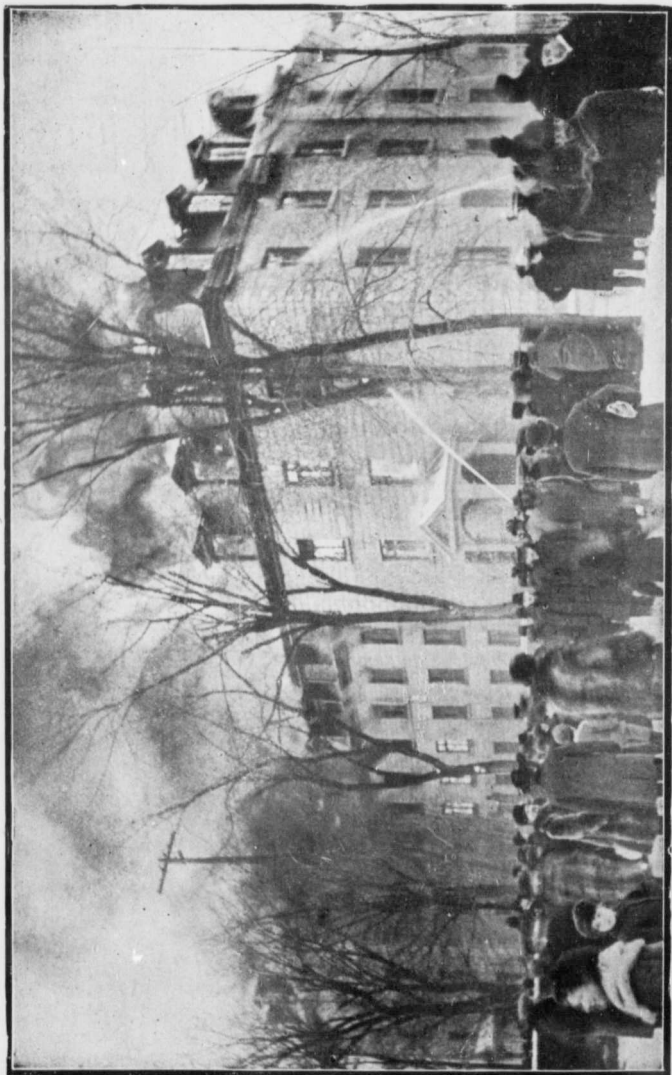
THE FOUNDER OF THE UNIVERSITY.



CONTENTS




	PAGE
A Disastrous Fire - - - - -	5
General Relief Committee - - - - -	5
History of the University - - - - -	6
The Building Lately Destroyed - - - - -	7
The Chapel - - - - -	8
Destruction Complete - - - - -	8
Loss of Life - - - - -	8
Loss of Property - - - - -	10
Important Facts - - - - -	10
Oblate Order can give but Little Aid - - - - -	12
Plans for the Future - - - - -	12
Donations already promised - - - - -	14
What Relief Committee proposes and suggests - - - - -	14
Plea for Generous Consideration - - - - -	16
ADDENDA.	
The University Fire - - - - -	18
Extracts from the University Review - - - - -	18



West Wing where the Fire started.

A Disastrous Fire.

 ON the morning of December 2nd, 1903, the people of the Canadian Capital were startled by the alarm of fire within the buildings of the University of Ottawa. While the students were breakfasting, about 7.30 a. m., flames broke out in a remote part of the extensive edifice and spread along the corridors with uncontrollable rapidity to every portion of the interior. In a few hours, notwithstanding every effort to fight the flames, there remained only a mass of ruined walls.

GENERAL RELIEF COMMITTEE.

On December 8th sympathizing citizens met in the City Hall. The Mayor acted as Chairman. The question of relief was considered when, with the view of aiding to restore the building, a General Committee was formed consisting of the following gentlemen :

SIR SANDFORD FLEMING - - Chairman.

His Worship Mayor Cook, Messrs. N. A. Belcourt, M.P., Thomas Birkett, M.P., D. Murphy, M.L.A. ; Sir Elzear Taschereau, Sir James Grant, Ex-Ald. J. U. Vincent, Ex-Ald. D. J. McDougal, Messrs. A. A. Taillon, A. E. Lussier, Ald. P. D. Ross, F. Moffet, P. Pelletier, E. Lambert, M.D., John Coates, E. Tassé, D'Arcy Scott, G. F. Henderson.

TREASURER :

A. A. TAILLON - - Banque Nationale.

JOINT SECRETARIES.

J. U. VINCENT - - - Barrister.

D. J. McDOUGAL - - - Barrister.

While a majority of the gentlemen composing the Committee naturally are denominationally connected with

the University of Ottawa, the Chairman and others are not so connected. The whole Committee may fairly be regarded as representative of the citizens of Ottawa who are moved purely by a sense of sympathy with those who have suffered from so great a calamity, and in a large measure by the high importance which they attach to the cause of education and culture. The desire of the whole Committee is to do everything in their power to aid the authorities of the University in replacing the loss sustained by the destructive fire.

The aim and purpose of the Committee having been communicated to the authorities of the University, the Committee has the assurance of President Emery that the sympathy of the citizens is most welcome, and that the proffered aid will be gratefully accepted and appreciated.

The Citizens' Relief Committee has accordingly resolved to make a general appeal for contributions in the hope that within a reasonably brief period new and more perfect buildings may replace that which has recently been swept away by fire.

The Committee confidently appeals for aid :

1. To the citizens of Ottawa,
2. To the Alumni of the University,
3. To the friends of education generally.

To many of those to whom this appeal is addressed little need be said of

THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY.*

It was established in 1848 by the Rt. Rev. J. E. Guigues, O.M.I., D.D., and placed under the direction of the Oblate Fathers.

Originally known as "The College of Bytown," the institution was, in 1861, incorporated under the title of "The College of Ottawa," and in 1866 received the power

* The facts and explanation which follow are kindly furnished to the Committee by the University authorities.

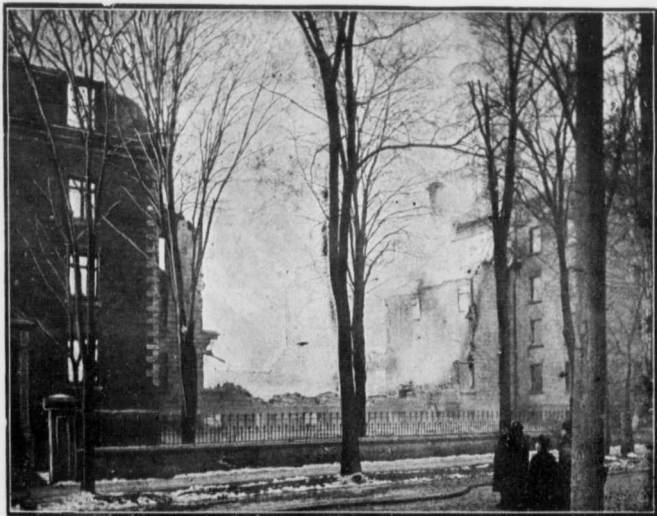
of conferring University degrees. In 1885 its charter was so amended as to grant privileges of affiliation.

By a Brief dated February 5th, 1889, the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XIII, conferred upon the University of Ottawa the rank and privileges of a Catholic University.

Like other denominational institutions, at the time, the University of Ottawa, in its early years, received an annual Government allowance. This allowance never exceeded \$2,100 and was received for the last time in 1868, since which date the institution has been entirely dependent upon its internal resources and private benefaction.

THE BUILDING LATELY DESTROYED

was begun in 1856. Wings and extensions were gradually added. At the time of its destruction this building afforded residential quarters to three hundred persons, including professors, intramural students and servants. It also contained an academic hall with seating capacity of 1,000, a



RUINS OF THE CHAPEL.—THE WALLS FELL DURING THE FIRE.

chapel seating 400, a library containing over 30,000 volumes, and the lecture rooms required for the 450 students following the different courses.

The chapel and academic hall ranked among the finest on the continent. This was especially true of

THE CHAPEL.

It was a gem of Mozarabic architecture occupying three stories of the oldest part of the building. Its graceful arches and columns, its chaste altars, the rich coloring and gilding of its walls and ceilings, produced an effect of beauty for which visitors, seeing the plainness of the outside structure, were wholly unprepared. The cost of this beautiful place of worship, over \$30,000, was defrayed some twenty years ago by donations from all parts of Canada and the United States. As has been said

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING WAS COMPLETE.

Its ruins to-day are a most desolate sight. Of its entire contents, only movables to the value of a few hundred dollars were saved. The most deplorable fact connected with the fire was

THE LOSS OF LIFE.

Though all the students escaped without serious injury, three fatalities are to be deplored.

An aged servant perished in the smoke and flames. Rev. C. J. Fulham, O.M.I., in jumping from a fourth story window, sustained internal injuries from which he died eight days later. Rev. C. M. McGurty, O.M.I., in making his way out through the blazing corridors and stairways, was so badly burnt that he too died after a fortnight of suffering. The two rev. fathers who lost their lives were professors in the University and young men whose parts and attainments gave promise of valuable service in the noble calling of their choice.



RUINS AFTER THE FIRE.
View from the north east angle.

THE LOSS OF PROPERTY

is estimated at fully *half a million dollars*. The insurance is \$127,000. This is insufficient to cover the present debt of the University, \$133,000. Consequently, to build without the generous aid of friends of the institution and friends of higher education, the authorities of the University find themselves face to face with a probably insurmountable difficulty.

SOME FACTS REGARDING THE GROWTH AND WORK OF THE INSTITUTION.

Only by half a century of economy, untiring labor and pecuniary sacrifice on the part of the Oblate Fathers did the University of Ottawa reach the reputable position in the educational world which attracted to it, during the last decade or more of years, an ever-increasing number of



SCENE DURING FIRE.—THE SEMINARY IN FLAMES.

students from all parts of the Dominion, from the United States and even Mexico.

Years ago from ten to twenty, and of later years from thirty to forty members of the Oblate Order gave their time to the work of the University. As members of a religious order they of course received no salary. Not only that, but the members of the professorial staff of the University annually more than defray the cost of their maintenance by the stipends and offerings which they receive in connection with occasional ministerial functions.



Scene during the Fire.—Sisters' House in foreground was saved.

The higher authorities of the Order have contributed to the success of the institution by giving special educational advantages to young members of the Order who gave

promise of success as professors. Direct pecuniary aid, too, from the Oblate Order has been a potent factor in securing the present position of the University. Not to speak of many smaller pecuniary favors, a quarter of a century ago, the Oblate communities in Canada and the United States presented to the University the handsome sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars. This was necessary at the time in view of financial embarrassment, and placed the University in a relatively satisfactory position.

THE OBLATE ORDER CAN NOW GIVE BUT LITTLE AID.

The straitened circumstances in which the Oblate Order finds itself at the present time, precludes the possibility of its affording much aid toward rebuilding the University which it so generously contributed to establish. The work of the Order is largely in such new fields as the Canadian Northwest, South Africa, Australia and Ceylon. Preparing missionaries for these new districts, and often providing for them there, have always heavily taxed the resources of the Order.

With these facts in mind, the present straitened circumstances alluded to will be understood, when it is remembered that the Oblates were amongst the members of the religious orders lately expelled from France and whose property was confiscated. Beyond the donations to be mentioned presently and providing the institution with professors, it seems hardly reasonable to expect the Oblate Order to do much in the near future for the University of Ottawa.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

A circular to parents and guardians announced that the work of the University would recommence on January 7th. At the date of writing, the University has reopened with nearly the same attendance as before the fire. The authorities of the institution are fortunate in having the fine Science Hall which was opened in 1901. This is a modern educational building, 100 x 80 and four stories high. It will supply most of the space required for lectures, study and

recreation. A new wooden building, 100 x 45 and two stories high, has been completed, and is used as a dormitory. Satisfactory arrangements have been made for the board of the students.

Work, of course, is resumed under conditions that are not free from inconvenience, *and that must be but temporary*. The circular issued states that it is hoped that at least one new building will be completed for the opening of the academic year in September next.

Definite plans of rebuilding have not yet been framed, but it seems to be generally admitted that two or three or



RUINS ABOUT MAIN ENTRANCE.—FATHER TABARET'S STATUE.

more separate buildings should take the place of the extensive structure that is now in ruins.

The scale on which the University will be rebuilt necessarily depends on the response of old students and the friends of education, to the appeal now made for financial aid.

DONATIONS ALREADY PROMISED.

His Grace the Archbishop of Ottawa, and Chancellor of the University, has generously undertaken on his own behalf and that of the Clergy of his diocese, to contribute the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars, towards the erection of a building for the Theological Department of the University. The Canadian Province of the Oblate Order has agreed to subscribe Ten Thousand Dollars towards the construction of the required new buildings, and it is expected that the Province of the United States will subscribe a like sum. The Trustees of Queen's University have appointed a Committee to make a generous selection of books for presentation to the Ottawa University library. By direction of the Hon. the Premier, the librarian of the University of Toronto will set aside a large number of duplicate volumes for the Ottawa institution. A collection of one thousand or more volumes of standard literary works will be secured for the library by an old friend of the institution, Henry J. Morgan, LL.D.

WHAT THE GENERAL RELIEF COMMITTEE PROPOSES AND SUGGESTS.

A copy of this pamphlet will be mailed to every one who it is believed will be ready to contribute in any way towards aiding the University of Ottawa in its hour of trial. In the first mailing list there will no doubt be many omissions as the registers of the University were lost in the fire. Those receiving this pamphlet will then be rendering a service by sending to one of the secretaries of the General Relief Committee the addresses of old students and friends of the institution in their locality.

Old students in Ottawa, New York, Quebec, and other places have taken steps towards organizing and co-operating with the General Relief Committee. It is suggested that

old students and friends of the institution in every city and town do the same. Any assistance asked of the General Relief Committee will be cheerfully given.

A reasonably prompt response to the present appeal, it must be evident to friends of the University, is highly desirable.

The Treasurer of the General Relief Committee, will receive and promptly acknowledge any sums which individuals or Alumni Associations may contribute.



RUINS OF THE LIBRARY AND ACADEMIC HALL.

Immediate donations are, of course, most desirable in the present great needs of the University. It is felt, however, that in many instances these donations, in a large measure, can hardly be expected. Hence promises of annual installments for from two to five years will be highly acceptable proofs of sympathy and loyalty towards the University of Ottawa in its dark hour. Naturally it would be well for

individuals or Alumni Associations to furnish a record of these promises to the Treasurer of the General Relief Committee. The future of the University depends largely on what its friends can do for it within reasonable time.

A PLEA FOR GENEROUS CONSIDERATION.

It is believed that for all who have benefited of the work of the University, or know of that work, the mere statement of the facts set forth in these pages will be the strongest plea for timely aid.

To others it may be said that the University of Ottawa is an institution built up for more than fifty years by sacrifice and untiring energy. From lowly beginnings it has risen to the rank of an institution that has received from Church and State the fullest University powers. It is an institution whose work is shown to be of a highly satisfactory character by all the tests by which educational results can be determined. Amongst all the seats of learning in the land, it stands foremost as an institution that has tended to draw closer the bonds of fraternal feeling between the French and the English-speaking peoples to whom an all-wise Providence has given the vast Dominion as a heritage.

Its influence for lasting good was rapidly increasing, in view of its relative prosperity and the large number of earnest students of the two great nationalities that thronged its halls in recent years. In a few hours, the work—the material work, at least—of years is swept away, and now what the future of the institution will be, rests chiefly with those to whose best interests it has ever been true. It is not too much to expect that they in turn will be true to it, that all who knew it will forever forget what they at times deemed its defects, and think only of the conditions and circumstances that occasioned them, and that the blackened ruins of to-day will give place to-morrow to new and splendid edifices, monuments of the generosity of an enlightened public.

OTTAWA, CANADA.

JANUARY 15TH, 1904.



SCENE DURING THE FIRE.—SEMINARY AND CHAPEL.

THE UNIVERSITY FIRE.

As to the origin of the fire, whether from defects in the lighting or heating appliances, or from other cause, investigation gives no clew. Whatever the original cause, all are agreed that the extraordinary rapidity with which the flames spread is owing to the fact, that all the class rooms, dormitories, the academic hall, chapel, refectories, offices, etc., were under one roof, and connected by one or more corridors on each floor. Thus the whole was grouped within what may practically be regarded as a single building, covering a great part of a block 530 by 330 feet, this structural arrangement has proved such a disastrous mistake it is not likely to be repeated.

There is reference to the fire in the Christmas issue of the "University of Ottawa Review," pages 173-180, some paragraphs of which may here be repeated :

"The material buildings are destroyed, but not Father Tabaret's work." So telegraphed our Oblate Archbishop, Mgr. Langevin, of St. Boniface, and never was truer word written or spoken. Indeed, the expressions of sympathy, evoked from all quarters, especially, as we might have felt sure they would be, from our sister universities, not of our Faith, have gone far to reconcile us to our loss. But, as Mgr. Langevin says, if the dear, familiar buildings have disappeared, the work of our pious founder remains. Whereof his statue, uninjured, as shown in our illustration, is surely a symbol and a pledge.

Yet Wednesday, December 2, 1903, will ever be a dark day in our annals. Father Thomas Murphy, who was making his thanksgiving, after Mass, in the Sisters' Chapel beside the laundry, saw the two windows, at the back of the Academic Hall, filled with flames, about 7.30 a.m. and at once raised the alarm, in the basement and kitchen. Father O'Boyle, who

was in the Community Room, appears to have smelt smoke about the same time. He, also, raised the alarm, and started to go to his room on the floor above, to save, if possible, the valuable papers kept there, but a blast of flame, coming through the doors of the Academic Hall, drove him back, singeing his hair as it did so.

The rapidity with which the flames spread was nothing less than awful. The long wooden corridors, the superheated steam pipes, carried the fire more effectually than any flue or



REV. C. J. FULHAM, O.M.I.,

Died Dec. 8th, '03, of injuries sustained in jumping from fourth story chimney could possibly have done. Before any effort was made to check its progress the blaze had proceeded from one end of the vast structure to the other, a distance of over 300 feet, and could be seen from the street, leaping up the two

great staircases almost at the same time. Crowds of horrified onlookers began to pour in, attracted by the dense smoke and flame that issued from a hundred windows at top and bottom of the doomed building. The excitement at this moment was something never to be forgotten. Blanched faces asked questions that tongue dared not utter. Fortunately it was breakfast hour. At the first cry "College on fire! Save yourselves!" the lower halls and rooms were quickly emptied into the courts and streets. The Fathers who happened to be in their rooms had to leap or to run for their lives. Half a dozen of the students were ill or sleeping, and had to leap or wait till they were rescued. Several of the Sisters and domestics, as was customary, had gone to make up the rooms of the students and the dormitories, when they found their escape by the two stairways cut off. Happily they were noticed in this extremity by Father Legault, and directed to the fire-escape. With the help of the lay professors who were in a similar predicament, the terrified women were handed down to the roof of the hand-ball alley and thence by a ladder to the ground.

Father Rector's first thought was for the Blessed Sacrament, which was saved none too soon, as were some of the sacred vestments.

The rest was like a nightmare. The narrow escape of the few priests, students and women, who happened to be upstairs, showed only too plainly, what must, inevitably, have happened, had the fire broke out, even an hour earlier. Surely, God's angels, as we nightly prayed, dwelt in the University, and kept the inmates safe in that hour of sorest danger. Three of our Fathers, as is too well known, were not so fortunate; Father Boyon's escape can only be described as miraculous, for those who saw him fall, rebound from the verandah roof, and fall again, felt sure he must be dead. Father Fulham's fall was, indeed, partly broken by a blanket, but only partly. Father McGurty was forced to make his way through a veritable hell of smoke and flame. One life, only, through God's mercy, was lost at the time, poor old Miss Danis, perished, without hope of rescue; but

we have now to mourn the loss of Father Charles Fulham, O.M.I., and Father Charles M. McGurty, O.M.I.

It was about 7.45 that Fathers Boyer and Fortier, who were looking out at the skating rink, saw the flames and smoke issuing from the lower windows of the Academic Hall, and raised the alarm. (Note. It seems impossible to determine the exact hour, or who first saw the fire.) Father



REV. C. M. MCGURTY, O.M.I.,

Died Dec. 15th '03. Third victim of injuries sustained at time of fire

Boyer rushed to the dormitories, to rouse those French students who, having taken part in the Play the previous evening, had been allowed to sleep late. Of these, some jumped into a net; one, Mr. Harvey, remained, calmly, on the cornice, until reached by a ladder. Father Boyon's

esc-

Calape—elsewhere were described—was nothing short of miraculous. Father Fulham (*R.I.P.*) jumped into a blanket, and sustained injuries which, later, proved fatal. Father McGurty (*R.I.P.*) fought his way through smoke and flame, also sustaining fatal injuries. The Sisters and women were rescued by Father Legault, as were the invalids in the Infirmary.

Father Rector's first thought, after saving the Blessed Sacrament, was to notify (at nine o'clock) the parents of all the students, by means of Press Association telegrams, that their sons were safe. Next, to arrange, with the various railway companies, for the transport of the students to their respective destinations.

At 10 o'clock, an office was opened at Dr. Chabot's house, and the students were supplied the means to return home.

This may be said to close the history of this memorable day; except that it remains to thank our many friends for help, hospitality, sympathy and kind enquiries. His Excellency the Governor General sent an aide, at the earliest possible moment, to express his sympathy.

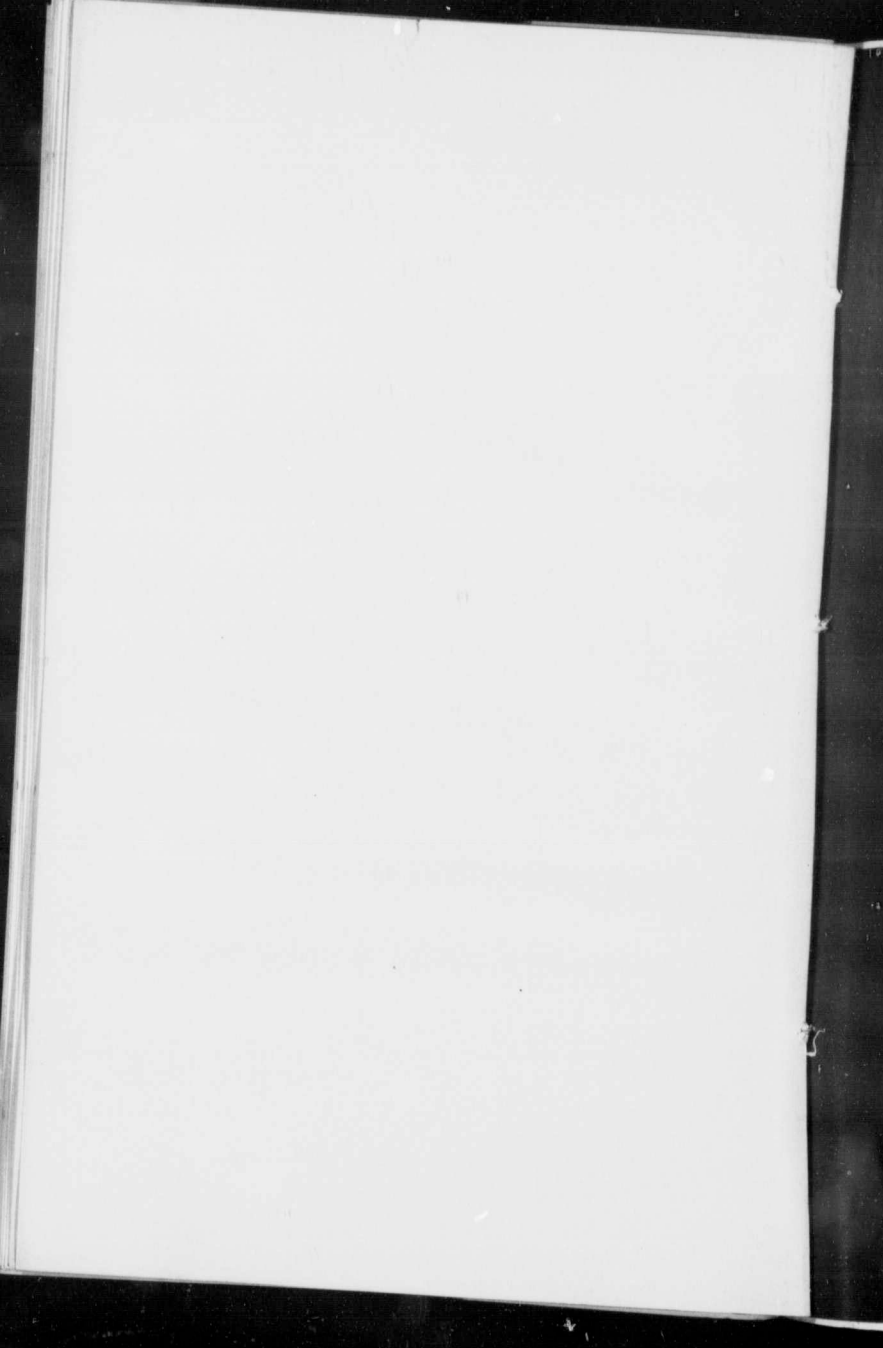
Thursday, Friday, Saturday.—These three days were passed, one may say, first, at the bedside of the three injured priests; lastly, but by no means least, in receiving and answering messages of sympathy, verbal, telegraphed, written. For such sympathy, from all quarters, Ottawa University must ever rest under a debt of gratitude which can never be paid.

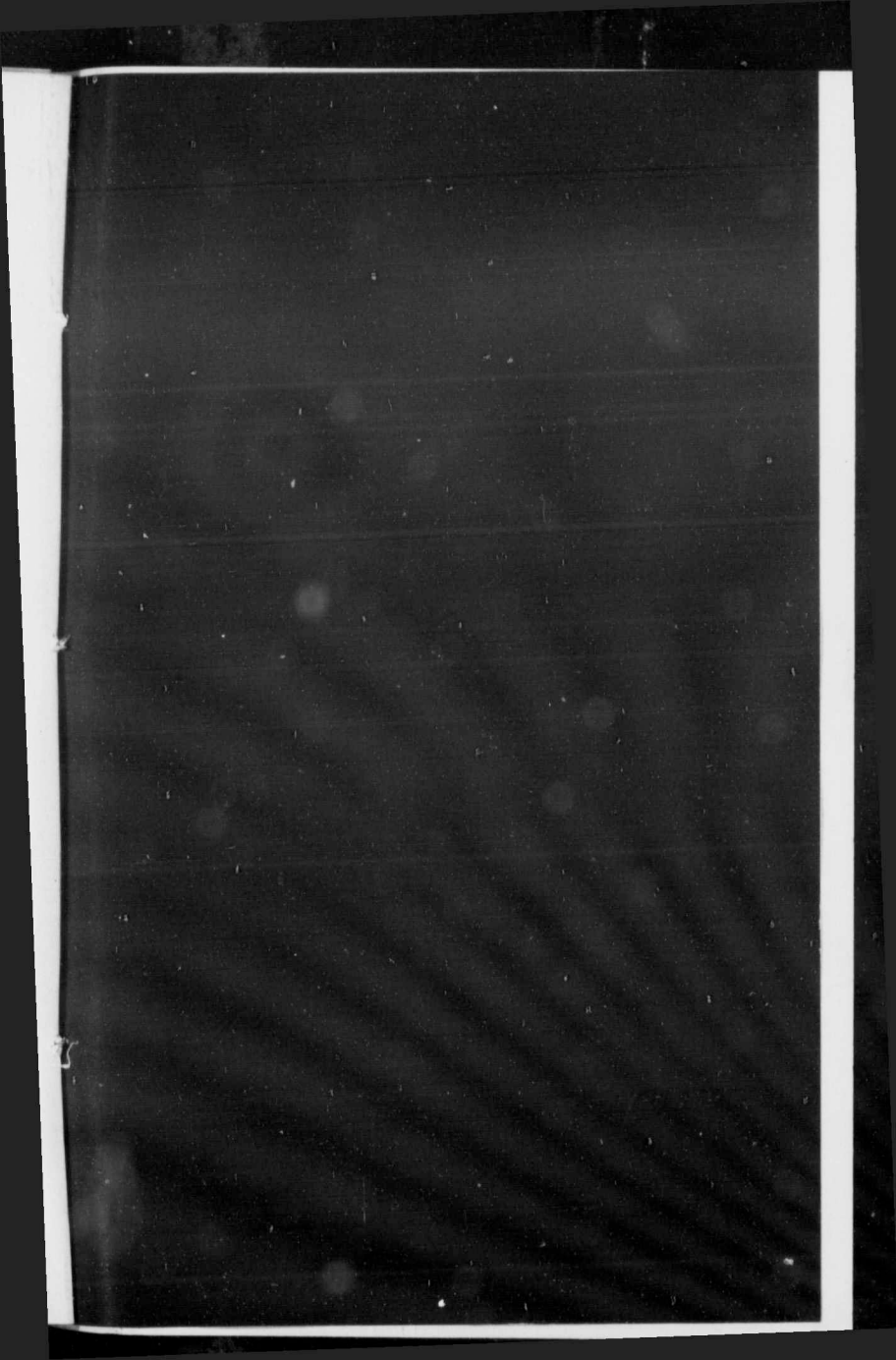
Tuesday, December 8.—On this, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, at 7 a.m., after most terrible suffering, borne with patience, fortitude and resignation to the will of God, Father Charles Fulham, O.M.I., passed to his reward. *R.I.P.*

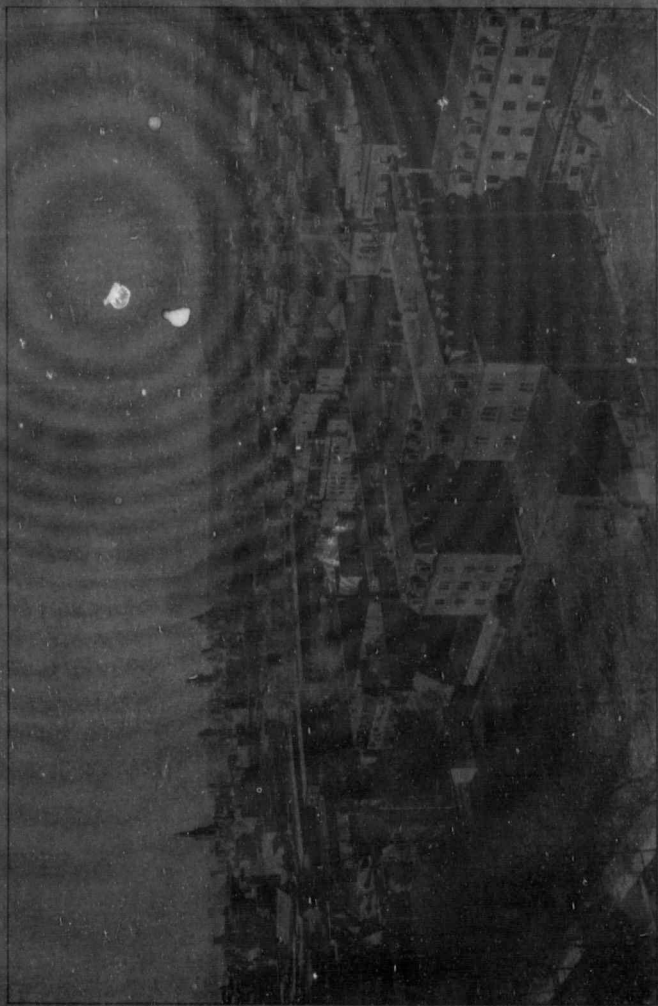
Tuesday, December 15.—Father McGurty died at 5 p.m. after terrible sufferings."—*R.I.P.*



BEFORE THE FIRE







Bird's eye view from Theodore St. Before the fire.

Bird's eye view from Theodore's Raft, the fire.