

## **The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

BY

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In September, 1847, there came from Loretto Abbey, Rathfarnham, Ireland, to the city of Toronto, Canada West, five young missionary nuns. His Lordship, Right Reverend Michael Power, had visited Rathfarnham while in Ireland in the early part of this year and Reverend Mother Teresa Ball had promised to send sisters. Letters between the Bishop and Mother Ball in June and July show that arrangements had been completed, Mother Ball writing on July 20 naming the five religious and giving the date of their departure. They would sail from Liverpool on "The Garrick" on August 11. Toronto's bishop and Toronto's cathedral bearing the name of the great Archangel was a good augury for Loretto, whose devotion to St. Michael harked back not only to persecution days of the eighteenth century in York, England, but farther still to the active devotion of the Foundress Mary Ward to all the angels and archangels. The letter of Bishop Power in June besides completing arrangements shows what he hoped from the new foundation:

"The day school will, I hope, be numerously attended after a few weeks, and the common School by a great number... The people, Catholics, mostly Irish or of Irish descent, are not rich. Some families are well able to educate their daughters, but many Protestants will feel happy in being able to avail themselves of the opportunity of giving to their daughters a good, sound education."

Sailing by "The Garrick" as planned and dressed in secular clothes, they reached New York in a little over a month's time. They were met by a New York representative of the Roche Bros. transit company of Dublin and were escorted to an hotel where their disguise was readily penetrated and their religious status recognized. By steamer they went from New York to Albany, "a floating palace" they said it was, while the beautiful Hudson River and its shores in the glow of evening and the brightness of moonlight delighted their eyes and their hearts. The train journey from Albany to Rochester was unpleasant, September showing what it can do in the way of unexpected cold. At Rochester the steamer for Toronto awaited them, less lordly, needless to say, than the Hudson River steamer. Contemporary newspapers advertise the "Steamer America" (provided with sails in case the steam engine could not be counted on), which crossed three days a week from Toronto to Rochester, calling at Cobourg en route, and returned on the alternate days.

The arrival at the wharf in Toronto was the occasion of the first of a series of early sorrows, some of them small to be sure, but very real. In some way the message of the ship's arrival had not reached the Bishop, and no one came to greet or guide them. After some delay and discussion, the odd little group of secular ladies got the attention of a coloured cabman. He was willing to oblige, but knew nothing whatever of a Catholic Bishop in the Tory city of Toronto. After inquiry, however, he drove them to the Bishop's door on Church Street. Indoors they met the second challenge to their courage. The tragedy of the ship fever and the daily deaths of the immigrants in the hospital sheds was the whole preoccupation of the Bishop. Reverend Father Kirwan had contracted the fever some time before, in the performance of his priestly office, and was now barely convalescent. He would leave next day in company with Reverend John Carroll for a season of recuperation at Niagara. Reverend John J. Hay, Archdeacon, and Vicar General to the Bishop, a highly gifted young priest, was already struggling with the inroads made on his health by the dread consumption which carried off so many young people in those days. His Lordship was himself attending the unfortunate famine and fever victims in the fever sheds daily and already worn down by his labours and anxieties. With fatherly welcome and thoughtful courtesy, the Bishop showed himself a perfect host. At the first meal he scrutinized carefully the food set before the nuns lest anything might be the cause of contagion. "Some Water Melon on the table", they write, "gave occasion to the Bishop to mention Italy where he got the seed from which these melons grew. This allusion to Italy," they continue, "led His Lordship to speak of his travels through Europe and, among the countries which he visited, he seemed to prefer the scenery of Ireland as being in his estimation more sweetly charming than that of Italy itself." One fancies the warmth it stirred in the hearts of these voluntary exiles of Erin.

That evening Mr. Samuel Goodenough Lynn, who with the Hon. John Elmsley, was the Bishop's right hand in temporal affairs, offered to take the ladies to his home while he with his sons went to the Hotel. Here they were hospitably provided for until a house was secured on the north side of Duke Street and duly furnished. Duke Street and all this section of early Toronto still retained to a considerable extent prestige as a residential district worthy of its royal names, given in honour of the doughty George III and his family. The Bank of Upper Canada on the N.E. corner of George and Duke, later on to become part of the De La Salle Institute, was there at that time, also the Ridout home on the north side of Duke Street opposite Princes' Street and other residences and buildings of note, according to the city directory of 1846-47, including the finely built home of the former Chief Justice Sir Wm. Campbell. The first Loretto Convent seems to have been placed in one of these larger houses. The nuns took possession of it on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy, Sept. 24. An announcement in the newspapers, "The Mirror", and "The British Colonist", is headed "Academy under the direction of the Ladies of Loretto". The course of education comprised Reading,

Elocution, Arithmetic, the English, French and Italian languages; History, Geography; every kind of Useful and Ornamental Needlework; Music and Painting. Fifteen to twenty boarders could be accommodated, and board and tuition was £25 per annum. Classes began on Sept. 29. Among first pupils, mention is made of two daughters of Hon. Mr. Elmsley, two daughters of Mr. S. G. Lynn and the five small daughters of Mr. J. P. De La Haye, who was professor of French at Upper Canada College. School was planned on the model the nuns had known and the Bishop had admired in Loretto Abbey, Rathfarnham, and text books were the Irish National School Books, for which the recommendation of the Provincial Board of Education had been secured.

Classes had not gone on even a week, however, when the greatest sorrow of these early days fell upon the group of hopeful young nuns. The Bishop had fallen victim to the fever caught from those whom he had so tenderly befriended as they lay sick and helpless in the outskirts of the city. After a short illness he died on Oct. 1. The mournful procession on Oct. 5 that bore his remains from St. Paul's Church to the crypt of the yet unfinished Cathedral on Church Street passed along Duke Street. The young nun, Sister Teresa Dease, who was presiding at the children's recreation performed that day one of the heroic acts of her life time – being cheerful and devoted to the young girls who could by no means have any understanding of the gloom that threatened to settle in the hearts of the nuns at the loss of their Father and Canadian founder.

It was to be three whole years before a successor in the Episcopal See was to arrive. Young, and unaccustomed to the climate and other hardships of the new land, and heroic in their desire to walk worthy of their Irish home and traditions, they were in great need of the guidance and counsel of a higher superior. At Rathfarnham they were accustomed to the constant care and supervision of the wise and capable Archbishop Daniel Murray who had brought the Institute to Ireland and watched over all its needs and ventures. Here in the severe climate of Canada it was not long until the dread tuberculosis, so prevalent in the early pioneer days, attacked them in turn. Before the coming of Bishop De Charbonnel, one, Sister Bonaventura Phelan, who had come out to Canada with high hopes and ardent zeal, was already dead and laid to rest in the crypt of the new Cathedral, while two others were likewise doomed with the same disease.

Some time in 1848 the nuns began teaching the Catholic children of the parish in an outside school, "a few blocks distant from the convent". In this school Sister Gertrude Fleming had the privilege of being the first religious teacher of an embryonic Separate School in the region of Upper Canada. In the fall of 1849 after the arrival of two more Sisters from Ireland, Sister Gertrude was accompanied by Sister M. Joachim Murray, who became in time one of the best known and best loved members of the Community. When the cold weather arrived they set out each morning with a bundle of kindling wood, hidden under their shawls, with which to start the school fire on their arrival. When the snow came

they were often the first in the morning to track their way through it. By 1853 two Loretto nuns were teaching in the school on St. Patrick's Market, in class-rooms upstairs, while the Christian Brothers, who had come to the diocese in 1851, taught downstairs.

In 1849 the nuns moved hopefully to more spacious quarters at the S. W. corner of Simcoe and Wellington, into the building which in later years was used for the offices of the Attorney General of the Province. But sorrow was stalking them. The hardships of these early years, the rigours of very cold winters, played havoc with the young foundation and Bishop De Charbonnel on his arrival in September 1850 was distressed by their situation. To Archbishop Murray in Dublin he writes:

Toronto, 14th November 1850.

Most Revd. Lord,

"I come to interest your grace in behalf of the Ladies of Loretto whom I have the happiness of having in Toronto. Your Lordship is aware that the zealous Bishop Power, their founder in his episcopal city, died with the ship fever a few days after their arrival. Since, these good ladies have suffered more than I can say. Deprived of a bishop, of a house, and of many other things during three years, I am amazed at their having got through the numberless difficulties they contended with. It is for me the best proof of their pleasing God and the motive of my devotedness to them. As soon as I arrived six weeks ago, my first visit, my first alms, my second mass were for them. I gave them for Director a distinguished Jesuit. There is a good spirit in the house, they are esteemed and cherished by their pupils and all those who are acquainted with them; they have done and will do much good amongst the Catholics and Protestants. . . Still the members at the house are too few; the Reverend Mother Superior is very delicate. Sister Gertrude keeps her bed, one has died; in fact they are overwhelmed; at least three nuns, very healthy sisters, would not be too many; one should be a first-rate housekeeper, and one of the two choir sisters should be equally pious and sensible, perfectly well acquainted with the rules and usages of the Institute, able to be a superior, at the (same) time she should feel happy to remain an inferior as long as it would please Providence."

Reverend Mother Teresa Ball, of Loretto Abbey, Rathfarnham, did her best. The Institute in Ireland was only thirty years old. Vocations had been few in the beginning, and from 1841 Mother Ball had already sent over forty members to foundations in India, Gibraltar, Mauritius, as well as in other parts of Ireland. Canada was the eighteenth foundation from Dublin and the members available for it were those in whom youth and generous ardour must supply for limited experience. Sister Joachim Murray and Sister Ita Cummings had arrived in the summer of 1849. The new convent ("Loretto House Nunnery", the city directory of 1850-51 names it), was the scene of the death of Sister M. Gertrude Fleming on Christmas Day, 1850, after months of heroic fortitude. The disease with her had attacked the bone and necessitated the amputation of the right foot above the ankle. The Superior, Rev. Mother Ignatia Hutchinson, was not long in following

her to the other world, dying on March 9, 1851. The school was retarded and the boarders dismissed until the following September. All this did not, however, prevent the entrance into religion of promising postulants and by the midsummer of 1851 four had already joined the Community. One of the four was the young daughter of Mr. S. G. Lynn, who lived to be chief superior of the Community after the death thirty-eight years later of Mother Teresa Dease. Reverend Mother Teresa Dease had been named superior after the death in March of the first superior. This summer of 1851, again, Reverend Mother Teresa Ball sent out two newly professed young members from the Irish Mother House.

In September 1851, the school began again with renewed courage. The house was more roomy than the one on Duke Street had been, and the Chapel here could be suitably furnished and adorned. Statues and furnishings had been the gift of the chaplain of 1848 and 1849, the Reverend J. Paré, Secretary of Bishop Bourget of Montreal, who had been lent to Toronto after the death of Bishop Power. The chaplain and confessor of the early Simcoe Street days was the Reverend P. J. Harkin, a priest also lent to Toronto from the Diocese of Quebec, already acquainted with the Community through studies pursued in Youghal, Ireland, where was the seaside novitiate of Loretto Abbey, Fermoy. Of Father Harkin the records say: "Reverend Father Harkin exerted himself not only to promote the spiritual good of the community, but spared no pains in promoting its temporal interests also, which he did most effectually. . . . He was the first that introduced for our pupils examination by programme, and public plays in French and English. . . ." The Catholic newspaper, "The Mirror" gives an account in 1849 of the "first annual examination of the Pupils of the House of Loretto, a convent of nuns lately established in Toronto", on July 26th of that year. There were morning and evening programs, a French Drama and an English one. The writer of the article in "The Mirror" hopes that on the next occasion "the gentlemen of the press" will be included in the friends of education invited. Graceful and dignified deportment, careful and cultured enunciation and the performance of musical numbers, piano, violin and harp, were supplemented by the display of needlework, drawing, painting and wax flowers in the class rooms.

The school announcement for these years begins as follows:

LORETTO HOUSE  
CORNER OF WELLINGTON AND SIMCOE STREETS, TORONTO,  
SEMINARY FOR THE EDUCATION OF YOUNG LADIES,  
UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE  
LADIES OF LORETTO HOUSE

"The course of instruction comprises every branch suitable to the education of Young Ladies. They receive tuition, according to the wishes of Parents or Guardians, in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, History (Ancient and Modern), Elements of Astronomy, Botany, Natural History, Rhetoric, and Logic; English, French,

and Italian languages ; Music, Drawing, Painting, use of Globes, Embroidery, Plain and Fancy Needle-Work, &c.”

The convent was now closer to a new and pretentious growth of the city along the harbour to the west. The seat of government was at this time in Quebec, and the Parliament Buildings erected in Toronto in 1830, facing Front Street and occupying the whole block between Simcoe and John, were used for Government offices and officials. In the next block north on the west side of Simcoe were Government House and grounds, also used for other purposes than the original one at this time. The block above this to the north was occupied by the buildings of Upper Canada College. It was in one of the government buildings at the corner of Wellington and Simcoe that Loretto Convent was located at this time. Many fine residences were in the vicinity. There were still open spaces of the city – on the east side of Simcoe Street and down to the harbour front was land sometimes utilized as market gardens. College Street was the city’s northern limit. The population of the city in 1852 was 25,166. St. Michael’s Cathedral had been dedicated on Sept. 29, 1849, and served this newer portion of the city, whilst St. Paul’s continued to serve the older city to the east. A system of waterworks and of gas lighting had been in civic use since 1842-3. In the city directory of 1856 there are listed seven street lamplighters. In 1849 the first omnibus service was begun between St. Lawrence Market and Yorkville, the village at the Yonge Street toll gate, just north of Bloor. The first horse street-car was still twelve years in the future. Transportation to other parts of the country was by stage coach, the Grand Trunk Railway making its maiden trip to Toronto only in 1856. Currency was reckoned in £. s. d., but Canadian postage stamps were issued in 1851.

The next ten years saw the Community increasing in numbers, fifty in 1861; and the number of pupils who had attended Loretto House, Toronto, was over 1500. Objections were made in Protestant circles because the daughters of leading families were often found in Loretto’s enrollment. The opening of Bishop Strachan School in 1865 put an end to the public comments made in Church pulpits. Meantime a convent had been opened at Brantford in 1853, and transferred in 1855 for a few months to London (November 1855 to June 1856). On the separation of the dioceses of Hamilton and London from the See of Toronto in 1856, the nuns withdrew from London and on invitation of Right Reverend John Farrell, first Bishop of Hamilton, transferred to Guelph, where the Jesuit Fathers had been given charge of the parish in 1852, with Reverend John Holzer, S.J., as parish priest. The lands of the church in Guelph, like those in Toronto, had been secured by the great Bishop Alexander Macdonell when all Upper Canada belonged to Kingston diocese. The Bishop was given his choice of location in the tract of land of the Canada Company which was to be Guelph, and had selected 80 acres of the highest section. Sir John Galt, Commissioner of the Canada Company, gives a dramatic account of the clearing of “the beautiful central hill, reserved”, to use his

own words, “for the Catholics in compliment to my friend, Bishop Macdonell, for his advice in the formation of the Company.” Here on this hill were erected on either side the existing Church, stone buildings; to the south, a building that would serve as a Jesuit College, and to the north, the convent that still stands there, for a private school for girls, with a large room reserved for the parish Common School, until the two stone Separate Schools were built in 1860.

In 1853, the Toronto Mother House had moved once more for increased space, and perhaps less expense in rent, this time to a large three storey frame building on Adelaide Street on church grounds of Macdonell Square beside the newly built St. Mary’s Church. Leaving the centre of the city for what was then the extreme west provided the reason for opening a Loretto Day School on the west side of Church Street, a block north of St. Michael’s Palace. The building in St. Mary’s Parish had an interesting history. It was erected by Bishop De Charbonnel for a Little Seminary of which he intended the Basilian Fathers to take charge. When, instead, the Basilians opened their College in St. Michael’s Palace, the Bishop offered the building to the Loretto Nuns – “healthy”, the records say it was, “but not very comfortable”. When the Loretto nuns moved from this building in 1862, it stood vacant for a time. The Precious Blood nuns came to Toronto in 1869 and in this house spent their first three years. Idle again for a while, it was next occupied by the Good Shepherd nuns for their first industrial school for girls in 1875. They moved to West Lodge Monastery in 1879. After this, it is said, the Sisters of St. Joseph teaching in St. Mary’s Separate School had a short sojourn in it. Finally it was sold and removed when Father F. P. Rooney was pastor at St. Mary’s and about to build the Presbytery there. As late as 1910, the old building, strengthened with an exterior of rough-cast plaster, was pointed out, on the east side of Bathurst Street between King and Adelaide, to the Abbey pupils on their four o’clock walks, as the old Loretto Convent.

The 1860’s saw three events of material advance for the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the first two, the results of generous gifts from Toronto’s third Bishop, Most Reverend John Joseph Lynch. In 1861, in founding a house for the Blessed Sacrament and for religious who would be faithful in adoration, at Niagara Falls, Bishop Lynch crowned a great dream that had begun in his boyhood days in Ireland when he first saw a picture of the mighty cataract. The land on the height directly above the Horseshoe Falls and all down to the water front was still uncultivated. Travellers passing along the Canadian bank of the river from Fort Erie down to Queenston had been accustomed from the 1820’s to find two pretentious inns on this height, one, “The Pavilion”, which was burnt down in 1839 and not rebuilt, the other, “The Ontario House”, a little farther west and south. This latter had completed its career and been demolished in 1858, but had been succeeded by “The Canada House”, built on closely adjoining ground. This house and ground form part of the property secured by Bishop Lynch. To the Loretto nuns he gave in 1861, four acres of the Ontario House Lot, and in 1865,

four and a quarter acres to the south. The deed for the first tract is made out between the Bank of Upper Canada on the first part and the "Corporation of the Sisters of Loretto for the diocese of Toronto" in the second part, and the purchase sum is \$1,000.

The deed in 1865 is made out between the Right Reverend J.J. Lynch and the Corporation of the Sisters of Loretto for the Diocese of Toronto, and the purchase sum this time is \$1. In 1892 under the signature of Archbishop Walsh and the other necessary signatures for the Archdiocese, there is a further deed of two acres on Stanley Street, also for the payment of \$1.

Life at Niagara Falls Convent began in pioneer conditions. The "way-faring tavern" needed much renovation. Under the direction of the pastor, the Reverend Victor Juhel, additions had already been made for dormitories and refectories. The nuns scrubbed and painted, cut the hay and gathered the fruit, with the help of an occasional workman or boy. There is a letter written by a Benedictine priest of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn., in 1889, to Mother Joachim in which he recalls helping her to demolish a shed at "the old tavern or new convent" in the fall of 1861. Water had to be hauled up the winding path from the foot of the hill, groceries and provisions from Clifton by a two and a half mile trudge along the railway tracks, or from the American side by crossing the river in a boat below Chippewa. Travellers came by night to pound at the door of the Inn, looking for the accommodation to which they were accustomed and loath to accept the new situation. Gypsies camped in season on the ground near the Convent and were often troublesome neighbours. Ten years saw great changes in material surroundings and, though parks and trolleys were yet to come, Archbishop Lynch was able to play host to many distinguished visitors at the Convent School, the first being Lord and Lady Dufferin in 1872. The guest book of Loretto, Niagara, is a priceless treasure of historic signatures.

Two short documents in 1861 tell the story of the land on which the Loretto Mother House in Toronto was built in that year, on church property, a plot of land of 239 foot frontage on Bond Street by 116 feet on Wilton (formerly Crookshank Street). On the Feast of the Visitation of the B.V.M. the Bishop drew up over his signature the following statement:

"I, John Joseph Lynch, Bishop of Toronto, for the love of God and in honour of His Blessed Mother, and for the benefit of my own soul and the salvation of others, give as a gift to the Congregation of Our Lady of Loretto the land on which the convent is being built together with the garden adjoining."

The gift took the form of a 500-year lease and on December 26 a letter from Reverend Mother Teresa Dease records the fulfillment of the promise:

"Esteemed and honoured Lord,

Accept our warm thanks for the valuable Christmas offering you so kindly sent us on Xmas eve; if the house lasts as long as the lease, no one can find fault with it for want of durability. Accept also our sincere congratulations on your happy recovery from your late illness. Will you not before long afford us the gratification of expressing to yourself in person how heartily we do rejoice at it?

Wishing Your Lordship many happy returns of this holy season and requesting your blessing,

I remain, my Lord,

Your obedient and grateful servant in Christ,  
(sgd) M. Teresa.

This, the first Mother House of Loretto erected in Canada, remained as Mother House and Novitiate until 1877. It continued as a Loretto High School and Commercial until 1913. The Boarding School had been transferred to Loretto Abbey, Wellington Street, soon after the Lyndhurst property on Wellington Street had been purchased by the nuns.

The story of the property, on Wellington Street is interesting. The house had been built there as early as 1837 by Col. Jameson, Attorney General, for his wife, one of the early women writers to describe life in Toronto. It was one of the first homes so far west along the shore of the bay. "The site", Mrs. Jameson writes optimistically, "must be charming in summer, for we command at one glance the entrance to the bay, the King's Pier, the lighthouse and beyond, the whole expanse of Lake Ontario to the Niagara shore." It was bought in 1844 by Mr. Frederick Widder, Commissioner of the Canada Company, and given the family title "Lyndhurst". After his death and that of his wife, the property was leased for two years to a Mrs. Gordon who lived there with her son and daughter. It was purchased for the nuns at a Chancery sale on February 6, 1867. The family living in it had hoped to have first chance of purchase and insisted on the rights of their lease, of which one year was not yet elapsed. The nuns recording their experiences of that summer write of "the many pilgrimages to the lawyer's office in the broiling heat of a Canadian summer" before getting possession. Finally, on the condition of the purchase of the carpet and curtain furnishings of the home, possession was given and the first Mass celebrated September 8. Here for the first time the nuns used the name familiar in Ireland, "Loretto Abbey". In Ireland, it would seem that the term "Abbey" was taken over by any ancient religious order without any regard for the Benedictine Rule. Muckross Abbey, the ruins of which are one of the historic beauties of Ireland, for instance, had been a Franciscan foundation in the 13th century. It was perhaps in keeping with the times and with the hopes of many of the British families settled in Toronto. It still seemed that ancestral estates and family trees might be established, where generations should succeed each other and grow old in the same setting into which they were born. In the Abbey grounds it was thought to have a private cemetery, as at Niagara Falls. Here the first two nuns who died in the house were buried, in 1870 and in 1873. But new

customs were stronger than the old and, on protests made by city lawyers, the bodies were removed in 1874 to the plot beside the Church of Our Lady of Peace, Niagara Falls. From time to time additions and alterations were made to the original Lyndhurst building, and in 1899-1900 the large chapel wing was erected and dedicated to the Holy Family. In the intervening years several convents had been opened, Loretto of Mater Admirabilis in Hamilton, 1865; Loretto of the Assumption, Stratford, 1878; Loretto of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Englewood, Chicago, 1892; Loretto of Our Lady of Victory, Sault Ste Marie, Mich., 1896; and Loretto of the Immaculate Conception, Woodlawn, Chicago, 1905. Some houses had been opened and then closed, one in Belleville in 1857, finally withdrawn in 1899; one in Lindsay from 1874-1890, and one in Joliet, Ill., from 1880-1918. The story of these foundations will be recorded elsewhere.

A Loretto Abbey program of the year 1875 is entitled:

A.M.D.G.  
CLOSING EXERCISES OF THE SCHOLASTIC YEAR  
and  
DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES  
24th June, 1875,  
at  
LORETTO ABBEY.

There follows a list of musical and choral numbers, three piano duets by sixteen young ladies, two at each of eight pianos; two French Dialogues; two English Choral Recitations; two choral numbers; an instrumental number, two harps and piano; closing with distribution of prizes and gold medal. One visualizes the long-practised, profound courtesies that would add grace and dignity. Pencilled comments on this program, presumably by the Archbishop, begin with "too long by three quarters" and end with a regret that there is no Italian number. Similar annual events took place also at Bond Street up to the year 1881.

In 1889 death claimed Reverend Mother Teresa Dease who had been superior for thirty-eight years. The whole life of the Institute emanated from her. In the introduction to the "Life and Letters of Mother Teresa Dease", published in 1916, Reverend Dean Harris describes her thus:

"Mother Teresa was a model of gentleness, of love and kindness; she was a safe guide to high ideals, and, from her childhood, was dowered with a benignity, tenderness and holiness which poured light into life and made joy more joyous. Her mental and spiritual endowments were of the finest and most delicate texture and the rich attributes of her mind seemed, to those who knew her well, only inferior to the warmth and generosity of her large and tender heart...

"While severe and scrupulous to herself, she was ever charitable and indulgent to others. Thoughts of God and of eternity and of the things which made for union with angels and saints were very near and dear to the heart of Mother Teresa. She lived in the white light of eternity, for she was a woman of prayer and moved habitually in what

seculars would call an 'atmosphere of devotion'. To her, union with God was as normal as social intercourse among others; she was in many ways a consecrated woman, the overmastering unity of whose life was established by the indwelling of the spirit of God – the Holy Ghost – in her soul. In the morning of her life she gave herself to God, she gave to Him her best in thought, in aspiration, in effort, in hope; and the oblation brought to her, as to other holy souls, abundant spiritual life, supernatural wisdom and abiding trust in God."

By this time the content of education was undergoing considerable revision. The Lindsay Convent under the direction and supervision of the Reverend Michael Stafford was the first to organize classes for Departmental Examinations. Father Stafford saw what the future of education was destined to be in Canada. The Separate School question had long been a major concern for the Bishops. Advanced education of girls was still a preparation for cultured Christian home life, the development of intellectual and artistic tastes, the domestic arts, and the matter of grace and ease in manners and deportment. The idea that Canadian life would provide in time a leisure class of its own, whose place in life would be social and benevolent, was, however, already dissolving into newer ambitions, when education would be expected to equip girls as well as boys for making their own livelihood. It is understandable that there were many who would not readily relinquish the old ideals of dignified and graceful womanhood. Nor have the two ideals been yet sufficiently harmonized and interwoven. Contemporary means and methods of education are attuned to the career idea. Christian life that underlies it and the graces of unworldliness that crown it must adjust themselves to a prescribed system.

When in 1915, the first graduate of Loretto College, through St. Michael's College, received degrees from the University of Toronto, the balance had tipped to the side of certificates and degrees. In the Community, the nuns who pioneered in this field were Mother Agatha O'Neill who had entered in 1866, herself already equipped with a First Class Normal School Certificate, and Mother Estelle Nolan, coming from our own Guelph school in 1892, and achieving in a few years a Master of Arts degree from Queen's University, who was gifted with a unique love of the learning and wisdom of the ages.

Mother Agatha taught Education Department courses in Lindsay, in Hamilton, at Bond Street, and laboured for forty untiring years to advance the certificate work in the schools and among the teachers of the Community, undaunted by differing views and even rebuffs. Mother Estelle's achievements in education were many, and what she accomplished in the way of drama deserves special notice in any records of Catholic Canadian schools. The English classics, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Sheridan, Goldsmith, came to life for High School classes and College classes, in the sixteenth century banquet at the improvised Tabard Inn with the pilgrims in contemporary costume and speech, or the coffee supper at Dr. Johnson's in the eighteenth. In Loretto College the production of "Everyman",

of Chesterton's "Magic", of Rostand's "Princess Far Away", of Ghéon's "St. Bernard de Menton" – and finally Violet Clifton's "Sanctity", each in its turn was a climax of Catholic drama in Canada. A Dante pageant compiled from the Vita Nuova and the Divina Comedia presented in the sixcentenary year of 1921 was a living revelation of the great Florentine poet and his masterpiece. A Mary Ward pageant similarly built up with lively Contemporary historical background was performed several times, doing much to make the great 17th century foundress better known, and loved.

At the present time the Institute conducts Loretto College, Toronto, in connection with St. Michael's College in the University of Toronto, ten Loretto High Schools in Canada and the United States, and provides one hundred and forty-four teachers for twenty-nine Separate and Parochial Schools with an aggregate of over eleven thousand pupils. The need for catechetical centres where there are no Catholic schools has led to the adoption of four such centres, Port Colborne and Fort Erie in Ontario, Estevan in Saskatchewan, and Flemington, New Jersey. As many as one hundred nuns devote some weeks of the summer vacation to teaching Catechism in country regions and neglected city districts, as far distant as S. Dakota and Northern Michigan, and Saskatchewan, as well as in Ontario. This story, too, must be left to a later date for full treatment.

Towards the turn of the century there came to the Institute a renewed knowledge of its earliest traditions and first foundress, Mary Ward. This great pioneer in apostolic work for women had suffered reverses even after her death, and though her Institute went on in a way that must be reckoned miraculous, her name had been thrust back into obscurity for a matter of a hundred years. The text of the Vows taken by her daughters had never ceased to read "in the Institute of the B.V.M.", and to mention the Popes who had given some approval, Pope Clement XI, Pope Benedict XIV, Pope Pius VII. For one hundred and twenty years the Ladies of Bar Convent, York, were alone in the field of Catholic education for girls in England. Some houses of the English Ladies in Bavaria had been dispersed after the Napoleonic wars for a short time. The house in Munich was re-opened in 1835, while houses in Mainz and St. Polten had continued without interruption. Loyal daughters of Mary Ward clung perseveringly to her ideals and passed on from one to one the fire of love that had been hers. The York Convent finally petitioned in the troubled times of the early nineteenth century to be under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary; the Irish foundation made at this time from York, and the Canadian foundation made from Loretto Abbey, Dublin, were both then also subject to the Ordinary. In Canada it was a providential, though only temporary, state of affairs, without which the much tried Community might not have survived in its first foundation in Canada. It was York again which took the initiative in petitioning Rome for further approval of the earliest organization. In 1877, the Institute organization was approved in its entirety by Pope Pius IX. In 1881, a Life of Mother Teresa Ball, the foundress in Ireland, was published, written by the

Reverend H. J. Coleridge, S.J. By 1885 the two-volume *Life of Mary Ward* by Mother Elizabeth Chambers, I.B.V.M., was published, and in 1887 a volume of *Annals of York*. These last three volumes had each a valuable historical preface from the pen of the same Reverend Father Coleridge. The history of two hundred and seventy-five years took on its true perspective. The vitality of a work inspired by the Holy Spirit in the heart of a valiant woman had survived the machinations of the powers of darkness. In the year 1900 there gathered in Rome representatives of all the groups of the Institute to discuss constitutions and union, with the encouragement of Cardinal Merry del Val, and of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. Results were gradual rather than immediate. In 1909 the saintly Pope Pius X, having reviewed all the historic decrees and documents concerning the Institute for the three hundred years of its existence, restored the name of the valiant woman, Mary Ward, to her rightful place as foundress. By 1937 four of the five groups of the Institute had adopted with Rome's approval the same text of the Jesuit constitutions as adapted for women.

In the interim, Loretto Abbey was transferred in 1927 from Wellington Street to the newly built Mother House now at Armour Heights, North Yonge Street, just outside the city limits. This outline of the external history of the life of the Loretto nuns in Canada and the United States makes no attempt to record the inner life, the life of the spirit, the eternal life of the Institute. That inner life, is, to be sure, inevitably interwoven with the daily, yearly activities of the members – is, indeed, the source – and each generation draws its inspiration from the lives of the older members of its day, 'to the greater glory of God'.

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