

ANNALS
OF THE
Propagation of the Faith
COMPILED FOR THE
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.



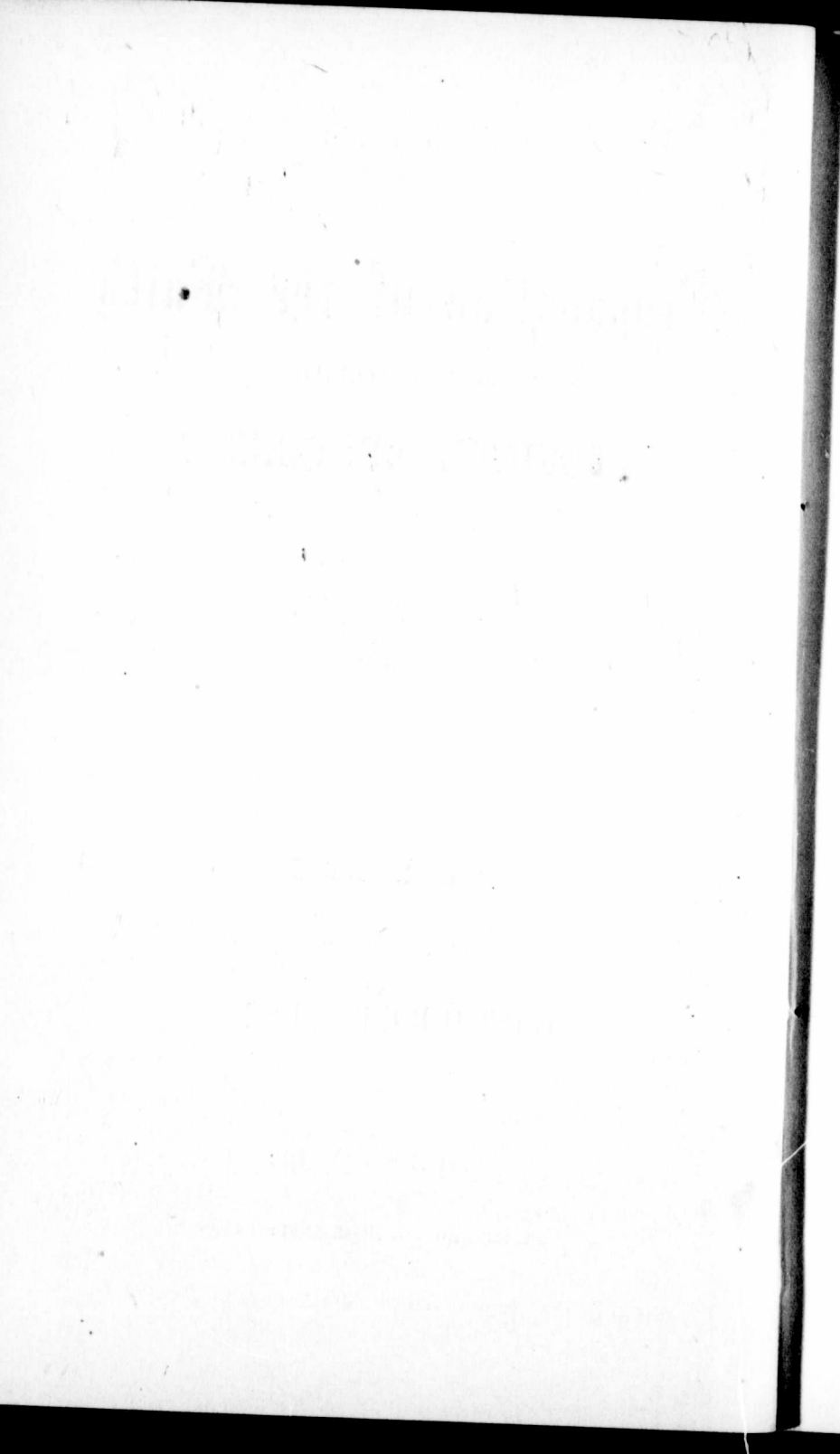
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OCTOBER, 1877.

THREE-RIVERS.

PUBLISHED FOR THE INSTITUTION.



MISSIONS OF THE NORTH WEST.

INTERESTING LETTER FROM THE REMOTE AND DREARY REGION
OF MCKENZIE RIVER, TO THE MOTHER GENERAL
OF THE GREY NUNS, IN MONTREAL.

{ GENERAL HOSPITAL OF PROVIDENCE.
{ McKenzie River, December 6th. 1876.

HIGHLY HONORED AND DEAR MOTHER GENERAL.

The long wished for moment, that of the Letter bearer's arrival, has come at last to rejoice the hearts of your poor children in far distant McKenzie. It is so sweet to hold intercourse with a Beloved Mother, to tell her of all our works, of our poor Indians, of our scholars, to talk not only of the past but also of our hopes for the time to come, and in the midst of all to add : Mother, notwithstanding the grief of our separation, the privations and sacrifices which accompany a missionary life amongst uncivilised tribes, we would all do over again what we have already done, now that experience show us all the good we can effect. In order also to relieve your motherly heart, we assure you that our prospects are improving and our privations less, than during the first years after our coming here. Do not be anxious, then, Dear Mother ; we manage to live, but more than all, we are happy.—What else is needed ? Are we not children of Divine Providence ?

I now resume from the date of my last letter, which was in June, and as usual give you all details, knowing that you consider all that interests us interesting to yourself also. The *one and only event* of this *Country*, the arrival of the Barges, from Fort Simpson, happened at

the end of June. They brought some visitors with them, and of their number was Madam Bompas, wife of the Anglican Bishop. This lady visited us three times during her sojourn here. The wife of one of the Protestant assistants of the Company died in the mean time, leaving a helpless infant ; this child, Madam Bompas adopted and tends with motherly care. Were we not here now, dear Mother, it is not only Protestant children who would receive her care, but those also of our Catholic Indians, and then what would become of their faith ? How happy, how infinitely happy are we to have been chosen for the good work in this Land !! But, alas ! our resources are so feeble that we are forced to limit even the good we could otherwise do. Did the generous folks, who inhabit Canada, only know what a harvest of souls could be reaped in these savage regions, they would undoubtedly come to our aid. Many have done so in the past, and our grateful thanks are due them. Their liberality is not forgotten by the McKenzie Missioners, much less is it ignored by Him, to whom the gift brings honor and praise. Each year the wants increase, while our means cannot keep pace with them. If I were free, how willingly would I go from door to door to beg assistance and help. Our protestant brethren are most zealous in there efforts to attract the Indians to their side. Their schools are multiplying in every direction. If they do not succeed in making the savages Protestants, they at least keep them away from the Missionary and fill their minds with prejudice against us.

The number of our Priests is by far insufficient for the wants. Oh ! Dear Mother, please pray and have prayers said, that the number may augment. Truly are the words of our Divine Saviour verified here : «The harvest is ripe, but the laborers are few.» May the

prayers of the pious obtain that error prevail not, but that we may find means of assisting and helping far more than we could do yet. Our Missionary Priests are devotedly zealous. On the 8th. of September, the Rev. Father Lecarre pronounced his solemn vows and became an Oblate. This young Missionary came from France with his Lordship Bishop Clut, in 1870, went with him to Alaska, in 1872, and for the rest of the time has undergone all the hardships which fall to the Priest's lot in these wild and uncivilized regions. What a life for both Bishop and Priest ! What privations, what sacrifices must not be undergone in these immense solitudes ! And now for rest, the young Missionary again crosses the Atlantic and calls on the generous youths of his loved Britannia to follow him to the wilds of America, and like him to enroll themselves among the number of laborers in the Lord's Vineyard. His call has been responded to, and he has again come back with alms and comrades willing to share his trials and his crown. A venerable Priest who had already numbered twenty years in the ministry has joined the Oblates, and another lay Brother has pronounced his first vows. These are so many more efficient aids, for in a country like the one we inhabit, every one, Bishop, Priest, like the lay Brothers, do all kinds of work. It would be impossible to live here otherwise, as it is so expensive and so hard to have things brought from great distance.

We had the pleasure also, on the 7th. of September, of seeing the Rev. Father Petitot, who arrived in good health and ardent to start for his mission of Good Hope, where the Indians are anxiously expecting him. It was also this same day that the dear letters from our loved Mother House in Canada arrived. You can hardly judge of the exquisite pleasure we feel in reading all the details that our good sisters Secretaries send us:

Thanks, many thanks to them for these too brief moments of joy,

Our good Marie Domitilda has come back from Athabasca, but the other girls will most probably pass the winter at Lake Labiche. The Rev. Father Grouard will reside there a year longer. We have heard that his Lordship Faraud has given up his intention of tracing the new route for transporting our effects. This news pleases us greatly, as we shall have him back in his Vicariate. We expect him in August, after an absence of seven years. We also had an exceedingly great joy when we learnt from the letters, that you had been at St. Boniface and had spent a good portion of time with our dear Sisters there. A little envy blended with this joy, but our Sisters will pardon the movement, knowing that we truly rejoiced with them. We were greatly consoled by the knowledge that your precious health is in better condition, and we ardently pray that the Almighty may strengthen you more and more.

On the 20th. of September, an autumn scene was enacting in our fields. Bishop, Priests and Lay-Brothers were busy (if not in manifesting their zeal, at least in using their strength,) digging potatoes. We gathered 1,100 barrels. Some of the potatoes were so large as to weigh over a pound. Had we the possibility of doing so, we would certainly have sent specimens to the Exhibition. It must have been the constant rain throughout the summer which improved this vegetable, but our barley and wheat did not ripen. In consequence our black bread will be rarer than ever this year. But I again repeat: We are God's children, and truly did our Venerated Foundress Mother Youville, say: «Always on the eve of want, yet never devoid of what is absolutely necessary to live.» What more can we covet for ourselves, we who have vowed to be poor?

We have dwelling with us as the present time, 19 girls and 8 boys, orphans and scholars. The youngest of our orphans is a dear little thing of 4 years, good and intelligent. She now speaks French as a native, though knowing only the Montagnais language when she first came to us.

Our dear Mother is always as devoted as ever, seeking not only the heaviest burdens for her share, but doing her best afterwards to relieve those of her sisters. The general health is good, far better than it used to be in Canada. It must be the pure air which alone produces this amelioration.

In closing the present, all my Sisters here unite with me in offering you our respectful and affectionate homage, Highly honored Mother General, with the liveliest assurances of our sisterly love for our good Sisters Assistants and all our former companions. Adieu, Dear Mother, till we meet in our *one* happy Home.

Believe me to be ever

Your affectionate daughter in Christ.

SISTER WARD.

THE LEPERS OF TRACADIE.

“ Ah ! little think the gay, licentious crowd,
Whom pleasure, power, and affluence surround—
Ah ! little think they, while they dance along,
How many pine ! how many drink the cup
Of baleful grief ! how many shake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind ! ”

THOMPSON'S SEASONS.

“ In a rage, I returned to my dwelling place, crying aloud : “Woe unto thee, leper ! Woe unto thee ! ” And as if the whole world united against me, I heard the echo through the ruins of the Château de Braxafan repeat distinctly : “Woe unto thee ! ” I stood motionless with horror on the threshold of the tower listening to the faint tones again and again repeated from the overhanging mountains : “Woe unto thee ! ”

XAVIER DE MAISTRE.

On the low and miry and forming the borders of the county of Gloucester, in New Brunswick, fifty miles from Miramichi and twenty five south of Caraquet, between a narrow river and the waters of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, stands a little village. The situation it occupies is dreary and sad to a high degree. On one side moans the gray sea, on whose dull and turbid waters rarely is seen a sail. On the other stretches a long low line of coast, dotted at intervals by the huts of the fishermen. The whole landscape is painfully monotonous, desolate and mournful. The cottages are mean in the extreme, while the simple church is without architectural merit. Afar off frowns forbiddingly a large building shut in by high walls. In this melancholy spot the passing traveller says to himself : “ Is this place accursed alike by God and man ? ”

Accursed, alas ! it has indeed been by despairing

lips and hearts ; for the building is the Lazaretto of Tracadie. Before the year 1798 no register was kept of baptisms, marriages, or burials in the parish. Since that date, however, and up to 1842, Tracadie was under the care of the *curés* of Caraquet, a neighboring parish.

On the 24th. of October 1842, arrived the first resident priest, M. François Xavier Stanislas Lafrance, who remained there until January 1852. M. Lafrance has since died. At Tracadie he was succeeded by the present *curé*, M. l'Abbé Ferdinand Gauvreau, with whose name the history of these poor lepers must always be interwoven.

Probably the most terrible chastisement inflicted on a guilty people is that known as leprosy. In ancient times it was only too well known, for it was then more frequent than in our day. It made such fearful ravages in certain parts of the world, that its very name was whispered in accents of horror and dread. From time immemorial has this scourge been looked upon as utterly distinct from all other diseases ; more virulent in its effects ; more insidious in its approaches, and above all by reason of the frightful manner in which it distorts and disfigures its victims.

The alarm that has always been felt in regard to this most loathsome disease arises not alone from its hideous results, but also from the conviction that has always existed as to the absolute hopelessness of cure.

During the summer of 1757 the colony on the Miramichi River suffered much from the war between France and England, which sadly interrupted their traffic in fish and furs. Consequently, the following winter was one of great suffering, and many of the colonists died of hunger. Two transport ships, laden with provisions and supplies of all kinds, were sent out

by the French Government in 1758, but both vessels were captured by the English fleet then assisting at the siege of Louisburg.

While these colonies were enduring suspense and starvation, a French vessel, called the *Indienne*, from Morlaix, was wrecked at the mouth of the Miramichi, near the "Baie des Vents" a name now corrupted into "Baie du Vin". Tradition states that this ship, before coming to America, had traded in the Levant, and that a large number of bales of old clothes strewn upon the beach after the vessel went to pieces, were seized by the inhabitants, dried, and afterwards worn. However this may be, it is certain that from that date arose a most terrible pestilence among the Canadians, who were already decimated by famine. The first victim of this malady was M. de Beauhair, and he, with eight hundred others, it is said, were buried at Point Beauhair. The survivors abandoned Miramichi and fled, some to l'Île Saint-Jean, now Prince Edward's Island—and the greater number settled along the western coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they formed scattered hamlets under the names of Niguanek, Tracadie and Pokemouche combined in one parish, that of Caraquet.

For eighty years, although it was known that isolated instances of Leprosy existed in the different colonies, they attracted little or no public attention up to 1817, when a woman named Ursule Landry died of the disease.

An account written by one of the nuns of l'Hôtel Dieu attributes a somewhat different origin to this scourge. This good sister writes that the disease was carried to New Brunswick in 1758, by a ship from the Levant; the vessel having made to the port late in the autumn, the crew were paid off and dispersed, many seeking a temporary home in Caraquet. Unfortunately

this crew was afflicted by a malady that was unsuspected by any one. The colonists were kind to the sailors ; the women washed their clothes, and in this way contracted the disease which was transmitted from one to another and from father to son, and in time acquired its peculiar features. These traditions are, in the main, probably correct as to the origin of the scourge in this Canadian village. The inhabitants of other villages than Tracadie subsist almost entirely on fish, are equally poor, equally ill-fed and insufficiently clothed, living in the same damp and foggy atmosphere ; but it is only in Tracadie or its vicinity that a leper is to be seen. The inhabitants of Labrador and Newfoundland eat fish almost exclusively, and live amid similar climatic conditions, paying no more enlightened attention to hygienic laws, and yet the "maladie de Tracadie" does not attack or decimate them.

From the date of the introduction of this disease into the village it increased slowly but steadily until 1817, when certain precautions began to be taken ; but not until 1844 did the authorities try any active precautions. In that year a medical board was organized, who made a report of their investigations to the government, and later in the same year an act of the Provincial Legislature was passed, renewed and amended in 1850. It authorized the lieutenant governor to establish a health committee. This committee recommended the erection of a lazaretto on l'Île de Sheldrake, an isolated spot in the middle of the Miramichi River, eighteen miles above Chatham. "Whoever was found to be unquestionably tainted by the disease," says the article, must be torn from his family, using force if needfull. The husband must be taken from his wife, the mother from her children, the child from its parents, whenever

the first symptom of leprosy declares itself. An eternal farewell to all they hold most dear must be said, and the poor creature is sent to the lazaretto. It often happens that a leper refuses to go quietly ; he is then dragged by ropes like a beast to the shambles—for none is willing to lay a finger upon him. Often the unhappy beings are driven with blows to the very door of the lazaretto." Things of course could not long remain in this brutal condition. The lepers, driven to desperation by their physical and mental sufferings, by a wild longing for the liberty denied them, and for the sight of their loved ones, sometimes effected their escape. An attempt was finally made to ameliorate their condition, and in 1847 the lazaretto was removed to the spot where it now stands, about half a mile from the parish church of Tracadie. A large tract of land was here purchased by the government ; and the present building was erected, surrounded by a wooden wall twenty feet high, set thick with nails to hinder the escape of the lepers. The windows of the lazaretto were barred heavily with iron, and thus added to the melancholy aspect of the building. The lepers, weary of the revolting resemblance to a prison, tore most of the bars away, and when the nuns arrived there they at once ordered the remainder to be removed.

In 1868 the nuns from the Hôtel Dieu of Montreal took possession of the lazaretto of Tracadie. For some few years a strong necessity had been felt for the reorganisation of this institution. A wish was expressed that it could be placed under the care of the Hospital Nuns. Steps were taken by Bishop Rogers to that effect, and they seem to have been singularly felicitous. He obtained from Bishop Bourget the assistance of the nuns of the Hôtel Dieu of Montreal, and the government appears to have regarded with favorable eyes this regen-

eration of the lazaretto, which produced in a very brief period of time the best possible results upon the patients. Abbé Gauvreau draws a sad picture of the state in which these poor creatures lived before the nuns went to their assistance. In a letter dated April 28, 1869, addressed to the Mother Superior of the Hôtel Dieu of Montreal, he says : " I am absolutely incapable of describing the state of abject misery in which our poor lepers passed their lives before the coming of the Sisters. I can only say, that from the hour of their transfer from l'île aux Bec-scies (Sheldrake), at the entrance of the river Miramichi, discord, revolt and insubordination towards the government, divisions and quarrels among themselves, made the history of their lives. The walls rang with horrible blasphemies, and the hospital seemed like a den of thieves."

The Board of Health spared nothing to make the lepers comfortable. Good food, and abundance of it, appropriate clothing, and careful medical attendance were liberally provided ; but, in spite of these efforts, the hearts of these poor creatures were as diseased as their bodies. Some of them revolted against the summons of death, notwithstanding the constant exhortations of the chaplain, and even after their last communion clung strongly to the futile hope of life. Of this number was one who had been warned by the physician that his hours were numbered and that a priest should be summoned. His friends, and those of his relatives who were within the walls of the lazaretto implored him to prepare for death. "Let me be !" he cried " I know what I am about !"

About nine o'clock in the evening he begged his companions in misery not to watch at his bedside, and, believing himself able to drive away Death, who was hurrying toward him with rapid strides, insisted on

playing a game of cards. The game had hardly begun, however, when the cards dropped from his hands and he fell back on his bed. Before assistance could reach him all was over.

With the arrival of the nuns a new order of things began. Without entering into any detailed account of all the labors performed by the sisters since their arrival, it is enough to state that cleanliness and order prevail, and true charity shows itself everywhere. The poor creatures, who formerly revelled in filth and disorder, now see about them decency and cleanliness. They are induced to be submissive and obedient by the hourly example of the sisters ; their modesty and reserve, their virtue and careful speech, their watchful care and devotion, their tender attention to the sick, teach the inmates of the hospital the best of lessons. It is easy to imagine with what joy the poor lepers welcomed the nuns who came to consecrate their lives to this service and also to understand with what affection and respect these holy women are regarded.

Many changes in the interior arrangements of the lazaretto followed the arrival of the sisters. The patients and the nuns now hear mass at the same time. The male patients occupy two rooms twenty-five feet square, while similar apartments above are reserved for the females. The grounds of the lazaretto have also been enlarged.

This malady can hardly be contagious, since in one family husband or wife may be attacked while the other goes unscathed. There is now at Tracadie a man, François Robichaud by name, who has had three wives ; the two first perished of leprosy, the third is now under treatment at the lazaretto—the husband in the meantime enjoying perfect health. In one family two or more children are lepers, while the others are untainted. One

servant woman resided for eight years in the hospital, ate and drank with the patients, yet has never shown any symptoms of the disease. The laundress of the institution lives under its roof, and has done so for two years; she is a widow, her husband having died of the scourge, she being his sole nurse during his illness. She is in perfect health. It has also happened more than once that persons suspected of leprosy and placed in the hospital, after remaining there several years and developing no further symptoms, are discharged as « whole ».

All the patients now in the hospital agree that the disease is communicated by touch, and each has his own theory as to where he was exposed to it—either by sleeping with some one who had it, or by eating and drinking with such.

I am strongly persuaded that this disease, whatever may be its origin, is greatly aggravated by the kind of life led by the natives of Tracadie, who are all fishermen or sailors. Their food is fish, generally herring, and their only vegetables turnips and potatoes. Such is their extreme poverty, that there are not ten families in Tracadie who ever touch bread.

After Governor Gordon's visit in 1862, the condition of the lepers was much improved. The sisters taught the young to read and employed them in making shoes and other articles.

The investigations of Governor Gordon, although made during a brief inspection of the lazaretto, are far from complete. The Abbé Gauvreau has been for eighteen years chaplain of the hospital. He has watched keenly the progress of the disease in over a hundred cases. He has noted every symptom of its slow and fatal march. He has been present at the death beds of many of the

lepers, and he recounts with horror the terrible scenes he has witnessed.

“Without wishing to impose my opinions on you,” he says, “I cannot resist the conviction that, apart from divine will, this scourge of fallen man is a most subtle poison introduced into the human body by transmission or by direct contact, or even perhaps by prolonged cohabitation.

“But whichever of these suppositions is the more nearly correct, when once the poison is fairly within the system its action is so latent and insidious, that for some years, two, four, or even more—the unfortunate Naaman or Giezi perceives in himself no change either in constitution or sensations. His sleep is as refreshing and his respiration as free as before. In a word, the vital organs perform all their functions and the various members are unshorn of their vigor and energy.

“At this period of the disease the skin loses its natural color, its healthy appearance, and is replaced by a deadly whiteness from head to foot. This whiteness looks as if the malady had taken possession of the mucous membrane and had displaced the fluids necessary to its functions. Without knowing if the leper of the Orient possessess other external indications, it is certain that in this stage the malady of Tracadie is precisely similar to the leprosy of the ancients. I mean in the whiteness of the skin. In the second stage the skin becomes yellow. In the third and last it turns to a deep red; it is often purple, and sometimes greenish, in hue. In fact, the people of Tracadie, like myself, are so familiar with the early symptoms of the disease, that they rarely fall into a mistake.

“Only one death has occurred in the first stage. All the other cases have passed on to the second or third stage before death, and strangely enough, it has been

remarked by the patients themselves that the treatment of Dr. La Bellois had always a much better success during the third period than during the second.

« At first the victim feels devouring thirst, great feverish action, and a singular trembling in every limb ; stiffness and a certain weakness in the joints ; a great weight on the chest like that caused by sorrow ; a rush of blood to the brain ; fatigue and drowsiness, and other disagreeable symptoms which now escape my memory. The entire nervous system is then struck, as it were, with insensibility to such a degree that a sharp instrument or a needle, or even the blade of a knife, buried in the fleshy parts or thrust through the tendons and cartilage causes the leper little or no pain.

« Some poor creature, with calm indifference, will place his arm or leg on a mass of burning wood and tar, and let it remain there until the entire limb, bones and all is consumed ; yet the leper feels no pain, and may sleep through it all as quietly as if in his bed.»

One of the nuns gives the following example of this astonishing insensibility : « Since we reached Tracadie two of the patients have burned their hands severely, and were totally unconscious of having done so until I dressed the wounds myself. » In regard to this torpidity of the system, M. Gauvreau remarks that it is but temporary, but he knows not its duration ; and the sister adds that the torpidity is not invariable with all the patients, and with some only in a portion of the body. In certain individuals it is only in the legs ; in others, in the hands alone ; but all complain of numbness like that of paralysis.

« By degrees, » says M. Gauvreau, « the unnatural whiteness of the skin disappears, and spots of a light yellow are to be seen. These spots, in some cases, are

small and about the size of a dollar piece. When of this character, they appear at first with a certain regularity of arrangement, and in other places corresponding with each other, as on the two arms and shoulders—more generally, however, on the breast. They are distinct, but by degrees the poison makes its way throughout the vitals ; the spots enlarge, approach each other, and, when at last united, the body of the sick man becomes a mass of corruption. Then the limbs swell, afterward portions of the body, the hands and the feet, and when the skin can bear no further tension, it breaks, and running sores cover the patient, who is repulsive and disgusting to the last degree. The entire skin of the body becomes extremely tender, and is covered with an oily substance that exudes from the pores and looks like varnish. The skin and flesh between thumb and forefinger dry away, the ends of the fingers, the feet and hands dwindle to nothingness and sometimes the joints separate, and the members drop off without pain and often without the knowledge of the patient. The most noble part of the being created to the image of God—the face—is marred as much as the body by this fell disease. It is generally excessively swollen. The chin, cheeks, and ears are usually covered by tubercles the size of peas. The eyes seem to start from their sockets, and are glazed by a sort of cataract that often produces complete blindness. The skin of the forehead thickens and swells, acquiring a leaden hue, which sometimes extends over the entire countenance, while in other cases the whole face is suffused with scarlet. The explanation of these different symptoms may be found, of course, in the variety of temperament—sanguine, bilious or lymphatic. This face, once so smooth and fair, has become seamed and furrowed. The lips are two appalling ulcers and the

upper lip much swollen and raised to the base of the nose, which has entirely disappeared ; while the under lip hangs over the chin, which shines from the tension of the skin. In some cases the lips are parched and drawn up like a purse puckered on strings. Leprosy—that of Tracadie, at least—completes its ravages on the internal organs of its victims. It attacks now the larynx and all the bronchial ramifications ; they become obstructed and filled with tubercles, so that the unhappy patient can find no relief in any position. His respiration becomes gradually more and more impeded until he is threatened with suffocation. I have been present at the last struggles of most of these afflicted mortals. I hope that I may never be called upon to witness similar scenes. Excuse me from details. If I undertook them my courage would give out, for I assure you that many of you would have fainted. Let me simply add that these lepers generally die in convulsions, panting for air ; frequently rushing to the door to breathe ; and returning they fling themselves on their pallets in despair. The thought of their sighs and sobs, the remembrance of their tears almost break my heart, and their prayers for succor ring constantly in my ears : “ O my God ! have mercy on me ! have mercy on me.” “ On our arrival at Tracadie,” says one of the Sisters, “ we found twenty inmates of the hospital, and since three more have been admitted. These poor creatures, being firmly persuaded that we could cure them, besieged us with entreaties for medicine, and were satisfied with whatever we gave. At first I selected three who had undergone no medical treatment ; these three were also the only ones who suffered from contraction of the extremities. The first, twenty-two years of age, had been at the hospital four years, and as yet showed the disease only in the contraction above mentioned, and in

a certain insensibility of the feet and hands. The second, fifteen years old, had been in the hospital for two years; his hands and feet were drawn up, and he suffered from a large swelling on the left side. This young fellow is very delicate, and suffers intensely at times from spasms of the stomach. The third case is a lad of eleven, who for two years has suffered from the disease. His hands are twisted out of shape, and his body is covered with spots, red and white; these spots are totally without sensibility. I have administered to these patients "*Fowle's Humor Cure*" an American patent medicine. The first and second patients experienced no other benefit from this remedy than a certain vigor previously unfelt. To the third the sensibility of the cuticle returned, but the spots remained the same. This in itself is very remarkable, because in no previous case have these benumbed or paralyzed parts regained their sensation. To another, a patient of twenty-two, I gave the same remedy. For eight years he had been a martyr to the virulence of the disease. When we arrived at the lazaretto, we found his case to be one of the worst there. His nose had fallen in; the lips were enormously puffed and swollen; his hands equally so, and looked more like the paws of a bear than like the hands of a human being. The saliva was profuse, but the efforts of swallowing almost futile. Soon after taking this same medicine the saliva ceased to flow and he swallowed with comparative ease.

"On the 23d of January he was, by the mercy of God, able to partake of the holy communion, of which he had been deprived for four years. His lips are now of their natural size, and he is stronger than he has been for years. But the pain in his limbs are far worse than they have ever been before. I have also given Fowle's cure to all the patients who had

been under no previous medical treatment, and invariably with beneficial results. In some the tint of the skin is more natural ; in others the swelling of the extremities is much abated ; but the remedy seems always to occasion an increase of pain in the limbs, although it unquestionably acts as a tonic upon the poor creatures. In all of them the mouth and throath improve with the use of Fowle's cure. And here let me say that this disease throughout bears a strong resemblance to syphilis. In both diseases the throat, the tongue, and the whole inside of the mouth is ulcerated. In both diseases the voice is affected to such a degree that it can hardly make itself heard. They cough frightfully. Some time after our coming, a leper presented himself for admission at our hospital doors. The poor creature was covered with ulcers, and every night bathed in a cold perspiration. After he had rested for a fews days, I gave him a powerful dose of "la liqueur arsenicale," which has since been repeated. The night sweats have disappered, and the ulcers are healed, with the exception of one of the foot. His lips are still unhealthy, but he is much stronger, and the spots on his person are gradually disappearing.

"Two others, later arrivals, have taken "la liqueur arsenicale," and have improved under its use. Suspecting that the origin of this malady may be traced to another source, I gave the bichloride of mercury, in doses of the thirty second part of a grain, to the most desperate case in the hospital. It is too soon, however, to judge of its effects. The improvement in no one of these cases is rapid, but we trust that it is certain. We look to God alone for success for which we venture to hope. From a letter of M. Gauvreau, bearing the date of Nov. 30, 1859, sixty persons perished from its ravages in the previous fifteen years, and twenty five of both sexes,

and of all ages, were then inmates of the lazaretto, awaiting there the end of their torments." Let us hope that the faithful Sisters will succeed in their good work ; for ourselves, every one of us, have a personal interest in it. Unfortunately, this good result is far from certain, as the Abbé Gauvreau desires us to understand.

" One or more of these unfortunates," he says, "feeling the insidious approaches of the disease, and shrinking from the idea of the lazaretto, have at times secretly escaped from Tracadie.

" The following instance came under my own observation. A youth suffering from this disease and dreading the lazaretto, went to Boston, where he secured a position on a fishing vessel, hoping that the sea air with the medicines that he would take, would effect his cure. He soon found that these hopes were groundless, and was obliged to enter the hospital in Boston, where, in spite of the care and attention bestowed upon him by the physicians of the medical school at Cambridge, he died, far from friends and home. "

One naturally asks, with a thrill of horror, whether, before the admission of this poor creature to the hospital, he did not transmit to his shipmates the poisonous virus that filled his own blood.

The total disappearance of this disease—if such disappearance may be hoped for—will be due exclusively to the noble and untiring exertions of the Sisters. Tracadie and its afflicted population would not alone owe a debt of eternal gratitude to these Hospital Nuns. America itself would share this feeling. With an example like this of charity and self abnegation before us, we cannot cease to wonder at, and to deplore, the narrow minds of those persons who condemn the mo-

nastic institution of the church. Let us compassionate all such ; for they have yet to learn the great truth, that the duty inculcated by the Church, after the love of God, is the love of our neighbors.

MISSIONS OF NEWFOUNDLAND.

{ St. George, Newfoundland,
{ February 10th. 1876.

TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH,

Gentlemen,

About two years ago I sent you a lengthy account of the beginning and progress of our holy religion in that portion of the extensive Prefecture Apostolic, committed to my care, which is comprised within the boundaries of St. George's Bay and the Codroy Valley. In that report I showed how Catholicity originated there with one French-Canadian family, some ninety years ago ; how notwithstanding their having been left without the administration of religion, save on extremely rare occasions, they adhered to the faith of their forefathers ; ad how by accession of new members, some from France, some from various parts of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, principally of French Acadian origin ; and latterly by some of Highland Scotch descent—they have now increased to some three thousand.

I propose in this, to refer to two other large Bays further north, to which I did not find it convenient to refer in the former report, and now give full and particular statistics.

The territory of St. George's Bay and of the Codroy Valley extends over eighty miles from north to south, and some fifty miles from east to west, comprising a territory which in point of natural resources, especially in mineral, is second to few places, if to any, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains. Add to this a most salubrious climate, and a fertile soil, besides the well known fishdries, and you can conjecture what an important district this will become once the apparently strange misunderstanding between Great Britain and France with regard to fishing rights will be adjusted, as likely it will soon be.

For this latter district, in order to carry out the work of the ministry, there are already six churches and chapels. Twelve schools are required to meet present wants.

Now I turn to the two other important localities, scarcely noticed in my last report—Bay of Islands and Bonne Bay.

The Bay of Islands consists of a square basin of water containing some 200 square miles, studded with a great number of Islands ; hence the name given by the French " Baie des Isles." This portion, with all its Islands, is little inhabited, owing to the roughness of the land around, and the immense depth of the water, which is from 80 to 140 fathoms. From this island-studded basin extend three large arms, some running far into the interior in different directions. The principal of these is the "Humber Sound," extending some eighteen or twenty miles from the main Bay, being about two miles wide the whole distance. This splendid estuary would form a harbor of sufficient capacity for the largest fleet in the world. But owing to its carrying, in a great measure, the main depth of the Bay. it is difficult to anchor except near the shore.

This deep Bay with its expansive arms seems formed by the hand of nature for a very important purpose.

The great shoals of herring which team around the Labrador coast in the autumn months, as is well known, seem by a disposition of a wise providence, to take up their winter quarters in these deep, but undisturbed waters. And hence a specimen of fishery is carried on here unknown, I believe, in any other part of the world.

FISHING THROUGH THE ICE.

When the winter sets in and this Bay freezes over, which is generally in the month of January, the fishermen set to work for the winter fishing.

Thus they proceed : several holes about two feet square are cut in the ice in a straight line ; a pole some twenty feet in length is attached to the end of the head line of the net. The pole thus fastened is sunk into the first hole and directed towards the next, from which it is set again in the direction of a third, and so on till the last hole is reached. This corresponds to the length of the net. One end of the rope is fastened at the last hole, the other remaining fastened at the first. Between these the net is suspended and sunk to whatever distance, in the immense depth the fish is supposed to be at, and left so one night. The next day the net is drawn up through one of the apertures. This is a sight worth seeing.

Sometimes the net is as stout as a tierce with the quantity of fish taken in this way. The poor fish are shaken out of the net and left to prance and jerk on the cold ice while they are being gathered into barrels or boxes on sleds by which they are being gathered into the stores, and salted off in all manner of ways.

QUANTITY OF FISH.

The quantity of fish taken in these Bays is enormous. Sometimes the fish will enter the Bay as early as the end of October. At this season it is taken in the usual way by nets and seines.

Fishing and trading vessels come from various ports of the New England States, from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island. Some to catch the fish themselves, but the greater number purchase their cargoes from the inhabitants, giving them all manner of provisions, groceries and dry goods in exchange. This trading is, as a general rule, appreciated more by these fishermen than cash payment, for thus they procure easily their supplies for winter.

As there is no Government Official to take direct cognizance of the exports, it is not easy to give the figures correctly of the quantity of fish thus exported. But it is pretty correctly computed to have amounted to from 30,000 to 60,000 barrels per year.

Last year I directed parties to take an estimate of what was taken away from another Bay, much a smaller one, some thirty miles north of Bay of Islands, viz, Bonne Bay, and find that from the first arrival of herring in October till December, the exports were 50,000 barrels, and this rate of taking the poor fish continued till May; from December till April, of course, it is taken through the ice.

Our people here take absolutely what they want. Our merchants have literally all they want, &c., all that they can manage to store up, their stores and vats being literally filled, and yet we are no more than half through the winter.

It was well this winter that some two large vessels belonging to the firm of A. & M. Petrie of Sligo, Ireland,

were detained by adverse winds, as they will afford room for salting and storing some 4000 barrels of fish which otherwise would have to be left in the water, or if taken, would be lost.

The above firm have some four square rigged vessels employed every summer in the fish and lumber trade. It is computed that there will be at least some 20,000 barrels of herring shipped at the opening of navigation, besides large quantities of tow timber and sawed lumber. It is much to be regretted that there is not a means of communication with these Bays in the winter season. The harbor of La Poile, a sea port open to navigation the whole winter, is within eighty or ninety miles of this Bay. With a good road this distance, hundreds of barrels could be sent daily to this port, whence it would reach the Eastern Terminus of the Nova Scotia Railway, White Haven, or any other port selected, in less than one day. Forty or fifty hours would bring it to the markets of New York, Boston, Quebec and Montreal, in a word all the important cities of the Eastern and Central States and Canada. What a boon this would be to these large cities to have so delicious an article of food perfectly fresh brought within their reach. This is no other than the much appreciated Labrador herring which I find remains as fat as ever during its sojourn in these waters. How much would not such a market enhance the value of this fish, which is now sometimes purchased in our Bay for a pound of tea, or a pound of tobacco per barrel.

Fishing as a rule is a very precarious business, at least for the fisherman. He is exposed to the caprice of the fish which seems, as it were, by an instinct of self-preservation, to shun the places, where it is caught in great quantities, for a long period and then return again.

To this general rule there seems to be an exception in the case of the herring fishing in this Bay of Island, Newfoundland. For this, there seems to be an obvious reason.

As long as these immense shoals of herring frequent the Labrador shores there seems to be little or no doubt of the supply being abundant in this Bay, which nature seems to have marked out as their winter quarters. In about 300 miles of the West Coast of Newfoundland there are only these three Bays, viz, Bonne Bay, Bay of Islands and Port au Port Bay. The gulf does not seem to afford this fish the protection it requires from the Fall storms and tempests so peculiar to the place : hence the necessity of its taking refuge in the tranquil waters of the Bay of Islands especially. Hence the remarkable fact that while other fishing grounds are abandoned, and again frequented by the fish, this Bay is unknown to fail. As a proof that this Bay is actually the winter ressort of the Labrador herring—no more proof need be required than this. They never appear here till after heavy storms from the North-East, and then they are often seen in shoals in the gulf on their way up the coast.

RELIGIOUS STATUTS.

Having said so much on the physical and industrial statuts of the localities under consideration I must now speak of their religious state.

The first germ of Catholicity was planted by a branch of the first catholic family of Bay St. George coming here some thirty years ago. This was indeed at first confined to one single individual, a female who was married to an Englishman, whom she was the means of bringing to the true church together with a large family they reared. As soon as the locality was

visited by a priest with direct jurisdiction, some twelve or fifteen years ago, a few other families followed. These were soon joined by some young men, adventurers from Nova Scotia. They intermarried among the English families ; but as soon as the first priest visited the place these women were received into the Church, their marriages blessed, and their children baptized.

The first visit of a missionary priest here was made in 1863, by the Very Revd. Alexis Bélanger. He had been pastor of St. George's Bay for some years previous ; but as there was scarcely any means of communication between the two places, the voyage being long and tedious, and his avocation laborious in his mission, it was only in 1868 that he could pay them another visit.

It was astonishing what work that missionary had to do while on the last visit especially, as the parish register which he left amply testifies. So many baptisms, so many marriages to bless, so many to be instructed who wished to become united to our holy Church—these combined with the poor accommodations, or rather the want of all accommodations a part of the time, so exhausted his strength and impaired his health that he only lived a few days after his return to his own residence.

After the death of this estimable missionary, the poor people were so horror stricken that they did not deem it proper for themselves to have any thing to do with interring his mortal remains, even seeing no possibility of getting a priest from any quarter, there being none within hundreds of miles away. In this dilemma they took the singular resolution of taking his remains to Quebec, his native diocese, a distance of 600 miles. For this a vessel was chartered and four of his parishioners volunteered to accompany the remains.

They have been entered under the stately Church of St. Roch below Quebec, his native parish.

On the news of the death of the Rvd. Père Bélanger having reached St. John's, the good Bishop Mollock undertook a journey to see if the Bishop of Arichat could give a missioner to replace him. Having failed there he proceeded to Quebec, but there met with no better success. No priest could be spared, and no Bishop was willing to send a priest to such an isolated place. Returning much discouraged, the good Bishop received, in Halifax, a petition from a number of the thus bereft Catholics of St. George's Bay, the great bulk of whom came from the diocese of Arichat, requesting Bishop Mullock to do that which he was just after doing, to request Bishop McKinnon of Arichat to send them a priest. The petition was couched in the most feeling language expressing the desolation of the whole region in being left without a priest. It so mollified the kind hearted Bishop McKinnon that he sent it on to the writer, who was then parish priest of Port Mulgrave, in the Strait of Canso, with an appeal to him to see if he would have courage and disinterestedness enough to go to that distant mission for nine months. It was late in the season, the end of October ; but as if Providence would have it so, a vessel was found to be preparing to go to this very shore for a cargo of fish. So that in five days after the first intimation of the project he was on board the vessel and off for the new scene of his future labors, not indeed for the locality that petitioned, but for a place some one hundred miles further off. Hither, as if Providence wished to encourage the project, the vessel arrived on the second day after leaving port, some 300 miles in the short space of forty hours, being nearly equal to steamboat speed.

What an impression the scenes around made on the mind of the newly arrived missionary, a country so rough and mountainous—this Humber being a valley between two great ranges of mountains towering to the clouds ! The first impression, which lasted for a few days, was something akin to what one would feel if confined in a dungeon. But the bustle and stir of the busy season, and above all the amount of labor to be done, for the salvation of souls purchased by the precious blood of Jesus, soon made him feel at home, and thank God it has been so since.

Although arriving in the Bay of Islands on the 2nd November, it was the 14th December before he could reach the place of his destination, the domicile of the late Père Bélanger at St. George's Bay. But it was no easy task to go over this voyage in the dreary month of December. On this route places were visited never trod by a missionary before— But I need not expatiate on the *labors and hardships*, besides the appalling dangers undertaken by the missionary year after year, as he was obliged either to come or go between the two more important stations of the Prefecture. He had certainly many a providential escape, but more especially when having left the Bay of Islands on the 25th November 1872 for St. George's on board of an American vessel ; during the night they encountered a heavy storm, and the vessel having been over-laden with a cargo of fish nearly level with the water, the waves passed and repassed over her, letting down a quantity of water into the cabin, where the poor missionary was alone from Monday night till Wednesday noon, when the storm abated a little, without a soul to reach him as much as a cup of water. The next day it was his pleasing duty to come on deck, and pilot them into Port au Port, the only harbor they could make to leave him at. Here

they waited a day and repaired as best they could their rudder-gear which had given way the first night of the storm. This had increased their danger manifold. Having left the missionary there, within 30 miles of his destination, they set off to sea, and must have perished that very night as it came on a most violent storm, and they were never heard from since !!! Thus it is that the missionary is exposed to dangers in this vast region which is traversed by neither road nor path, and to attend to the various settlements on the coast and up the deep Bays, one has to go in every sort of vessel he may find going from one Bay to another.

I have the honor, Gentlemen,

To remain

Your obedient servant in Christ,

THOMAS SEARS,

Pr. Apos.