

ANNALS
OF THE
Propagation of the Faith.
COMPILED FOR THE
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FLOWERS OF CATHOLIC FAITH.

Whilst narrating the struggles and conquests of the Faith in the distant East and the far West, these Annals will not outgo their object in exposing to the consideration of their readers one of the wonders of divine charity, which the catholic Faith is operating in our own midst. The religious Order of the Carmelites, with its sublime object and its heroic virtues, is one of the miracles of divine charity which the Catholic Church alone has hitherto been able to produce, one of the fruits of divine grace, by which the good tree may easily be discerned. Its implantation on the soil of Canada, and the gathering of its first flower, offer a subject of the greatest interest, and cannot fail to win the admiration of all generous souls.

On the 16th of April, 1875, five Carmelite Nuns, at the request of the venerable Bishop of Montreal, left the Carmel of Reims (France) on their way to Canada, where their presence had long been anxiously desired. They refused none of the sacrifices offered them; willingly they parted from their country, their families, their friends; for the love of God they abandoned the cherished abode of many happy years, to which they were attached by the sweetest affections. Above all, they desired to comply with the designs of God, to labor for his glory, and to share with the chosen souls whom He might lead to join them, the inestimable grace of their holy vocation. They desired moreover to bring down upon Canada itself the blessings of heaven by their prayers, their good works, their life of continual penance and mortification; for such is the sole object of their Order.

The life of the Carmelites is indeed austere : Saint Theresa willed it so, and every prescription of her Rule bears the stamp of mortification, of sacrifice and self-denial in a real apostolic sense. She desires her spiritual daughters to be Apostles, entirely devoted to the wants of their brethren, to lay them before God and solicit with fervor the graces necessary for one and all. Their mission, of course, is not public ; hidden, on the contrary, from all human eyes by the screen of close seclusion, and entirely separated from the world, they pass their lives in perpetual retreat and silence. They never even speak to each other, except during recreation, or when compelled by necessity. They do, nevertheless, exercise an Apostolate, but one of prayer and sacrifice. Such is the noble mission entrusted to them by the great Saint whom they love and venerate at their Mother, whose lessons are their rule of life, and whose virtues they strive, though imperfectly, to imitate. In the following passage St. Theresa traces out to her daughters their line of conduct, and initiates them to her spirit :

“ Hearing, she says, the damages and losses the
“ protestants were causing in France, I was extremely
“ afflicted ; and, as if I had any power, or was anything,
“ I wept before our Lord, beseeching Him to remedy so
“ great an evil. It seemed to me that I could have given
“ my life a thousand times for the salvation of even one
“ of those unhappy souls, who were being lost in such
“ great numbers. But seeing that I was only a woman,
“ without worth, nor means to render any service in
“ promoting the cause of our Saviour, I desired that,
“ since there were so many enemies, and so few friends,
“ these few at least should be good. I then resolved to
“ perform the little in my power, that is, to follow with
“ all possible perfection the evangelical counsels, and to
“ engage the Sisters who are here to do the same. It
“ seemed to me that, by devoting ourselves to continual
“ prayers and supplications for those who fight the

« battles of the Church, we would thereby perform our
« little utmost to help our good Lord, who receives so
« much injury from those to whom He does so much
« good. Oh! my dear Sisters in J. C., help me to pray
« our divine Saviour for those souls; for that purpose
« did his Majesty assemble us here; that is your voca-
« tion, your sole business here; that should be the
« object of your most ardent desires, of your tears, of
« your prayers, etc.»

It is not, therefore, for themselves that the Carmelites embrace the austerities of their Rule: they offer themselves to God as victims of expiation for the conversion and salvation of sinners, for the Holy Church and for her Ministers, for all the wants of their brethren. With the Eucharistic Victim, they offer themselves as mediators between heaven and earth, beseeching God to calm his anger and withhold his arm, ready to smite the guilty.

Abstinence from flesh meat is perpetual in the Carmel: meat is never used, except in case of sickness, and even then only when all other means of restoration have been exhausted. Vegetables, milk, eggs and fish appear in turn on the frugal table, whence all delicacies are banished, and nothing is allowed but simple and substantial food, prepared with care and neatness.

During Lent, every friday throughout the year, and on several other days appointed by the Rule, the aliments are seasoned with oil or merely boiled with salt, butter, eggs and milk being then forbidden. Besides abstinence, fasting is also frequent and prolonged; the Lent of the Order begins on the 14 of September and lasts without interruption till Easter, sundays excepted; the first meal is taken at eleven or half-past eleven, according to the season; the second, fixed at 6 in the evening, is not properly a meal, but a mere collation, calculated rather to excite than to satisfy the appetite. During the

remainder of the year the same abstinence is observed, but fasting is kept only on fridays and certain other days assigned by the rule, which however are very frequent. Many other forms of penance are of familiar and almost daily practice with the Nuns, who nevertheless, as a rule, enjoy good health, and sustain sometimes for 40 and 50 years the strict observance of those fasts and abstinences. They practice them as easily in Canada as in France, notwithstanding the severity of the climate.

The young canadian postulants admitted amongst them become very easily accustomed to this severe rule ; they are even astonished to enjoy such good health in the Carmel, and become daily more attached to the practice of its austere virtues. The dear children know that a great mission is offered them : to pray, to suffer and to immolate themselves for their brethren ; they would willingly acquit before God the immense debt which so many poor souls have contracted towards His justice, and atone, by the practice of the most heroic virtues, for the enormous sins, almost infinite in number, which are every day committed against His adorable Majesty. To atone for the luxury and effeminacy of the world, they love to become poor, to be wanting in everything : poor in their raiment, poor in their living, poor, oh ! yes, very poor in their furniture. A narrow cell, and within a chair, the poorest that could be found, the chair of the peasant's hut,..... three paper images without frames, a wooden cross without paint, a holy-water cup, a few books, a little lamp very sparing of its feeble light, constitute the whole detail of ornaments. To complete the furniture add a small bedstead made of three boards, upon which is laid a hard mattress, with a coarse woollen blanket and pillow. Upon this

hard bed the Carmelite, after her long and toilsome day, lies down at night to rest her weary limbs ; on this humble couch her eyes are closed by the peaceful sleep of a pure soul during the few hours allowed by the Rule : calm and tranquil as the child reposing on its mother's bosom, she also reposes on the Heart of her Jesus ; and when the morning signal calls her again to life, her first thought is for God, her first act is to renew the offering of herself to her divine Spouse, that she may serve and glorify and love Him more tenderly than on the eve.

To offer herself with Jesus crucified, as a living and ever-dying victim for the salvation of souls, to suffer, suffer always, for those whose sole thought is pleasure, and who never think of a heaven to gain or a hell to avoid, is the life of the Carmelite, her occupation, her only happiness on earth. She would, at the price of any sacrifice, draw down upon earth the graces, the blessings and favors of heaven ; she would, if it were possible, win to God the hearts of all men, and fill them with his love, and urge them on, amidst the perils and obstacles of the way, to the abode of eternal rest. This is the only limit of her zeal, the sole object of her desires ; and until her heart's last pulse, it shall be the incessant object of her aspirations ; even her last sigh will be an expression of her love of suffering in union with Jesus, and the consummation of the holocaust, a thousand times offered, and at last completed by the hand of death, to receive its reward in heaven.

Such is, in a few words, the beautiful life of the daughters of saint Theresa ; life entirely celestial, which she was the first to lead, and whereby she attained to that high perfection which has made her one of the most illustrious saints of the Church, and perhaps

the most perfect model of the apostolate of prayer and sacrifice.

Such is the life which the Carmelites of France have come to inaugurate in Canada. They are come destitute of all earthly wealth, but abounding in desires and zealous to procure, by all means in their power, the treasures of all spiritual graces to dear Canada, now their adopted country.

To realise, however, the desired object of their mission, they have to depend on the generosity of the public for all that is strictly necessary for their living, as they have no other means of subsistence. They are willing to live on earth the life of voluntary victims of expiation; but only in heaven can they hope to live as the angels, freed from the wants of human nature.

Those, therefore, who shall be pleased to assist them in the accomplishment of their noble mission shall, of course, participate more abundantly in the merits of their prayers, their sufferings and their sacrifices, and acquire a higher claim to the intercession and protection of their illustrious mother Saint Theresa, and of St. Joseph, the glorious Protector of their Order.

Let us now listen to a voice from within the cloister relating the trials, hopes and fears of the newly founded community, and the peaceful departure of the first Flower gathered by the hand of the divine Master from the Carmel of Canada.

LETTER OF THE MOTHER SUPERIORESS OF THE CARMEL OF
MONTREAL, TO THE SUPERIORESS OF THE CARMELITE
MONASTERY OF REIMS (FRANCE.)

Very Reverend and Honored Mother,

Peace and most humble greeting in our Lord Jesus-Christ, who has just now sorely afflicted our hearts, by

adding another and most painful trial to those which His paternal hand had already imparted to our little community, so recently founded, and yet already so severely tried.

The divine Master has called to himself our dear and beloved sister Hermine Emilia Mary Angela of the Eucharist, Professed nun of the Carmel of Reims (France), at the age of 32 years 2 months and a few days, and after 12 years, 7 months and a few days of profession. Our limited number, the wants of a foundation yet at its beginning, and the precious gifts of our dear child, all contribute to render her loss extremely painful to us. But God willed it so !... and whatsoever he wills and does is always for the greater good of his children. This thought consoles us, and leaves our soul in the peace of holy resignation.

Our dear sister Mary Angela was born in the diocese of Soissons (France). She lost her good mother at the age of eight years, and was entrusted to the care of a pious lady, who showed her a tender and really maternal affection, endeavoring especially to form her young heart to true piety and solid virtue. It was indeed a great happiness for this poor child to have received so judicious a training, and God himself undoubtedly led her to the person destined to direct her in the ways of her future holy vocation.

Being extremely gay, lively and witty, and possessing fair and agreeable features, she might have suffered from the dangerous influence of the world, had not her kind mistress watched over her with the most tender solicitude, and guarded her innocence against all worldly dangers. The young pupil, in return, loved and revered her mistress, whose eminent virtues she ever afterwards remembered, and their remembrance often gave her courage in the hour of trial.

Notwithstanding her playfulness, her apparent levity, and the many innocent little tricks she loved to play on her companions, Hermine was nevertheless really pensive : at the age of 12 years she consecrated herself to the Blessed Virgin, whom she always loved as a child loves the most tender of mothers. It was, no doubt, her fidelity to correspond with this first grace, and the first aspiration of her young heart towards Mary, that won her the protection of the Mother whom no one ever invoked in vain, and who gave her strength to overcome the seductions of the world.

Meanwhile began to appear in her soul the first indications of her vocation to a religious life ; during a retreat which she followed with fervor, she took her irrevocable resolution. She would be a nun, she would be a Carmelite... Her preference of a life separated from the world, of a life of penance and prayer, determined her choice ; in the Carmel she would find what her heart desired. An obstacle, however, deterred her a moment : she had a liking for foreign missions ; she would be happy to grant them her strength and her life... whilst in the Carmel there are no missionaries ; the daughters of St. Theresa do not go forth and far away to instruct and evangelize the little Indians, to nurse, exhort and assist the sick, the dying savage tribes... Must she therefore join the daughters of St. Vincent of Paul ? No ! her choice is made, her vocation is positive ; all her affections are for the Carmel. She will be a Carmelite...and if she cannot go to the world's end to exercise her apostolate, she knows that the Carmel is also an order of apostles, an order of missionaries, if not by preaching, at least by prayer and sacrifice. She little thought then, the dear child, that she would one day be called to a distant mission, that she would cross the

seas and come to Canada, here to give her life for the souls of her adopted country.

Admitted into the Carmel of Reims, she appeared at first extremely timid. But as she grew up she proved to be very intelligent, industrious, endowed with a sound judgement, and fulfilled diligently the different offices entrusted to her, in particular that of assistant portress; her good Mother Prioress held her in high esteem, and showed her the greatest confidence. Possessing a lively faith, a tender and affectionate piety, and having a special devotion towards the blessed Eucharist, of which she was happy to bear the holy name, she met with few of the trials of spiritual life. She applied herself easily to prayer and meditation, and never lost the holy presence of God amidst her daily occupations. Often, very often she used to converse with her good Mother in heaven, with her Angel Guardian whom she also tenderly loved. Her health, although rather delicate, allowed her nevertheless to observe with punctuality the Rule of the Carmel, and in time of sickness she bore her sufferings courageously.

During her postulate she accidentally burned her foot in a terrible way. She said nothing about it, and continued all day long to follow the exercises of the community, Matins, etc. The next day she was unable to bear her foot upon the ground, and being reproached for not demanding the treatment her state required, she said she had omitted to do so through fear of causing any trouble to the sister who had been the involuntary cause of the accident. The consequences were so serious, that she was confined to the infirmary for six weeks at least before she recovered.

Thus passed away the first years of our dear sister's

religious life. Calm and peaceful, assiduous to her duty and to the work of her own sanctification, she loved prayer and enjoyed the grace and happiness of her dear vocation.

Meantime a great event was being prepared ; God had decreed the extension of the Carmel to Canada, and He was already disposing all things for the accomplishment of his designs. The young canadian lady who was His first instrument in the work was already soliciting our assent, and invited us pressingly to come and establish the Carmel in Canada, where she desired to be its first living stone. On our repeated refusal, she set out herself for France and came to knock at the door of our Monastery of Reims, accomplishing her immense sacrifice with all the courage and energy of a heroine : her career was not a long one, but it was complete, and truly may we apply to her the words of Scripture : that in a short space she fulfilled a long career. The Lord **no** doubt found her ripe for heaven, and hastened to cull this little flower yet hardly in bloom, and already diffusing the sweet perfume of advanced sanctity.

After the death of Sister Theresa of Jesus, the negotiations for a foundation in Canada were reopened more seriously than ever. They recalled to Sister Mary Angela all her former ideas about foreign missions. Any allusion to Canada made her radiant with joy, and whenever a letter announced that the matter was progressing, her eyes brightened like two stars... the mere sight of a letter, before she knew its contents, filled her with joy and fervor. The affair progressed slowly, very slowly ; the Carmel hesitated to consent, difficulties arose, and for a long time the project remained very uncertain. Meanwhile the little missionary prayed, prayed again, prayed incessantly, whilst, we suppose, the little Flower of the Carmel also prayed in heaven.

From that time forward, the heart of Sister Mary Angela was in Canada : she took the greatest interest before God in the young canadian children whom His divine goodness would lead to us, and one day she said to one of her companions : « My dear Sister, let us pray « a great deal for the young canadians who are waiting « for us beyond ; the dear children, oh ! how we love « them, how we long to see and know them ! »

Finally all obstacles were removed ; the foundation was accepted, the voyage was decided, and a few months afterwards the departure took place. Our dear Sister felt very keenly, as we all did, the pain of separation. To abandon the sweet home of her religious life, to separate from a cherished Mother and from beloved Sisters never more to see them on earth, was indeed an ordeal for her heart, it was a heavy sacrifice for us all... But it was God's will !... Before leaving she said to her companion : « Let us not impair our sacrifice ; let us perform it with all possible purity of intention for the greater glory of our divine Lord. »

The voyage on sea was pretty rough ; several of us suffered considerably from sea-sickness ; sister Mary Angela escaped with the least injury. She delighted in attending the sick, together with the nurse, who was also able, to some extent, to attend to her duty. After a voyage of three long weeks, including 15 days on sea, we arrived at last in sight of Quebec, which appeared to us like a land of promise after 40 years in the desert... It was Ascension day, the 6 of May 1875. We paid a short visit to the good Ursuline Mothers, who received us with real sisterly kindness, and offered us the most gracious hospitality. Too soon did we have to separate ; but hearts remain united in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We set out at last for Montreal, and our arrival was greeted by a terrible storm : the thunder pealed frightfully, the sky blazed, the rain poured down in torrents, the elements seemed to conspire against us. We arrived safely at the Hotel-Dieu about half past six in the evening. The good Mothers of this Institution had previously solicited the favor, as they called it, of keeping us until we could be installed. They received us with the greatest kindness, and conducted us to the sanctuary to thank God and the Blessed Virgin. After partaking of a slight lunch, we withdrew to the rooms prepared for us and tried to repair the excessive fatigues of the day. We remained a month in that holy House ; we felt ourselves quite at home, and shall never forget the edifying examples and the religious spirit we found in that fervent community, nor the affectionate kindness of the good Mothers towards us. Our relations have ever since been most friendly, as we fondly trust they shall continue to be in the future. Meantime a little temporary lodging was being prepared for us ; very poor and very narrow, it was the Bethlehem of our Carmel in Canada. We were conducted thither in procession with the blessed Sacrament, which was to be deposited in our little, very little chapel.

When all had retired, and the door was closed upon us, how happy we felt to be again within the cloister ! We were there, alone with Jesus, Jesus near us, Jesus for us, for us alone, his six poor little spouses... that moment was one of ineffable happiness.

Our good Sister Mary Angela went to work immediately with all her heart. She was so happy !... As in all newly founded communities, she had to exert herself in the different offices entrusted to her. She was depositary, she attended the wicket, and as we had yet

no lay Sister, she also took charge of the kitchen. To attend the wicket especially was a difficult task, and offered her an abundant source of merit. Being strangers in the place, at a distance of nearly three miles from the town, knowing neither the people nor the usages of the country, we were exposed to many mistakes and embarrassments. But divine Providence came to our assistance through a few persons, who kindly interested themselves in our behalf. Our dear Sister suffered considerably all summer ; she no doubt felt the change of climate ; she was very often troubled with vomiting and other indispositions.

Applications for admittance soon came in numerous, very numerous. To enable us to receive them it was necessary to add a wing to the lodging we then occupied, until it were possible to erect a regular Monastery. Seven out of the many young ladies who presented themselves were chosen and admitted towards the beginning of november. The poor things had no idea of our kind of life ; everything appeared very new, very strange to them. Out of the seven first postulants, only one is now a Professed nun, with a few others who came afterwards. We were, alas ! only at the beginning of our trials ; a phase of pain and anguish was about to open before us, and heart-rending circumstances, which we are compelled to pass over in silence, brought our foundation to the verge of destruction. The facts are so extraordinary, that they would appear incredible if we could relate them. All we can say, is that we saw them pass with unspeakable anxiety for ourselves, and with the most heartfelt gratitude towards God for the providential assistance of His divine goodness, which wrought real miracles in our favor. Yes, dear Reverend Mother, God did miracles for us, and without a miracle we should have inevitably went to

the bottom. I said so one day to our Sisters in a moment of terrible distress : “ My dear children, there is no hope....without a miracle, the foundation must fall...” God did that miracle when all seemed lost !

Under all those trying circumstances our beloved Sister preserved her inalterable confidence in God, and often, when we exposed to her our fears and anxieties for the future, we admired the energy of her faith, which made her hope even against hope ; hers was more than hope, it was almost certitude.

As I have already stated, Reverend Mother, a Monastery adapted to our wants and usages was to be erected for us. The work was even commenced. But circumstances of a very grave nature came to interrupt the enterprise ; the work had to be suspended, with the hope however of being continued afterwards. But it was not : we had to yield to the exigency of the situation, and abandon a fond and long cherished project, now become impossible ; we had to give up a magnificent building lot, given for our establishment ; we had to sacrifice considerable sums of money now spent to no purpose, and think of fixing our tent somewhere else... but where ? or how ?... no one knew, it was the secret of God.

There we were, alone, abandoned, without any human support, nor ressource, nor advice, and what advice could be given under such circumstances ? We prayed, and at the same time we attempted an appeal for assistance ; but every door was closed..... the terrible financial crisis which has weighed upon Canada since a few years rendered our situation even more difficult, more despairing, if a christian, if a religious soul especially, could ever despair ! We saw ourselves on the point of being compelled to return to their families our dear little novices, and God knows how painful

the thought of separation was to them and to us !... And ourselves, what were we to do ? Would we return to France again, or would we appeal to public charity for a shelter ? we knew not.

We were reduced to this extremity, dear Mother, when, in the far distance, we perceived the star of relief. A pious lady, who took a kind interest in our behalf, had told us some time previously, that she had a little piece of ground which she would willingly place at our disposal, but that it was so small, she hardly dared to mention it. I paid no attention to the offer then ; we had at that time other views, which failed ; but now we remembered the little piece of ground in question, and we requested the lady, yet almost unknown to us, to grant us the favor of an interview. From the outset I discovered in her a heart of gold... full of interest, sympathy and devotedness. She was the consoling angel whom Providence had sent to our assistance ; she was the instrument of divine mercy towards our poor little Carmel..... The ground was examined, measured again and again on every side, to see if there were not a few feet more ! Finally, a second angel from God came to the assistance of the first... the lady's brother, a pious and learned Ecclesiastic, offered us out of his own garden a strip of ground whereon to build our church and sacristy : their generous hand rescued us from the wreck, we were saved ! Besides giving the ground, this excellent lady has also assumed the cost of building our church, thus doubling our debt of gratitude towards her. Let us here, Reverend Mother, appeal to the charity of all our dear Carmels, to assist us in paying our debt towards this respectable family, for we feel unable to do it alone. We ask of each of our beloved Sisters a decade of the beads, and an intention

at communion for our dear benefactors, and for their pious mother, who is very aged, and also very good to us. She has been suffering several years from complete blindness, which she endures nevertheless with all the patience of a fervent christian. Do also, Reverend Mother, remember us in your prayers before God, that He may complete His work, and send us the means to meet the heavy debts we have yet to pay for the building of our Monastery. Several persons have already come to our assistance, and become thereby participants in the prayers and good works of the Carmel. Towards them also we have a debt of profound gratitude which we likewise recommend to your charity. We here ask them to accept our heart-felt thanks for the good they have done us, and to be assured that our dear departed Sister will remember them before God, as I myself recommended her to do a few moments before she expired.

But, my dear Mother, notwithstanding their benevolence, the pious Canadians cannot, on account of the financial crisis they are traversing, do as much as they would desire; do therefore beseech St. Joseph, our tender Father, to be in the future, as in the past, our heavenly Purveyor, and to complete, for his own glory, what he has so successfully begun.

And now we are within, our dear Carmel, every stone of which is a monument of God's goodness, and expresses, by its mere presence, a magnificent and perpetual *Deo gratias!* From here our dear child was the first to take her flight towards heaven, sanctified by the graces of her God, purified by her sufferings, by her love, by the grace of the Sacraments and of the Jubilee; may she have known no interval between her last act of love on earth and the first her heart produced in heaven!

We have entertained you at length, too long perhaps, dear Mother, on the trials and pains, the joys and consolations of our four first years in Canada. The paths through which divine Providence has led us were also those of Sister Mary Angela ; they form part of her life, in them she sanctified herself. Moreover, Reverend Mother, we thought those details might interest you ; we know that many of our dear Monasteries love Canada, and desire to learn all about the foundation of our Carmel ; and when I say many of our Monasteries, why should I not say *all*? You will therefore pardon us, dear Mother, for having entertained you so long. But let us return to our dear sick Sister.

For some time past a persistant cough, frequent oppressions, progressive weakness and all the symptoms of consumption had caused us great anxiety for our dear Sister's health. Our efforts to arrest the progress of her illness were in vain ; our prayers and supplications failed to obtain a recovery so ardently desired. The dear child willingly united her prayers with ours ; she would have been happy to recover, that she might continue many long years to work and devote herself for our dear foundation, which she so tenderly loved! The Lord ordained otherwise : she will no doubt continue in heaven her dear work, and be our Intercessor for the consolidation and development of our great enterprise. She endured her sickness with great courage, following the exercises till the last, even assisting at Matins, though she were hardly able to stand. Habitually gay and amiable, she was so lively during recreation, that no one would suppose she was habitually suffering. Little by little we had to refuse her one exercise, then another : " Mother, she used to say mournfully, you are leaving me nothing!" She attended regularly at Vespers up to about the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel ; she

assisted at Mass the day before her death, and that very morning *during her agony*, she asked permission to go to Mass ; she died at half past nine o'clock the same morning. Our dear Sister was able to continue her communions up to the last, notwithstanding the ardent thirst she had to endure ; she never kept her bed a whole day ; only after receiving Extreme-Uncion did she rest a few hours, saying : " I feel so well in my little bed where I received so many graces, that I cannot decide to leave it." Since about two months she had grown very thin, her illness was making visible progress. The week before her death, we exposed our fears to the physician of the House, who was also alarmed and advised us to have her anointed without delay. She came herself to the parlor, despite our entreaties, believing she was not sick enough to let the doctor come in : what a beautiful example of her love for the rule even unto death ! We believed for a moment that Saint Ana would perhaps restore our dear child to us ; but this hope was of short duration. On monday, the 4 of august, she received the last sacraments with that piety, faith and fervor which had distinguished her whole life. At seven in the morning, she had dressed herself to come to Mass ; she intended to go to bed again for the ceremony. She knew not how to express her happiness : her face was radiant, and the sweet joy that brightened her features seemed to reflect in her pure soul the presence of God and the peace of heaven. We could not realise that our beloved Sister was to leave us so soon, she seemed so full of life ; from time to time we observed a few alarming symptoms, but she soon recovered.

On wednesday, the 6th, she again came fasting to the choir (which is up stairs) to receive holy communion, and after Mass she remained all through the cere-

mony of profession of our fifth little canadian novice. On friday, the 8, without any other symptom of approaching death, she began to have the death-rattle about four o'clock in the morning. She assured us that she was not suffering, that she felt better than the day before; the dear child preserved all her presence of mind, she observed everything, remembered everything. We took advantage of her admirable presence of mind to have her receive once more the holy Viaticum: this fulfilled her desires.

Our Reverend Chaplain, who is so good, so devoted, willingly brought her the blessed Sacrament about 6 o'clock. Our dear child's happiness was now complete, and so was ours, I assure you, Dear Mother, despite our sorrow..... Jesus had come himself to receive the soul of his little spouse.—She was going to expire whilst He yet reposed in her heart! Did He not purify her soul in His blood from whatever stains yet remained to be expiated? did she not appear before the awful tribunal covered with the merits of her Jesus?..... we love to hope that He received her into heaven, that there we shall find her... in the bosom of God do we love to seek her. She was so well prepared! a few moments before receiving the holy Viaticum she said with an expression we shall never forget: "Oh dear Mother, let Jesus come and take possession of my heart to do *all*... whatsoever he pleases!" She was altogether absorbed in her God. "Mother, (she said to me) it seems as if I had wings to take my flight: but when it pleases God, oh! yes, just as He pleases!" We had offered her a little drink, she asked for more, but instantly added: -- Oh! no, Mother, if you please, I will ask nothing, I desire to have no will of my own." Again we offered her two tea spoonfuls of water; taking the second one she said: "I take both to honor the two natures o

Our Saviour." She renewed her sacred vows with an expressiveness that moved us all, repeating thrice in an ineffable tone : " And so until death ! and so... until death ! and so until... death ! " she then added : " in the name of thy most holy, most amiable, most adorable Trinity did I repeat thrice ; and so until... death ! " She followed attentively, and finished alone the aspirations we suggested to her, and joined in the prayers for the dying. She perceived one of our postulants near her bed, and said to her with effusion : " Oh ! my dear Sister Ann-Mary, how sweet it is to die in the Carmel ! " She retained her gaiety even in the embrace of death, reprimanding herself for her sleepiness which she could not overcome : « It is a shame, (she used to say) to be sleeping this way, lazy thing that I am ; I should receive « the whip to keep me awake. » Poor child, she was going to rest for ever ! She offered the sacrifice of her life for the holy Church and for its Head, for our dear France, for Canada, her adoptive country ; she promised us she would not forget in heaven our holy Order, and in particular our beloved Carmel of Reims ; she will also remember all our dear and generous Benefactors. We should like, dear Mother, to relate to you all the edifying words we gathered from the lips of our dying Sister, if it were not too long ; but we could never tell you the expressiveness with which her lips or rather her heart pronounced them. She gradually lost the use of speech, but not her presence of mind ; she pressed our hand repeatedly. She had been some time in this state when suddenly, without even opening her eyes, she said very distinctly : « My God... my God... I « give Thee my heart... My God... I give Thee my whole « heart, » she added, laying stress on each word ; she then said with a tone of earnestness : " What shall I give to Jesus ? " It was a sublime moment... Five mi-

minutes after, she added: "I am then going to die!" These were her last words; she soon ceased to breathe and remitted her pure soul into the hands of her divine Spouse, without the least effort, calm and peaceful as the infant going to sleep on its mother's bosom. It was Friday the 8th, about half past nine in the morning; we were all present. She seemed to smile in death, and we loved to pray beside her.

We have the sweet and melancholy consolation of retaining in the vault of our new Monastery the mortal remains of our dear departed Sisters; it seems thereby as if they remained with us; often indeed shall we go to pray beside this dear tomb... The obsequies were performed by His Lordship Bishop Taché, of St. Boniface, in presence of several members of the clergy.

We confidently believe that our dear daughter is already in possession of her God; nevertheless, the judgements of the Lord are severe, and He requires great perfection in the souls He has chosen to be His Spouses. We request you therefore, dear Mother, to have the prayers of the Order offered as soon as possible for our dear Sister. Please have your holy Community offer a communion, a day's good works, the indulgence of the 6 *Pater*, of the *Via Crucis*, with invocations to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, to St. Joseph, to our Saintly Mother, and to the holy Angels, for whom she had a special devotion.

At the foot of the Cross we beg you to accept our respects and believe us most affectionately,

Very Reverend and honored Mother,

Your humble sister and servant in our Lord,

SISTER MARY SERAPHINE

of the divine Heart of Jesus.

From our Monastery of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart... Montreal (Canada) August 11 1879.

THE EXILES OF SIBERIA.

A GLIMPSE OF HOW THE CATHOLIC POLES AND POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE TREATED BY RUSSIA. WHY NIHILISM IS SO WIDE SPREAD,—BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

BERLIN, Aug. 7, (1879.)—If a person of sane mind were to inform you of his or her intention to spend a vacation in Siberia you would undoubtedly smile audibly, and opine that the party making so audacious an assertion would be a fit subject for the lunatic asylum. Still, I am bound to confess that I have just returned from a trip to that Arctic region, where I made quite a stay, in company with my friend Robert Lemke, the eminent political economist, and a student of political philosophy than whom there is none more thorough and more searching. We have been through the land of the Nihilists, and however earnest we might have been in our desire to discover important information, all our efforts would have been in vain, had not an influential American at St. Petersburg, whose name I have promised not to mention, given us such letters of introduction that all portals were opened wide to us and we saw and heard what only a privileged few have seen and heard for a good many years. It is easily understood that the Russian Government, under the trying circumstances of the present day, is not very liberal in granting extended privileges to newspaper men; and, had I travelled in that capacity, I might have been denied access to the sources from which I have drawn the information about a good many things in Russia. The large cities, however, are not the places for the accumulation of knowledge such as we desired to get; and, after idling a few days at Moscow, St. Petersburg, and its villegatures, we started for the Siberian mines.

Until we came to Tobolsk there was still some civilization about and around us. But after that we received a foretaste of the horrors we were about to witness. For days we dragged along in a miserable carriage without meeting anything or anybody except the lonely Government posts, with their stupid « Starost » and his subordinate Cossacks. At last we saw in the distance a towering mountain, and within its cleft side a colossal opening, similar to the pit of a volcano. From within foul air and disagreeable smells saluted our nostrils, and for some time we had to draw our breath hard. With our pocket handkerchiefs crammed into our mouths we entered the gigantic mouth of the rock. From the walls dirty water dripped down in large drops, forming a little rivulet, which gathered in a pool outside the entrance. Toward the east and the north the territory rose as high as 4,000 feet above the sea. A chain, several miles in length, of snow-capped glaciers gave to the mine the character of an unapproachable fortress. To the left of the entrance an enormous guard-house was built, occupied by a number of Cossacks. The establishment was about as filthy as any habitation for human beings can well be. The furniture consisted only of a few rough benches and a large table. In front of its door a double file of muskets were stacked, between which a bearded Cossack marched up and down. We showed our letters to the young officer of the day, who regarded us wonderingly—searchingly. He seemed at a loss to understand the granting of a privilege so seldom sought and so rarely granted. A guide was given us, and we passed a long, narrow and dark corridor, which, to judge from the inclination of the floor, led into the depth. The ground was so slippery and so wet that we were in danger of falling more than once.

Pestilential miasms filled the air ; and, in spite of a

good fur cloak—the gift of a friend in Moscow—I actually shook with cold. The darkness was so intense that neither of us could see the other.

We had gone on perhaps ten minutes when I perceived, far in the distance, the trembling, uncertain glimmer of a light; and I felt sure that we were approaching the mine proper. The ground became softer and more slimy, the cold more penetrating. At every step we sank into the morass for several inches, and there was a smell of putrefaction, as in a charnel-house.

« We are in front of the mine, » said our guide, pointing to a high iron railing which surrounded a long cave—its massive rails, through the crevice of which hardly a rat might have squeezed itself, being covered with rust. The locks were fastened with chains of immense thickness and weight. A guard made his appearance, and upon the word of our guide he opened the lock, but only with a great deal of strength was he enabled so far to turn the railing upon its hinges that we could pass through into the interior. We stepped into a room which, although it was large enough otherwise, hardly permitted a full-grown man to stand upright, and was lighted only by a poor oil-lamp, which left all surrounding things in darkness.

« Where arewe ? » I asked the guide. « In the dormitory of the prisoners, » he answered. « Formerly this was a well yielding lode ; now we have made it into a sleeping room. » We shuddered. This subterranean cave, into which neither sun nor moon could ever send a ray of light, was called an apartment ; and in this terrible grave, the air of which was pregnant with fearful miasms, the unfortunates banished here by the unpitiable law of despotism

were compelled to rest after the day's work,* upon a poor bed of straw ! Into the dripping walls of the rock, alcove-like cells had been hollowed out ; and the entire room gave the impression of an enormous bee-hive. Every cell harbors five prisoners during the night ; and above each of the single cots a strong iron bar was fastened, to which the unhappy mortals were locked and chained like so many dogs. No door—no window—no chair—no table—no shelving ; everywhere the naked rock and rusty iron ! The straw which served as a bed for the delinquents was wet and half rotten ; it looked and felt like a mass of dung. A little bag filled with straw served as a pillow ; a wet sheet, made of bag linen, as a coverlet. No bench—no utensils of any kind. In one corner a lamp faintly glimmered in honor of the Madonna, whose image was fastened above it in an old gilt frame.

An insupportable dread overcame me in gazing upon this picture of terrible desolation and misery, and I drew a long breath of relief when we passed out of the « dormitory » and into another corridor, dark as the first one, but less slippery. Everything was as quiet as a graveyard until we reached an enormous cave, in the centre of which stood a round table and three benches. Several torches, fastened to iron rings in the wall, served to lighten the hall, in the ceiling of which I saw a window, almost covered with iron bars, through which a faint ray of day light endeavored to penetrate, and this mingled with the torchlight produced an effect at once dismal and gloomy beyond description. This was the mine proper, and here an infernal noise was heard, caused by the pickaxes and hammers with which the exiles were working the iron ore. Before us we saw several hundred ragged creatures, with terrible rough long beards, faces pale as death, or of a sickly yellow,

with red-rimmed eyes, dragging heavy chains, rattling them at every motion—the prisoners ! Not one looked healthy, and not one spoke, or sang, or whistled ; they all worked in silence, looking askance at us, and rattling again their chains, which have been put upon them in the name of justice ! Many of them were bare-foot ; a few wore the remnants of shoes upon their feet. The rags which covered them were completely saturated with the dripping water, so that they could not give to the shivering bodies one atom of warmth. Upon their beards I saw long icicles, and I sometimes watched one or the other blow into his chilled hands or shake convulsively in the icy-cold air. I shall never forget the dreadful scene ; and, in contemplating it, I would imagine for a moment that mountain spirits were busy here at their hidden work ; but the clanking of the chains, the groaning of the prisoners, and the rough cries of the taskmasters soon recalled the dreadful reality. The hammering and digging never ceased. If an exile attempted to rest a little, the sharp command of the overseer soon put him to work again ; and there was a feverish, unceasing activity. One of the prisoners—a slight fine figure, with a face the profile of which showed extraordinary beauty—excited our particular attention. With visible exertion he swung his pickaxe, and his breath came wheezing from his chest ; but he could not loosen the stone, and sometimes his arm fell despairingly to his side.

We approached him. « Why are you here ? » I asked ; He looked up shyly, almost frightened, and continued his work.

« The prisoners are forbidden to speak about the cause of their exile, » the Inspector informed me.

« Who is the prisoner ? » I asked our guide.

« No 114, » he answered, laconically

« So I see, » I replied ; « but I mean his name, his family, his crime. »

« It is Count de Parentoff, » he replied, « a well-know conspirator. I am sorry not to be able to tell you more about No. 114. »

The foul air almost suffocated me. I beckoned to the guide and my friend. He and I hastily traversed again the narrow corridors, and ascended to the world again, where the Chief Commander saluted us.

« Well, » he asked, « what impression has our institution made upon you ? »

We bowed in silence.

He seemed delighted, and remarked ironically : « Our boys below work diligently, do they not ? »

« Indeed they do, » answered my friend ; « but with what feeling of relief the unhappy ones must greet their Sunday, when they can take a rest. »

« Rest ! » he said, wonderingly ; « they have none ; they must work always ! »

« Always ! »

« Most certainly ! They are condemned to work everlastingly. He who once enters the mine never leaves it again. »

« But this is barbaric, » I could not refrain from saying.

He shrugged his shoulders. « The exiles » he replied, « work twelve hours daily, and on Sundays too. They are never permitted to rest, Oh ! but yes—twice during the year—at Easter and on the birthday of our glorious Emperor ! »

And he removed his hat, as though he had spoken the name of the Lord.

We bowed again, and hastened to get back to Tobolsk. My friend and I were both very silent until we got out of Russia. But hereafter we shall not be so very much shocked and surprised when we read of the terrible spread of that political fanaticism which is called Nihilism in the great Empire of the European East.

IRISH NUNS IN THE EAST.

In the Autumn of the year 1873, a small community of nuns, of the Order of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, most of whom were Irish ladies, were at the request of Monsignor Ignatius Poali, Bishop of Nicopolis and Bucharest, sent from the mother house at Bolton, England, to found a Convent in Roushouk, the capital of Danubian Bulgaria. In spite of the great difficulties which always attend the commencement of undertakings of this nature, they succeeded in the short space of three or four years, in attracting to their school not only all the Catholic people of the town, who, up to that time, had frequented various non catholic institutions, but also a considerable number of the children of non Catholic parents, who entrust them by preference to the care of these good Sisters. Moreover, the good example of their lives, their edifying conversation, and the zeal with which, in their leisure hours, they devoted themselves to the care of the sick, and other works of mercy, were the cause of the return of many to the One True Church. Everything gave hopes of a most consoling future. A small Convent, with schools adjoining, had been erected

near the Church, and the Bishop had already purchased an adjacent piece of land, in order to enlarge the establishment, when the war broke out, and compelled the poor Religious to flee from the scene of their labors, scarcely leaving them time to bring with them the most essential requisites.

Having taken refuge in Bucharest, and waited there some months in the vain hope of the possibility of returning to Roushouk, they were at last transferred by the Bishop to Crajova, the capital of Little Wallachia. Here the field of their labors being more extensive, they soon formed a new centre of Catholic education, their schools being now frequented by more than one hundred poor children. In order to commence this new foundation, the Bishop was obliged to rent and newly furnish a house, and provide for the maintenance of the Religious, who, in their former residence, had ceased to be dependent on him for their support. There also Divine Providence has already given remarkable indications of its favor. Besides the novices and the postulants whom the Sisters brought with them from Roushouk, they have lately received six other young ladies, some of whom possess already the necessary qualifications for the work of education, the number of the community being thus raised to thirteen, so that there is every reason to believe that Crajova has been destined by God to become a centre of the Order in these countries, and that the Sisters of the Passion, being once firmly established there, will be able not only to re-open their convent at Roushouk, but also to extend to other towns the beneficial working of their holy institute. For this reason the Bishop has resolved to erect a modest convent on the site belonging to the mission, and in the immediate vicinity of the Catholic church at Crajova ; but

as the means at his disposal are not even sufficient to defray the expenses of the rent and maintenance of the present house, he has commissioned the Rev. Jerome Smith, Passionist, to visit England and Ireland.

