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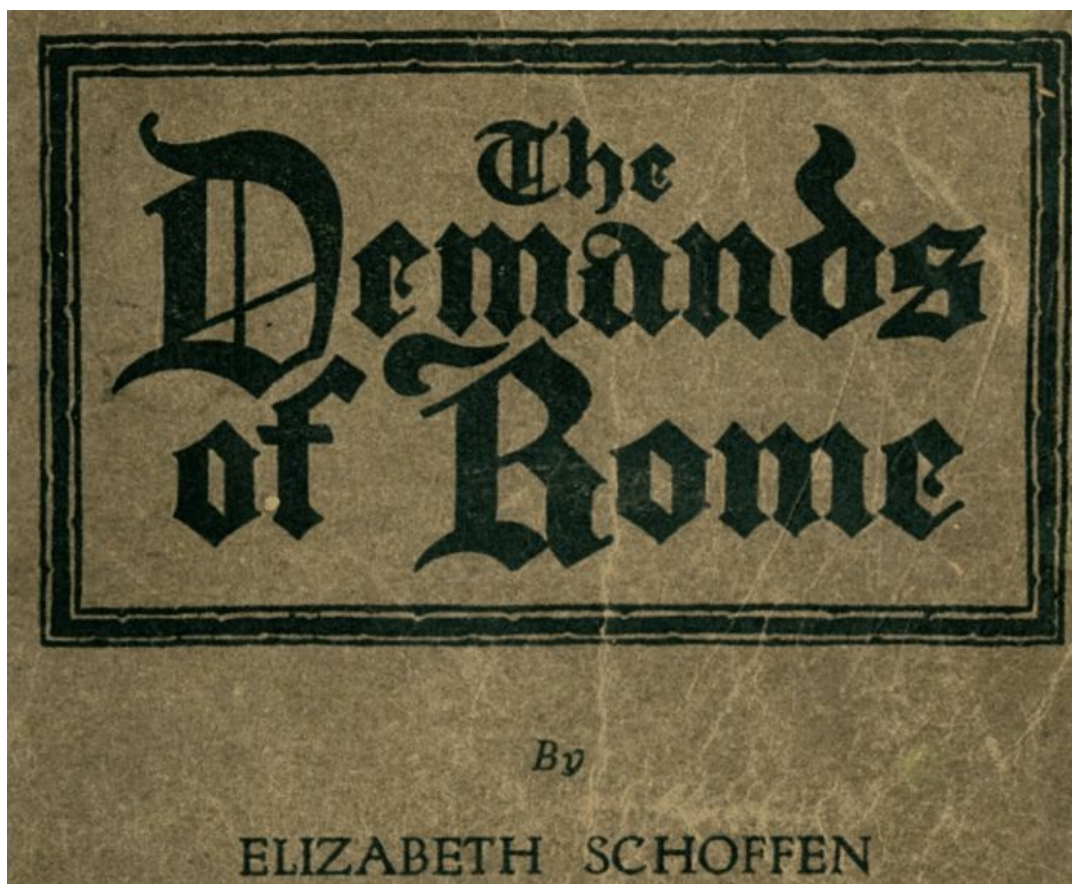
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THE DEMANDS OF ROME

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Elizabeth Schoffen as Sister Lucretia



Elizabeth Schoffen, Lecturer and Author

DEDICATION

In the name of all that is good, kind and Christian, I humbly dedicate this book to those two dauntless Americans, my friends and benefactors, Mr. and Mrs. E. U. Morrison.

[5]

"The Demands of Rome"

—By—

ELIZABETH SCHOFFEN (SISTER LUCRETIA)

Second Edition

***Her Own Story of Thirty-One Years as a
Sister of Charity in the Order of the***

Sisters of Charity of Providence of the Roman Catholic Church

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, PORTLAND, OREGON

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by

ELIZABETH SCHOFFEN

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PREFACE.

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After many entreaties and a sincere vow, it is now "mine to tell the story" of "THE DEMANDS OF ROME" as I have lived them during my long life and faithful service in the Roman Catholic Church and sisterhood. I would sound this story in the ear of everyone who has the interest of the oppressed at heart—in the ear of everyone who has the interest of disseminating knowledge, the light and power of which would be a great help to the freeing of the captive from religious bondage. For as I view it now, religious bondage is the most direful of all.

In a few words, "THE DEMANDS OF ROME" from the individual are from the "cradle to the grave," and they do not stop there, he is followed through "purgatory" and into eternity. In the commercial world, you must listen to "THE DEMANDS OF ROME" or the Roman Catholic trade goes elsewhere, and the anathema of the church is invoked upon you.

The church of Rome *demand*s property, and when they have it, *demand* that they be not taxed for that privilege; they *demand* wealth, never being satisfied, but forever *demanding*; they *demand* the suppression of liberty; they *demand* life; they *demand* death.

Now, as a sister in the church of Rome, it is *demand* from the very day she enters the convent, as I have explained throughout this book. The first *demand* is the hair of the victim. The Word of God says, "If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her," but what does the church of Rome care what the Bible says? It is the *demand* from the church, and blind obedience of the subject to that *demand* that Rome cares about. It is their endless *demand*s for supremacy of heaven, earth and hell.

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We have all heard of the dumb animal which would run back to his stall in case of fire; nevertheless, we must take an interest in the faithful old horse and use every effort to save his life from the horrible death that he would rush to.

How much more must we take an interest in the lives of the poor, oppressed humans, the overburdened, entrapped nuns behind the convent walls, though she may imagine that she is enjoying the greatest freedom and the happiest life. Yes, we must all look well to the doors that stand between Liberty and bondage, even though those doors seem bright with "religious" paint.

Let me say with the poet, that I cannot hope to "live but a few more days, or years, at most," and my one aim is to give to the world a book that will stand the crucial time of the changing years—a book that shall be known and read long after the author is forgotten. I write it with a fond hope that it may be helpful to "those who have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," those who may be floundering in the meshes of a crooked and perverted theology. I want no other monument.

ELIZABETH SCHOFFEN.

February, 1917.

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THE DEMANDS OF ROME

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

In writing this story of thirty-one years of my service in the Sisterhood of the Roman Catholic Church, I have no apologies to make. From the treatment I received after I left the cruel and oppressive Romish institution, I feel that there are thousands of Protestants, so-called, that need to know what is required and demanded of the poor, duped girls that are in these prisons of darkness that dot this beautiful country of ours from one end to the other, guising themselves under the cloak of religion.

Then, there is the Roman Catholic, who has been brought up in that faith, and yet feels that the system as practiced in this country is not in accord with the American principles. To these I wish to give my message, that they might know the inner workings of these damnable institutions, falsely called "charitable and religious."

With malice toward no one, but for love of God, charity and liberty to all, I tell this story of my life, with a sincere hope that it may—in some little way—help you, dear reader, and your posterity from drifting into the now threatening condition of pagan darkness and the indescribable, as well as uncalled for, unnatural, inhuman tortures I escaped from.

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Protestants are brought up in such grand freedom and liberty of spirit, both civil and religious, that it is almost impossible for them to believe that there can be anything to prevent Roman Catholics (I now mean the good Roman Catholic) from enjoying the same rights and privileges that they do. If my Protestant friends will just stop one moment and think about the difference between Americanism and Catholicism, then they will realize how it is that the good Roman Catholic cannot enjoy the true liberal government that their forefathers fought, bled and died for, and which they are enjoying today.

Americanism means true democracy—the rule of the majority in matters civil, and the protection of the rights of the minority.

Americanism means freedom of thought, conscience, speech and press.

Americanism means the right to worship God according to the dictates of your own conscience.

Americanism means that liberty of body, soul and spirit which tends to the development of all that is noblest and best in the individual.

Does Roman Catholicism mean these great principles?

Let me say emphatically, NO.

Catholicism means the rule of the Pope.

Catholicism means restriction of thought, speech, and censorship of the press.

Catholicism means the worship of God in no other manner than set forth by the Popes, and the persecution of heretics, even unto death. You weak Protestants will probably say, "Oh, not that bad." Well, let me tell you, that you had better open your eyes. Let me quote from the "Golden Manual," a prayer book I used while a Sister. This book has the approval of John Card. McCloskey, then Archbishop of New York, page 666: "That thou wouldst vouchsafe to defeat the attempts of all Turks and heretics, and bring them to naught." And according to the Roman Catholic Church, a heretic is anyone who does not believe all the teachings of that church. So you Protestants are each and every one heretics and the Roman Catholic church has no use for you, so why should you cater to them? [13]

Catholicism means repression of individuality and the subjection of the body, soul and spirit to a ruling class (the priests) by the terrible doctrine of infallibility, for we, as Catholics and sisters, believe that the priest cannot sin, as priest.

With these Roman Catholic principles, which I learned and practiced as a sister, so diabolically opposed to our American principles, it can readily be seen why a good Roman Catholic cannot enjoy the freedom which the Constitution gives to every American citizen. And, my dear American Protestant, if you do not get any other thought from this book, I wish to give you one here in the introductory which will be well worth your earnest, thoughtful study: If these principles of the Roman Catholic system are allowed to continue being put into practice, there is a possibility that we may lose our precious heritage of freedom which has been handed down to us. I was deprived of all the rights of an American citizen till about five years ago. I was buried in pagan darkness and superstition and my soul longed and was dying for light and life, and I did not know how to obtain freedom because of the ignorant manner in which I was raised in the parochial school, and the damnable instructions I received from the so-called representative of Christ on earth, the priest. I have heard that there are about eighty thousand sisters in the convents of the Roman Catholic system in the United States, and if this power can keep that number of girls in subjection and ignorance, do you not think that they will do the same with the seculars, if they had a little more power? [14]

Just think it over, and read of the demands of Rome I had to yield to for thirty-one years. Read the dark history of the Roman Catholic Church, and remember that Rome never changes; 'Semper eadem—' "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Then maybe you will cease being Protestant in name only, and begin to protest.

Why are we Protestants? What is the meaning of the word Protestant?

Protestant is one who protests, and we are called Protestants because at the time of the Reformation the people who protested against the cruelties and superstitious practices of Rome took the name Protestant, and we are supposed to protest against the same teachings and cruelties today.

But how many true Protestants have we today? Very few, indeed. If you would be a true Protestant, you must protest twenty-four hours a day, and seven days in every week in the year. Thank God, the American people have, in the last few years, begun to wake up, and see the evils of this terrible system, which is gnawing at the very vitals of our free institutions. And, if the American people do not become indifferent, as they have in the past, Rome will meet the same fate here that she has met, or is meeting, in nearly every country where she has held sway for any length of time. [15]

History tells us in no uncertain language of the downfall of the once powerful country of Spain, of the suppression of the convents and monasteries in Portugal, Italy and France, and without the system of convents and monasteries, priestcraft can amount to naught. With these historical facts staring us in the face, the convent and monastery system is becoming a power in this land, and the inevitable is sure to come—the suppression of all closed institutions. "History repeats."

Therefore, I wish to give to the world my experience of thirty-one years in a convent, that I may help hasten the time when these institutions will be open, and the captive set free; that I may help, if I can, the real true, red-blooded American citizens from returning to sleepy indifference.

I cannot write this story in the language of an educated person, for as you will learn in the succeeding chapters, my education was sadly neglected. There will, no doubt, be many grammatical errors, which I ask my readers to overlook, as it is not intended as a work of rhetoric, but a message from the heart. I will write it in my own language, that which I had to learn mostly by myself, and it took a great many years of hard work and a great deal of deception on my part to be able to tell it even as well as I will. And, if I can convey to my American brothers and sisters any new light on the workings of these damnable institutions, or, if I may be the means of influencing a few more to be real, true, honest Protestants, then this effort will not be in vain. [16]

I have no tale of immorality to tell, as the order of which I was a member was what may be classed as one of the "open orders," and the institutions in which I worked most of my so-called "religious" career, were among the most modern operated by the Roman Catholic system in this country. I have heard and read a great deal about the nameless infamies and the degradation of the "cloistered" orders, but that story I must leave for some other to tell. I will tell the unvarnished, plain truth of my experience in the "modern" institutions, and let the reader draw his or her own conclusion as to the life the sisters in the closed orders have to live.

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CHAPTER II.

MY EARLY LIFE AND SCHOOLING

I was born in 1861, in Minnesota, of German parents, who had come from Germany in quest of greater liberty and a home in a free land.

My mother was a most devout Roman Catholic, absolutely under priest guidance, and by his instructions to her the children were reared and schooled. My father was a broad-minded Roman Catholic, not very strong in the faith. I have heard him speak of the teachings and superstitious practices, as "priest foolishness." But, that there might be peace in the family, he would leave matters regarding the children to mother, and leaving these things with her was leaving them with the priest.

When I was five years old, we migrated to the State of Washington near Walla Walla (then called Fort Walla Walla).

I was the eighth child of a large family, and as my parents could not afford to send all of us to the convent or parochial school, it was my lot to go to the public school a few weeks occasionally for three years. This was when I was at the age of eight, nine and ten years. But, for fear of imbibing the "Protestant godless spirit," as my mother called it, I was given only a reader and speller. Nearly every day my mother would question me as to what the Protestant children would say to me at school. She cautioned me many, many times not to talk to them, as they were the children of bad Protestants, that they would grow up bad and wicked the same as their parents were, without belief in God and church, as Protestants were people who fell away from God by leaving the true church and following a very wicked man, named Luther, who became proud and disobedient to the Pope. [18]

These Protestant godless (public) schools were greatly deplored in my home by my mother, and yet my father was a teacher and director in these public schools for a great many years. Because the Roman Catholic people had to pay taxes to keep these schools running, there was much murmuring against that unjust government of an infidel people, as it was called. With these contentions continually wrangling in my home, it did not require serious excuses for my being kept out of school. I have heard my mother make the statement many times that it would be better to have no education than to have this Protestant godless public school education.

When I was eleven years old, my mother and the priest decided that it was time for me to go to the convent school to learn my catechism, confession, my first communion, the rosary—my religion. In fact, during the three years I attended this school, that was about all I learned. True, there were classes of reading, spelling and arithmetic, but the books I used in these studies were of a lesser grade than those I used during the short time I went to the public school. By the order of the sister who taught arithmetic, I had to teach smaller children what little arithmetic I learned from blackboard study in the public school, having my class in the back of the room we occupied. The sister who taught reading (Sister Agnes) told us that before she came to that school to teach, she had been a cook in an Indian Mission. Well qualified, wasn't she? The catechism teacher (Sister Mary Rosary) taught sewing and catechism alternately, in that part of the building known as the wash-house. [19]

Three years of my life were wasted in this manner, learning practically nothing but Roman Catholic catechism and pagan religion. Three years of just that time of a child's life which should be spent laying the foundation for something nobler and grander.

And now, after all is said and done, I was prepared to take my first communion. This was administered to me on May 23d, 1875, by "Father" Duffy, in the parish church of Walla Walla. I was confirmed the same day, in the same church, by Bishop Blanchet, of Vancouver, Washington.

I thought that I now had religion, and as I thought that was the one objective of the convent schooling, I took my few books home and told my mother that I would not go to that school any longer. I wanted to return to the public school, but mother said we were Catholics, and as such, we had to go to the Catholic school. Finally, after a great deal of persistence, I was permitted to go to the public school, but it was only for a very short time again. Mother took sick, and regardless of the fact that there were two sisters and a brother younger than I, and a sister and brother older, at home, this was a very good excuse to get me out of school.

From this time till I was twenty years old, six years, I did nothing but idle away the most precious time of one's existence. Oh, what stupid, lonely, sorrowful girlhood years they were. I knew in a dreamy way that I was being cheated out of my right of education, but what was I to do? I was [20]

tempted many times to leave home and work for schooling. I once made mention of this intention to mother. I was threatened with all sorts of punishments if I ever attempted a thing of this nature. She told me that I could study the catechism at home, that that was enough for me to know—that I would not forget the things that would take me to heaven and keep me from going to that terrible hell-fire with the devils. If there would have been any reasonable excuse for all this, I would have nothing to say. But there the school was at our very door, free to all, without price, with the exception of the few books that were needed, and yet I was denied that privilege. And why? All in the name of religion.

Oh, my American friends, can you not see the folly of it all? Can you not see the folly of allowing this one-man power to continue building these institutions all over this fair land of ours? Every time you see a parochial school in the shadow of a cross, just think that there is the institution taking the place of our public schools, and you can rest assured that even the parochial schools would not be here if it were not for the public schools. Institutions supposed to be educational, when in reality they are institutions for the purpose of teaching Roman Catholic paganism.

You may say that there are Roman Catholics who are well educated. Yes, there are. But where you will see one who is well educated, there will be hundreds and maybe thousands who have only a duped education, a fooled education, so to speak. I have given you a fair example of Roman Catholic education in my own life.

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Six years before I entered the sisterhood, I had nothing to do outside the few home chores, kept in inexcusable ignorance, deprived of every opportunity for any enlightenment, even for my own future home life. I could hear nothing but punishments, purgatory, hell-fire and everlasting damnation. Prayer to the crucifix in honor of the five holy wounds, to the holy Virgin Mary and her badge—the scapular—for protection; confession, the church, the priest-Christ—these were my schooling. No reading, no society, except one Catholic neighbor family, and I was being continually cautioned to beware of them, as they had little of the Roman Catholic religion, were too worldly and were given almost entirely to dress and nice times.

Be assured that I had a real Roman Catholic raising, absolute ignorance, steeped in Popery, superstition, idolatry filled with Roman fanaticism. One of the Popes has said, "Ignorance is the mother of devotion." Yes, superstition was the name of my Roman Catholic mother; indifference was the name, in effect, of my Roman Catholic father. But the Lord God, the pope, through the priest, the devil's hellish system, was the school I was raised in. It was this cunningly devised, diabolical system which was responsible for the ignorance and mental blindness of my good, honest, but deluded parents, as it was to blame for the awful wrongs, injustice and the wretched life of abject convent slavery I had to live so many years.

So I had been compelled to hear and see nothing but the one sided teaching of the Roman Catholic catechism, the priest's hell and damnation preaching, had been held back and down in Roman Catholic ignorance, darkness and superstition, until at length I became as one deaf, dumb and blind, which very well explains the principle of the teachings of the Roman Catholic system.

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During the last few years of my home life, all home and priestly influence was brought to bear on the convent life as the preferable choice for a girl. I had a great ambition to be a teacher, and the Jesuit priests (Father Jordan and Father Cathaldo) assured me that in the convent the sisters taught everything a girl needed to know; music, singing, needlework and the necessary education for teaching. The beautiful, glowing picture of convent and a sister's life were constantly being brought to my mind, till I could at last think of nothing else.

The world was pictured as terrible and sinful; the people being educated in the public schools, living under the influence of an unbelieving government, parents having no religion, people of irresponsible character and loose morals, caring for nothing but the material things of this world and good times, which consisted of sinful pleasures. And, living in this manner, there was no hope of eternal life for them, as there was no one to whom they could confess their sins, and "nothing defiled can enter heaven."

With these things constantly burdening my undeveloped mind, and the thought of the great work I could do for the church and priests, and of some day being a great sister-teacher, I at last consented to be a sister for the Roman Catholic system.

Very natural, under this kind of home life and influence, when every thing human, natural, ennobling, elevating and commonly decent and Christian was withheld and kept out of my life, and all of nature's endowments and rights distorted and put to my mind as something deceptive and leading to sin and deplorable wrongs.

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CHAPTER III.

MY NOVITIATE LIFE

My last two confessions, in preparation to entering the convent were made to "Father" Ceserri. When I had finished the last one, and he was expounding and explaining my admirable choice of sisterhood life, he raised his right hand while pronouncing the words, "I absolve thee, etc." and then he put his arm around my neck and very "fatherly" kissed me. In the midst of my sanctifying

confusion I did not know whether it was the Holy Ghost, or if it was meant in brotherly love. But, I quieted my mind with the happy thought that as the priest was Christ in the confessional, it must have been Him who had kissed me, and I believed myself highly favored by this mark of His love.

This same priest, "Father" Ceserri, took me from my home, which was in the Palouse country in the eastern part of Washington, to Walla Walla, which was two days' travel by stage, and a few hours on the railroad. At the end of the two days' stage travel, we were in Dayton, Washington. It had been very warm and dusty all day. The clerk of the hotel showed us to a large room prepared for two. "Father" Ceserri, in a laughing, jolly, good-natured manner, remarked that the clerk took us for man and wife. The priest left the room while I was dusting and arranging myself. When he returned, he had a couple of bottles of porter, he called it, and two big goblets. He opened the porter and filled the goblets, handed one to me and kept the other himself. I would not take it, telling him that I never took liquor. He pleaded that I should drink it as it would do me good after the tiresome travel of the day. He could not prevail upon me to take it, so he left the room again, returning soon with some beer, saying that this was milder and insisted that I take it. I refused as before. He told me that if I wanted to be a sister that I had to learn to obey, as sisters made vows of obedience. So I consented to taste it in obedience to him. He was then satisfied, as I had obeyed.

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The next day we went to Walla Walla, where I remained about a month with the Sisters of Charity, who took me to Vancouver, Washington, where I entered the convent.

It was understood between the priest and my mother, before I left home, that I would have a year's schooling before entering the Sisterhood. This promise had also been made to me by the Reverend Mother John of the Cross.

On the day set by the sisters, July 30th, 1881, I was notified that I was to be received into the novitiate that evening. I reminded the reverend mother of her promise to me in regard to school, and she told me that she had not forgotten it, that the two years' novitiate was all schooling. I believed her, and, as I had already had a few lessons in obedience, I thought it best for me to do as she directed. I had learned that the reverend mother superior was the same over us in the convent as the priest in the confessional and church. So I yielded in all confidence to her for my future interests.

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Elizabeth Schoffen, One Month Before Leaving Home for the Convent.

On entering the novitiate, I was given a formula, which I said kneeling, as follows: "Reverend Mother, I beg to enter this holy house, and will submit to all the trials to prove myself worthy to become a servant of the poor, and pray for perseverance." I was then led into a large, barn-like hall or room, with a long, sort-of-workshop table in the center, and a number of plain chairs—this was all the furniture. There were a few holy pictures on the wall which broke the awful bareness.

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The frames were black, coffin-like strips of wood, very forcibly impressing the idea of death on my mind.

I was then led to a graded oratory where there were various statues and lighted candles, before which I knelt, ahead of the novices and the Mistress of Novices, and prayed: "Veni, Creator Spiritus," meaning, "Come, O Holy Ghost," and the Litany of the Saints. With this introductory ceremony over, the Mistress came to me with a large pair of scissors and cut off my beautiful, golden-brown hair, my only beauty. This was the first "mark of the beast," the first preparatory act for Rome's "holy" institution.

I was then a "postulant" which means on probation. The postulant period generally is six months. During that time the sisters decide whether or not the candidate has a religious calling—that is, to find out more intimately her character, disposition, temperament, inclinations, disinclinations—to see if she has the bodily fitness and soul requirements to be permitted the next step of advancement in this "holy" calling.

I was told by the mistress that the closing of the door of that "holy" house was a complete separation of myself from the sinful world. That if I wanted to be a spouse of Christ and a good sister, I had to absolutely forget everything outside the convent, even to my own parents and relations. "He that is not willing to leave father and mother for my sake is not worthy of me." The one important obligation that was repeatedly impressed upon my mind was that I had entered the convent to become a religious to save my soul. The quotation, "Let the dead bury their dead," was translated literally to me, and I was not to worry about any one outside the four walls that enclosed me.

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As a postulant, I was to learn the fundamental virtues of the community of the Sisters of Charity—Humility, Simplicity and Charity. For the acquisition of these virtues I had to learn to diminish in my own estimation; be glad whenever I was given an opportunity to abase, to renounce or to mortify myself. By the interior and exterior practice of these virtues I had to prove myself. By true humility of heart, I had to bear all things and refuse the soul its desires. The poor and humble in spirit pass their life in abundance of peace, I was taught.

One of the first humiliating experiences I had, to illustrate the above teaching, was one Sunday evening soon after I entered. The sister who was to relieve me in the department I was working in, had failed to report and I had not had any supper. The next exercise was benediction in the church and I could not absent myself from this without being dispensed by my superior, and then for only very grave reasons. I went to the novitiate room about eight o'clock, and the mistress of novices rebuked me severely for not being in rank with the novices. I told her that I had not had any supper yet, as the sister officer had failed to replace me in time. I had broken a rule by being absent from supper without permission, so I went on my knees and asked a penance. The mistress told me that I could go to the pantry and get some eatables and take them up to the novitiate room and eat my supper before the novices. She also informed me that I had done wrong for blaming a professed sister for the breach of the rule.

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This seems like a very childish occurrence, and so it was. But it was humiliating for me to sit before a number of novices eating a cold supper, and Rome had made her point by demanding from one of her dupes, and the dupe responded.

Almost from the first day I entered, I had to learn Latin prayers. This was probably the education I was promised. It would have been alright had I been taught Latin so it would have been of some benefit to me. But these prayers were taught me in a sort of parrot-like manner, the mistress of novices telling me how to pronounce the words in Latin, and I knew what they meant in English, having learned the prayers previously. If I were to see the same words written, explaining something I had not previously memorized, I would not be able to read or understand the meaning of them. I learned prayers in French in the same manner.

I will give you an example of a Latin prayer. This is the Angelical Salutation, or Hail! Mary:

Ave, Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Quite often during my postulant period, while I was learning these Latin prayers, I would have to do sewing. This was a beginning of the vow of poverty, which I hoped to take in the near future—learning to be a religious, and at the same time working my hands for the Roman Catholic system.

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The candidate is assigned her work by the mistress of novices and goes through a test to see in what way she can become useful in the service of God as a Sister of Charity. It is a case of getting all the work possible out of the girls from the very start, for these so-called "holy" institutions.

My two years' novitiate training was served in the boys' department of the Orphanage of the Sisters of Charity at Vancouver, Washington. There was an average of about seventy boys in this institution, ranging in age from three to fourteen years. Two sisters had all the care of these children, except the cooking of the food. And, oh, the care these poor children received. They were physically and mentally weak from having been underfed and poorly cared for, and being taught by two sisters who had a parochial school education such as I had.

One of my duties was to awaken these poor, little waif children for Mass at five thirty in the

morning. If, on arising, I found that any of them had failed to get up during the night to attend to nature's call, it was my duty to whip them with a substantial leather strap, which was provided for that purpose. If some of the larger boys needed this persuasive remedy for their ills, they would be taken to the attic, stripped, and some sister would be there to administer the medicine in prolific doses. With this kind of treatment, it was no wonder that we had to be continually on our guard to keep them from running away. I have known as many as six at one time to run away for two or three days, and sometimes some of them would not come back at all.

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On the twenty-fourth day of February, 1882, I was admitted to the "holy habit," in most orders called the taking of the "white veil," the next step to my "religious perfection."

I was now a "novice" and I must present myself every two weeks to the mistress of novices, and in order that she may direct my soul in the spiritual life, I must kneel to her in private and make what is called "manifestation of conscience." That is, to lay bare my heart and mind in everything I can possibly think of, excepting grave sins. If the mistress, who is a cunning director, has any dislike for any of the novices, this exercise is very cruel, for these "saintly" nuns know better than any one on earth how to cunningly torture those in their power—the system forcing them to it.

Every week I had to go to the priest for confession, whether I had anything to confess or not. Very often I had to search my heart and mind to find something to tell this "Christ" in the confessional.

Soon after I became a "novice," we were called to the novitiate for spiritual instruction. "Father" Louis de G. Schram was the chaplain. An orphan boy had been taken out of the orphanage on account of one of the younger sisters having talked a little too much. "Father" Schram said, "Now, sisters, always tell the truth, but to tell the truth you do not have to tell everything you know. Suppose, Sister O'Brien, if somebody would come and ask you, 'Is Johnny Morgan here?' you would not have to say 'Yes, Johnny Morgan is here.' You place one hand in the sleeve of the other hand, and you say, 'No, Johnny Morgan is not here,' and you will mean that Johnny Morgan is not up your sleeve."

This story was given as a spiritual instruction, but it very truly represents the system I lived for thirty-one years—deception, from beginning to finish. With teachings of this nature constantly before us, it was a case of lying, stealing, thieving and "swipping" among ourselves, from morning till night, to make life a little more comfortable for ourselves.

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A novice is not allowed to talk in general conversation with a professed sister during her novitiate period, with the exception of the mistress of novices and the mother superior. These two sisters, and the priest, are the only confidants we have, as we are taught to talk among ourselves on religious subjects only, and if we hear another novice talking in any other subject or breaking any other rule, it is our duty by rule and conscience to report her to the mistress of novices. We are told that we are all "monitors," which means, carry the reports to the mistress of novices.

This practice destroys confidence and causes us to regard one another with suspicion, the result of which is distrust and hatred, and a general spy system. This is one of the most devilish practices taught in this part of a sister's life, one that stays with her throughout her whole sisterhood. Tattling, accusing, charging one another with the most trivial, cruel, and very often wicked acts. Many times the sister accused is innocent of any wrong doing, but there is nearly always a penance imposed upon her, and if she is not in the good grace of the mother superior, the penance is often very severe.

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"Father" Louis de G. Schram (Johnny Morgan Story)

From the first day we enter, we are not allowed to send or receive mail, without it first being censored. This is another manner Rome has of keeping the girls in the convent after they are once there. The practice of censorship of mail is absolutely against the postal laws of the country, but it is done in the convents every day. Why should the postal authorities permit the continuous disregard for the laws? Are the sisters in the convents American citizens and under the protection of the laws of the country, or are they not American citizens? If *you* would open mail belonging to some other person, unless you could give a very good reason for so doing, you would find yourself in the clutches of the law, and would have to account to the Federal government. But you never hear of a superior of a convent being held for opening another sister's mail. Why this discrimination? Is it not breaking the law in one instance the same as the other? [34]

While I was in the novitiate, a letter that I had written to my parents, was returned to me by the mistress of novices, with the instruction that I rewrite it and leave certain parts out, as it would cause my people to think that I was not happy. Yes, dear reader, that is it exactly. It did not make any difference how I felt, whether I was happy or not, the fact was that I was in the convent, seemingly, for better or worse. It was the impression I left on the outer world that Rome was most interested in.

The fact of the matter is, that I was not happy and wished to leave, but did not know what to do or where to go. I knew that I would not be welcomed in my own home or among Roman Catholics, and with the bringing up I had received and under the influence of this religious training, I believed it impossible to be saved among Protestants. Several times I made mention of my unhappiness to the Master of Novices in the confessional. He implored me to be faithful and God would reward me, and if I was not faithful there was small chance of saving my soul. [36]

Nearly always after telling the Master of Novices of the unhappiness in the convent, he would, at the next "spiritual" instruction, give us a long talk about girls who had lost their vocation by leaving the convent, and that they nearly all came to a bad end.

My dear reader, you can readily understand why more of these poor, deluded sisters do not leave these institutions, when, from the very beginning these principles are ground in their very hearts and minds until they become as one bound, tied and gagged.

CHAPTER IV.

A VIRGIN SPOUSE OF CHRIST

MY FIRST MISSION

My novitiate training of two years being finished, I was now ready to be prepared to become a "Virgin Spouse of Christ." My "canonical examination" was conducted by "The Right Reverend" Aegedius Jounger, Bishop of Nesqually. This examination was a very private affair. It consisted of rigid questioning in regard to the vows I was about to take, poverty, chastity and obedience, and especially the vow of chastity. I was asked what I understood by the vow of chastity, and if I thought I could keep it through my life. I was also questioned very closely as to my fitness to take a vow of this nature.

I was informed that my examination had been satisfactory, and on the sixth day of August, 1883, I made my profession as a Sister of Charity of Providence, in the convent of that order, the House of Providence, in Vancouver, Washington. Bishop Jounger officiated at this ceremony, assisted by "Father" Schram and several other priests.

This ceremony included the "nuptial mass" which is the wedding ceremony between the novice, or candidate, as the bride, and Jesus Christ, the absent bridegroom. At this ceremony I received my wedding ring (which I have yet) and took the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. These three things—the wedding ceremony, receiving the ring and the taking of the vows—made me a "virgin bride of Jesus Christ." The head-gear of the garb was changed at this ceremony of my "religious profession," which was the only difference between the garb of the novice and the professed sister in the order I had entered. I also received my number, 554, which meant that I was the 554th sister to enter that order, and which I kept throughout my sisterhood life. All clothes and articles assigned to us for our use are marked with the sister's number, just as seculars (people of the world) use their names or initials, or the numbering of convicts in the penitentiary.

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The following is, in substance, the form of the final and perpetual vows I took:

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. I, Elizabeth Schoffen, in religion Sister Lucretia, wishing to consecrate myself to God as a daughter of charity, a servant of the poor, do hereby make to the Divine Majesty the perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, under the authority of the General Superior, and according to the constitution and laws of the institute and organization.

"I humbly beg the Divine mercy through the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of His glorious Mother and the prayers of the Patron Saints of this Institute, to grant me the grace of being faithful to these vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; for the dispensation of which I will humbly submit to my Mother General and the Holy Father, the Pope. Amen."

[39]

After the taking of these vows, there is more mass during which the act of "Consecration to the Holy Virgin Mary" takes place. I had just been consecrated to Jesus Christ as His virgin spouse, but now I must be consecrated to His mother. Let me say right here that once each year the sisters are required to renew their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and the act of consecration to the Holy Virgin Mary.

The act of consecration to the Holy Virgin Mary is as follows:

'O, Holy Virgin, virgin among all virgins, and queen of all religious associations, we humbly prostrate ourselves at your feet in order to acknowledge that after God, it is to you, O good mother of ours, that we owe the grace of our vocation—devoted and consecrated in a special manner to the devotion of your sorrows. Being called to take care of your dear Son in His poverty, His suffering and to assist Him when dying, we desire that you make us share in your feelings as a mother. Therefore, please make us partake of your compassion for all the spiritual and physical miseries of the children that you have begotten on the cross. Be pleased to look at us as the daughters of sorrow. Deign to receive us in your most amiable heart—this heart of yours that was pierced with the seven swords of sorrow. We willingly love this heart of yours so good. You know the dangers we go through in the exercise of Charity; take great care of us in the midst of our perils, O you who are the helper of all Christians. In acknowledgment of your kindness, we shall work with all our strength to make all people love, serve and glorify thee. Amen.'

Allow me to explain, in a concise manner, the three vows, poverty, chastity and obedience:

[40]

By the vow of poverty, I had to give up all the material goods I possessed and all that I ever hoped to possess either by service or inheritance—being guided according to the Lord's counsel, "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all thou hast and give it to the poor." Even my material body no longer belonged to myself, I was an inherent part of the order. Nothing belonged to me—the clothes I wore, even to a pin, belonged to the community. I had to always say, "This is *ours*," never say "This is *mine*." If any presents were given to me in any of the work I was to do, I had to turn them over to the superior. Not a minute of time is mine any longer, the twenty-four hours of

the day belongs to the community, and if I wish to do anything other than the daily routine, I must be dispensed by my superior.

By the vow of chastity I was forbidden to think of a man or marriage. I was not allowed to kiss and fondle children, especially male children, or to kiss another sister. After a long absence, sisters may embrace and greet each other by rubbing head-gears against the cheeks. I was not allowed to enter the curtained-off apartment of another sister in the dormitory. I was not allowed any more liberty towards even my mother or any of my relatives than I was towards strangers. I may, as my book of rule reads, see them for one-half an hour, upon permission from my superior, and if the time is extended I must be dispensed by my superior for the non-observance of this point of the "holy" rule. Now, when I had this permission to speak to some of my relatives, or some one else, I must never speak in a language not understood by the sister in near surveillance. If these visits occur more than once or twice a year, it is ample ground for humility, and mean, cutting things said by the superior and sisters. This is also a breach of the vow of poverty, as the time spent talking does not belong to the sister but to the community. She is told that it is a bad example to others who may wish the same privilege. It is a continual determined vigilance, keeping the sisters from any communication with the outside world. The rule particularly emphasizes that the sisters shall not keep birds or pet animals, as it would take time, which is not hers, and divert her affection which, as a sister spouse, must be given entirely to her heavenly spouse, Jesus Christ.

[41]

Another great teaching of this vow of chastity is modesty. A sister is taught to keep her eyes modestly cast down, fold her hands in the big sleeves of her garb when in the presence of the "opposite sex" (as men are called), and never look them in the face any higher than the chin. I tried this teaching for some time, but somehow Mother Nature was still with me, and every once in a while I would take a quick look at a man full in the face to see if he was good-looking, and if I could not see a good-looking man, I would look at the priest to see if he was handsome.

As an example for this virtue of modesty, we were told of the young Jesuit priest, St. Aloysius, who was so good and pure and holy, that he never looked his own mother full in the face.

By the vow of obedience a sister is to yield entire obedience of thought, word and understanding to her superior. The will of her superior must be her will, believing that black was white if the superior said so. Literally, she was like a corpse in her superior's hands, and still a tool to work for the Roman Catholic system. What is worse than mental slavery, the stultifying of all our intellectual powers and bringing them under the despotic will of another, and this behind the prison walls and barred doors of the Romish religious convent?

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Obligations to convent life and practices crush all natural instinct. If the sister desires to aim at the high "ideals" taught in the sisterhood, she must abase and humiliate herself. If she has not the courage to make a fool of herself, by abasing and humiliating herself, she must ask her superior to give her some humiliating penance to suppress her feelings of higher nature as proud and coming from the devil. The more sinful and criminal a sister can believe herself in the eyes of God, and the more deserving of prisonlike treatment, and as a worm under the feet of all her companions, the more perfect and saintly she becomes in her own eyes and in the eyes of her superior, who can then use her as a better tool for the benefit of the system.

Any one who knows anything about nuns knows that they are nearly all like children, for under the ironclad, narrow and restricted rule, the sisters retrograde from the day they enter, and as time goes on they become as the rule itself—bitter and heartless, from a sense of morbidness and from the unnatural conditions, circumstances and environment surrounding them. There are the sisters who are childish and silly; others who are the cunning hypocrite. The latter type become the schemers among the sisters for the system, and believe me, they will leave nothing undone to gain favor with the heads of the order and the priests that they might gain some high office for themselves.

For nearly a year after I took my vows, I remained at the Orphanage in Vancouver.

As you already know, I was raised on a ranch, and was accustomed to being in the open air and having plenty of sunshine. These three years of almost complete confinement in this institution, and the long hours of hard, tedious work had begun to tell on my health. And, now as I could hardly attend to my duties, I was transferred to an Indian Mission at Tulalip, Washington, about June, 1884.

[43]

I was at this Mission five years. The first eight months I worked in the boys' department, assisting in the industrial training of about seventy-five Indian boys. The part I had in training these boys was more manual service than real instruction. But my labors kept me out of doors considerably and at the end of the eight months, my health was practically restored.

I was then given charge of the girls' department of the Mission where the work was again very confining.

Imagine, if you can, the terrible conditions I had to contend with at this school. There were about sixty girls, ranging in age from five to twenty-five years. They all slept in one large dormitory with beds so close together, that there was barely passing space, and I occupied one corner of that room. The accommodations for cleanliness were very poor, and the stench in that sleeping room was simply nauseating, and there was no remedy for it, with the existing conditions. In the morning, I had to dress about twenty-five of these girls, and care for the running, mattering sores of many, who were diseased (scrofulous), with an ointment supplied for that purpose by the

government physician.

After this doctor had made a few visits and I had become a little acquainted with him, the superior came to me and asked me about our conversation. When she found out that we had talked about some things that were not strictly business, I was not allowed to be in the room when he came again. She told me that I should be very careful around a man, that I might lose my vocation. [44]

I had to take my turn in the laundry nearly every week, and I remember one instance which occurred which will illustrate how the Roman Catholic system makes a "mountain out of a mole hill" and causes so much sorrow over practically nothing. I had damaged a little red-flannel shirt belonging to one of the children, while washing it, and I never heard the end of this terrible thing until after I wrote to my father and asked him to send me five dollars, that I might replace it. A very trivial thing in itself but the superior kept talking about it, causing me very much sorrow and grief that I shed many tears over it.

While I was at this Mission, I received a letter from my father informing me that my mother was very ill, and that in all probability would soon pass away. This letter had been addressed to Vancouver, and my Mother Superior had opened it and knew the contents. When she forwarded it to me, she inclosed a letter to my superior at Tulalip, telling her to tell me that if I could get some one to take my place and get the money necessary for my fare from my father, she would give me permission to go home to see my mother before she died. She knew very well that it was an impossibility to get any other to take my place, as I did not have the assigning of sisters to work of any nature, and none but sisters were allowed in the Mission. The answer was simply that my mother died and I never saw her after the day I left home to enter the "holy" convent.

Again, after four years of confining work in this department of the mission, my health absolutely failed. I asked to be transferred to some other house where I might have a chance to recuperate. About the first of September, 1889, I was transferred to the Indian Mission at Colville, Washington. At this Mission I had charge of the sewing and assisted in the dining-room. The responsibility was much less than it had been at Tulalip, and, having been relieved of this strain, and depressing conditions, I gradually regained my health. [45]

I had now spent a little over six years in Mission work, and being naturally of an active disposition, both mentally and physically, I knew that I could not endure this banishment much longer. I say "banishment" very thoughtfully, for banishment it was. No companions with whom to converse, as the other sisters in these Missions were generally foreigners who could speak very little English, and as for being companions they were little better than no one. Then, the work was very tiresome and monotonous, with no physical exercise attached to it, nearly all being done in a sitting posture, with nothing to use or enlighten the mentality.

So, realizing these conditions, I asked to be given some work of a more active nature. And, about the first of December, 1890, I was transferred to the Sacred Heart Hospital, Spokane, Washington.

I was at this hospital only a short time, but while there I had charge of the laundry, which meant doing most of the work in that department, and also charge of a ward of fourteen patients, regardless of the fact that I had never had any previous experience of this nature. And, believe me, there were many trying, disagreeable experiences both to myself and the sick, due to my being untrained.

I recall one instance when I nearly injured myself for life lifting a patient when I did not know how to handle a person in a helpless condition. My back was crippled for about a month, but they say experience is the best teacher, and I had had my first lesson of this nature. [46]

A physician had prescribed a seidlitz powder for a patient I was attending, but I had never given one and did not know how to proceed. I asked the sister superior, and then endeavored to carry out her orders. I took two large tumblers half filled with water and a powder in each. Hurriedly I poured the contents of one tumbler into the other and the effervescing saline ran all over the poor man and bed, while he was making desperate efforts to drink a little. All the men in the ward raised their heads to see the experiment and enjoyed a hearty laugh, while the patient received his prescription and a shower bath, both at the same time.

This was one time in my convent life that I received what I had asked for, in fact, it was just the opposite extreme of what I had been experiencing in my previous Mission. I was on my feet from morning till night, and even for recreation and diversion, I was sent to the kitchen to assist in the work there. [47]

CHAPTER V.

MY BEGGING EXPEDITION.

ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL—ROUTINE OF A SISTER.

During the spring of 1891, the Province of the Sisters of Charity of Providence of the Pacific

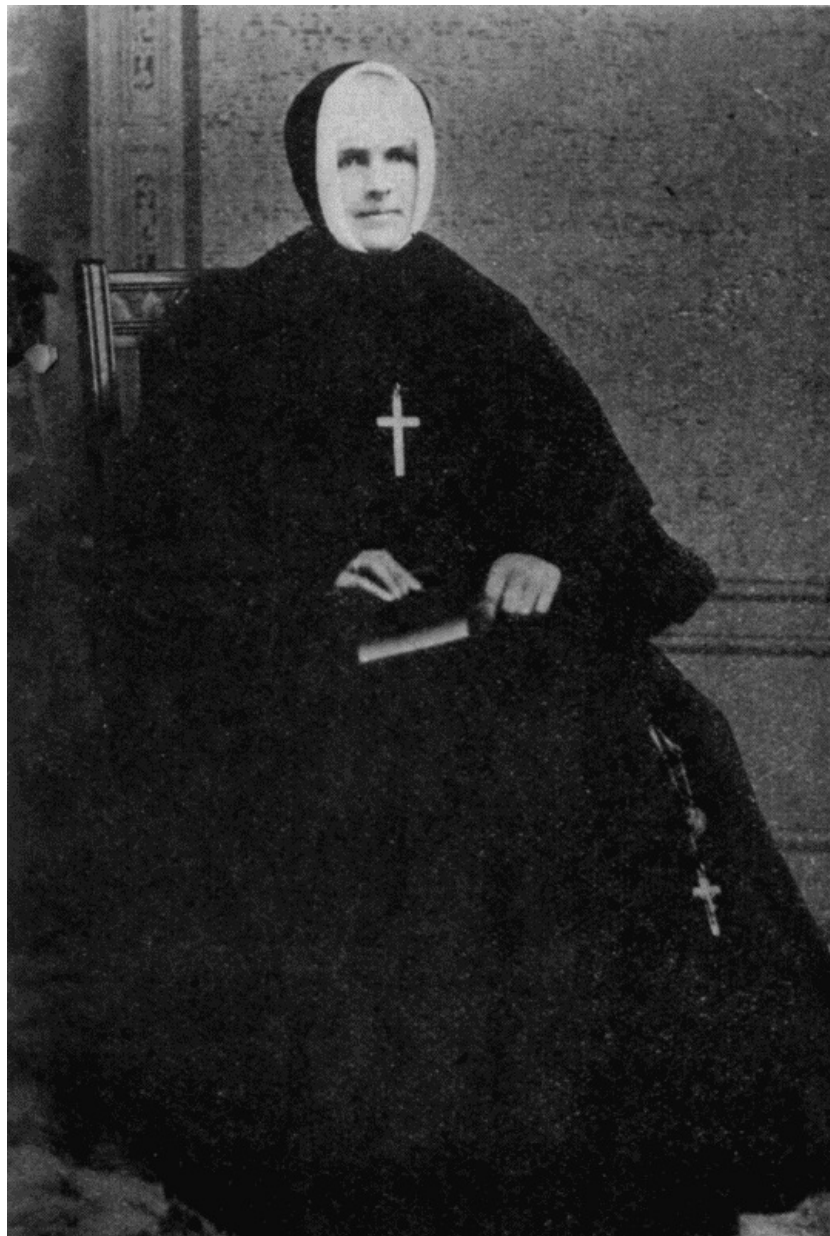
Northwest was divided, and by an order from the head Mother House at Montreal, the sisters were to remain in the provinces where they were when the division went into effect. I was ordered to report to the Mother House at Vancouver, Washington. This was in March, 1891. On my way to Vancouver from Spokane, I had to pass through Portland, Oregon, and while there the order went into effect, and the sister superior of St. Vincent's Hospital claimed me as a subject of the Oregon Province.

I was at St. Vincent's Hospital about a month, when I was transferred to Astoria, Oregon, to St. Mary's Hospital, where I practiced on typhoid patients and became more efficient in laundry work, for a little over a year.

In June, 1892, I was missioned to St. Mary's Hospital, New Westminster, B. C. My duties in this hospital were practically the same as in the other hospitals I had worked in.

It was while I was at this hospital that I was sent on my principal begging expedition. On July fourth, 1892, Sister Ethelbert and myself were commissioned to go north to the logging camps on the islands in the Gulf of Georgia (near Alaska) to secure contributions in the name of Charity for the Roman Catholic Church and to sell tickets for ten dollars each, which would entitle the holder to care in St. Mary's Hospital, New Westminster, B. C., for a specified time. [48]

The hardship and terrors of this trip are indescribable. Crossing the stormy straights in small canoes, camping out at night in the wildest woods, our lives were endangered many times. Arriving at the camps at all hours of the night, tired, wet, cold and hungry; being lifted into bunks by the men when we were so cold, in fact nearly frozen, that we could hardly move; being carried on the backs of the men across muddy and wet places where the water was too shallow for the canoe, or boat, to land. Oh, yes, in the convent we were taught to be so modest—modesty to the very extreme, but it is all right, in the Roman Catholic Church, to send sisters to such places as this, where, as some of the men told me, they had not seen a woman for from three to eight years. It was all right in the Roman Catholic Church because we were getting the money for the fat living of the priests and to enrich the coffers of the Pope of Rome. Believe me, dear reader, no benefit do the sisters ever get from the hardships and indignities imposed upon them on a trip of this nature. [49]



Sister Ethelbert, my companion on the "begging trip" to the Gulf of Georgia, near Alaska. She told me this was her seventh trip to this part of the country on a mission of this nature. She died at the age of thirty-six years.

At one camp we visited, the men refused to keep us over night, so the men who had rowed us all day, began to row us to the next camp. About ten o'clock in the night, a storm arose, and we had to land, as it was too rough to go farther. The shore space was very limited, as there were huge mountains on one side and the breakers on the other. Dry wood was very scarce so the fire we had was little better than none at all. There were four of us—two sisters and two men—and all the covering we had was one double blanket, with the rough, rocky shore for a bed. About two o'clock in the morning, the storm subsided and we embarked again and continued our journey, arriving at the next camp about four o'clock. Two of the workmen very kindly gave us their bunk, but because of the cold there was very little sleep. When we arose, the Chinese cook took us to the kitchen and had us warm our feet in the large oven. He was a very good and kind sympathetic friend for he looked so sorry for us and said, "You have hard time." [50]

Since I had to go begging, I was very pleased to have Sister Ethelbert for a companion because I knew that she was not a trouble-maker, but a truly good and sisterly person. I had hungered and longed for many years to be with some sister that I could talk with on some other than the written religious subjects and I was sure that this was the opportunity. I tried to talk to her, and she would smile at me, and she tried to talk to me, and I would smile at her. It was very apparent that our vocabulary was very limited and simple, when it came to talking on outside subjects. It was not till some years later that I realized why this condition existed. It was from the long silence and suppression, of not only speech, but our very thoughts, having been in bondage so long.

We were away from St. Mary's Hospital just three weeks and brought back a little over eleven hundred dollars in checks and cash. Is it any wonder that Rome can build such magnificent institutions?

As a result of the exposure and hardships on this trip I contracted sickness from which I did not completely recover during the remainder of my convent life. And oh, if I could only explain what it means to be a sick sister! I was not receiving the proper care, so I wrote to my Mother House, located in Portland, Oregon, pleading that something might be done for me. I waited for three weeks for an answer, but received none. I wrote to my Superior again, and told her that if the community could not give me the care I needed, I would write to my father and ask him to see that I received medical assistance. This was a very bold thing for a sister to do, but I was certainly very sick and little did I care what the community would do to me. [52]

When the Mother Superior received this letter, I was immediately recalled to the Mother House by telegram. I arrived at the Mother House, St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland, on the seventh day of July, 1893.

I received fairly good care for a short time; then I was handed a picture of our suffering Lord, and told by the Mother Provincial, Sister Mary Theresa, to practice resignation and make novenas to this miraculous picture for help. (Novena means nine days' prayer.)

For years I was not sick enough to be confined to my bed, although I should have been there many times when I was drudging away, working for the Church of Rome. A sick sister need not look for any care until she is about ready to pass to the Great Beyond. The climax of my sickness came many years later when I had to submit to an operation.

During the first eight months I was at St. Vincent's Hospital, I had very little use of my left hand and arm. I thought it was partial paralysis. A very prominent physician of the hospital staff, whose name I purposely withhold, diagnosed my case and gave it a technical name, which my unintelligible mind could not comprehend. But in my presence he told Sister Mary Bonsecours, who was my officer and who had received orders to see what the doctor could do for me, that I would never be any better. Nevertheless, he prescribed for me which improved my condition to a certain extent. [53]

In this condition I assisted in the caring of patients, doing the best I could, experimenting, as it were, and learning a little here and there at the expense of the suffering sick. We had no instructors or books on nursing until after I had been there about three years, when we were furnished one book, a manual of nursing, and whenever a sister was lucky enough to get it she would keep it until some other sister would have a chance to "swipe" it. A sister once "swiped" it from me, and it took me eight months to get a chance to "swipe" it back. Also, about this time we were allowed to attend certain lectures given by the staff doctors. One of the "certain" lectures we were *not* allowed to attend were those given on maternity, and yet the sisters were held responsible for any errors in caring for cases of this nature. To sum it all up in short, we were instructed to pray that God would bless us and our work and that nothing wrong would happen to the patients.

During the first six years of my experience at St. Vincent's Hospital and after I had recovered sufficiently from my sickness, I was sent to St. Mary's Hospital, Astoria, Oregon, off and on, for short periods to assist in the work there.

In 1895 the new magnificent, six-story brick St. Vincent's Hospital was finished, and we took charge in September of that year. [54]

Here I had charge of ten rooms, and had the serving of two meals daily to the entire floor, which meant about fifty patients, and the only assistance I had was one girl who was neither sister nor nurse, but very good and kind to me. Besides these duties, I had to take my turn in the laundry, do sewing, and above all else, attend to the numberless religious obligations.

In order that you might realize of what these numberless religious obligations consisted, I will here give a program of the daily routine which I had to follow throughout my Sisterhood career:

Rise at	5:00 A.M.
Morning prayer, followed by meditation	5:30 A.M.
Mass	6:00 A.M.
Breakfast	7:00 A.M.
Spiritual reading	9:00 A.M.
Examination of conscience	11:25 A.M.
Dinner	11:30 A.M.
Beads	11:35 A.M.
Recreation for one hour beginning at	12:00 noon
Spiritual reading	1:30 P.M.
Prostration	3:00 P.M.
Meditation	4:00 P.M.
Examination of conscience	5:55 P.M.
Supper	6:00 P.M.
Beads	6:25 P.M.
Recreation for one hour beginning at	7:00 P.M.
Evening prayer and examination of conscience	8:00 P.M.
Followed by a visit to the blessed Sacrament in the Chapel.	
Retire—lights out and silence	9:00 P.M.



[55]

Caught in the Act of Kissing the Floor, a Very Common Penance for the Sisters in the Order I Was a Member of.

In addition to these, the following must be observed:

[56]

Every hour of the day when the clock strikes, each sister must rise to her feet and say, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Blessed be the hours of the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. O my God, I give thee my heart, grant me the grace to pass this hour, and the rest of this day in thy holy love and without offending thee," and one "Hail, Mary."

An hour each week must be spent in the chapel in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

From fifteen to thirty minutes every Friday evening after evening prayer for the exercise called the "culp," in some orders called "chapter." This exercise consists of each sister kneeling before the superior, and all the other sisters charges her with every mean, contemptible, petty wrong, usually a breach of some rule of the order, which they have remarked in her during the past week. Then the "culprit" so charged acknowledges some of these faults, adds a few more herself, and, kissing the floor, asks a penance of the superior. The superior has the authority to impose any of the accustomed penances.

One Sunday of each month is called "retreat day," which means additional prayer and devotion, that the sister may be fortified spiritually for the next month. During this day there are three meditations in addition to the regular daily routine. Each sister must present herself to the

superior to tell her spiritual advancement and the difficulties she has had in the work. Sometimes all the sisters do not have the time to appear before the superior on this day, but she must do so the first opportunity she has during the week, and then it is generally a reprimand for not being there sooner. This retreat day is ended with a long Te Deum, which means a canticle of thanksgiving.

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An explanation of some of the daily exercises will no doubt be of interest to most of my readers.

The morning meal is eaten in silence, except on Feast days or unusual occasions. During the noon and evening meal some sister is appointed to read, generally from the "Lives of the Saints" or "Roman Martyrology," narrations very repulsive and revolting to nature. In this manner we mortify the senses. If we wish something passed while we are eating, we make signs for it. Ten minutes is about the time spent in consuming the gout defying food supplied us. There is a dish-pan with about two quarts of warm water in it on the table, and the first sister finished eating has this pan passed to her and she washes her dishes, dries them and places them in her private drawer in the table at her place. From six to ten sisters wash their own dishes in this same water, and no difference if some of these sisters are diseased, as I have seen them, they would be wasting time to make a change of water, and that would be a breach of the vow of poverty. In all my thirty-one years of convent life, I never had a chair with a back to it more than a dozen times in the refectory (as the dining-room is called). It was either benches or stools.

The following will show the spirit in which a sister should receive her food, given at my spiritual instruction during retreat:

MEALS.

"Attention and devotion in saying the prayers before and after meals, eyes modestly cast down, a deep sense of my own misery, a pure intention in this animal exercise. Never to pick or choose of what comes to table. If anything is disagreeable, to thank God for having given me an opportunity of mortification."

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According to rule, we are allowed two hours' recreation each day, which, in reality, are about the busiest two hours of the day. Oh, no, Rome does not give her sisters any two hours' real recreation, or rest, during her long hours of labor. Such work as preparing fruit for canning or vegetables for cooking, folding clothes that are often very damp, picking over unsanitary gauze, tearing rags for carpet, picking over feathers from old pillows, and other undesirable work is done during these two hours; and then they say the sisters have plenty of recreation and rest.

At three o'clock every afternoon the sister must repair to some private place for profound prostration. That is, she must kneel and bend forward and say: "Jesus Christ became obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross. Son of God, dying upon the cross for the salvation of souls, we adore thee; eternal Father, we offer Thee this, thy divine Son; accept, we beseech thee, His merits in behalf of the suffering souls in purgatory, for the conversion of all poor sinners, and of all in their agony." In addition to this prayer, she must say the "Hail! Mary" and the "Our Father" three times each, or remain kneeling the time it would take to say them and meditate on the prayer said. Then, this exercise is completed by kissing the floor.

Three times each day, five minutes is spent in examining our conscience. We write in a little book provided for that purpose, our faults and imperfections. Before going to confession we are supposed to look over this book and in this manner we forget nothing the priest should know.

A bell called the "regulation bell" calls us to each and every one of these "holy" exercises, and no matter what the sister is doing when this bell rings, even if a patient is sorely in need of her care, she must stop and go to her religious duties. If she is late to any of them, it means punishment, either by reprimand or penance, or maybe both. My readers can draw their own conclusions as to the care a patient gets from a sister-nurse, when these religious duties comes before the duties of nursing.

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One of the great inconveniences and discomforts of a sister-nurse is the clothes which she is compelled to wear. The garb which I wore for thirty-one years weighed about fifteen pounds, and there is no change of weight in this "holy habit" for cold or warm weather. Our petticoats and stockings are the only garments that are changed in weight for the different temperatures. We are allowed two garbs at a time, but a sister wears one nearly all the time until it is worn out. All the cleaning these garbs get is a little brushing with soap and water, and when it gets discolored, it is dyed to its original color. One of these garbs I had for twelve years, and when I discarded it, there was only a small piece of the original left. Think of the cleanliness and sanitation of these poor girls, wearing such clothes, perspiring over the sick, and from cooking and doing laundry work, and even being under the rule of asking permission to take a bath. Over all this when we cared for the sick, we tied a large white apron, slipped on a pair of white sleeves, and then the patients would say, "How sanitary these sisters were." Poor, deluded public; poor, secluded girls; they are not to blame, they do the very best they can under the gag-rule of Rome. Is it any wonder to you that the average sister dies between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five years, when they are compelled to live in this manner and endure the terrible practices I have mentioned in this chapter?

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CHAPTER VI.

HOW I EDUCATED MYSELF.

I BECAME SUPERINTENDENT OF THE THIRD FLOOR AT ST. VINCENT'S.

In the order of the Sisters of Charity of Providence, the rules restrict the members to certain reading. The books we were allowed to read were those on the Roman Catholic religious practices, such as "Christian Perfection" by the Jesuit, Alphonsus Rodriguez, a set of books on "Meditation" by St. Ignatius, also a Jesuit, a book on the "Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul," a prayer book, a manual of community prayers, and a book of rule. If a sister should wish to read any other books, outside of a few like these I have named, she must have permission from her superior, even to the reading of "The Lives of the Saints."

The reading of secular, or profane, as it is called, books are never allowed under any conditions. No magazines, newspapers or periodicals are they ever allowed to read. If there happened to be an article in some religious magazine or paper that it was decided to let the sisters read, it was cut out and handed to them, hereby having permission to read it. Think of the terrible darkness the poor girls are kept in, with nothing to develop their mental faculties, nothing to read except the few chosen books, and when you have read one you have read all, and this over and over again, year in and year out. [62]

When I came to St. Vincent's Hospital, I had been in the order about twelve years. Twelve years of almost silence; twelve years of Latin prayers; twelve years of communion and confession; twelve years of Roman convent-slavery; twelve years of retrogression.

I found myself almost lost as to how to talk intelligibly to the doctors and patients. My vocabulary was certainly very limited. I felt the grave necessity of doing something to aid me in my work. But how? That was the great question in my mind for some time. I had been taught that God would punish me if I dared to read anything except what I was allowed. And, believe me, even twelve years' experience in the convent had changed my views of Romanism but very little, if any.

Finally, one day while on the daily routine, a newspaper came to my notice, and I dared to read just one line. I waited a day or two to see if God would punish me. Then, when nothing extraordinary happened, I dared to read a few lines more, and I waited a few days again to see what God would do.

At last the opportunity came. In one of the rooms I found a book, by the name of "At the Mercy of Tiberius." I dared to read it, and oh, how I enjoyed that novel. It was the first book of that nature, profane reading, that I had ever read. But trouble was brewing. Some sister had seen me reading, and although she did not know exactly what it was, she knew that it was not a religious book, and she reported me to the superior. When the superior asked me about it, I told her I had been reading a book, where it could be found and offered to go and get it for her. But I had her "bluffed" and she told me to never mind. [63]

It took me about six months to read this first book, as I had to steal away and read for only a few minutes at a time. Where do you suppose I went to do this un-Roman, "un-Christian" act of endeavoring to enlighten my mind? In dark closets, bath-rooms, and in fact any place I could secret myself, so I would not be seen by some of the other sisters. For it would mean a reprimand and very often a penance, and the sister thus charged with having broken this point of the "holy" rules, is held under suspicion.

For some time after this it was a problem to my mind as to how I was to obtain other reading. In time I made friends among those who came to the hospital, and very often these good people, mostly Protestant or non-Catholic, would present me with some little token, showing their appreciation of the kindness shown them, as is done to most sisters. Instead of accepting money or other gifts, which by rule had to be turned over to the superior, I would ask them to give me some book, generally leaving the nature of it to their discretion, if I thought I could trust them. Then I would warn them to be very careful when they gave it to me that no sister saw them do so, as it would mean trouble for me.

In this manner I received much good reading, books that were very instructive. When a book was too large to carry around in my big pockets, I would cut or tear off a piece of it, and throw the remaining portion on some old, dusty cupboard in the attic, until I had read the piece torn off, then get a small ladder or box and tear off another piece, and so on until I had finished reading the entire book. One good friend gave me a small dictionary, which was a great help to me. Another gave me a book of word study, which I covered with a prayer-book cover and studied in chapel. This was a case of "Johnny Morgan wasn't here." [64]

By stealing, thieving and lying, so to speak, in this manner I read and studied for a great many years, and I credit my final escape from darkness and ignorance largely to the fact that I had independence enough to read and friends kind enough to give me these books.

During the summer of 1899, I was appointed to the superintendency of the third floor of St. Vincent's Hospital. In this position, which I held for twelve years, I found a few more minutes occasionally to read, and to exercise the little independence I possessed. The result, the more I read, the more independent I became, and this was one of the grave charges brought against me when I was at last transferred, or, I might say, dragged from Portland.

One of the great responsibilities of the office of superintendent was the caring of the priest's apartment which was on my floor. There was the chaplain of the hospital who resided in this apartment, and he nearly always had from one to four "wafer God manufacturers" visiting him, and you may be sure it was not a small care to see that these "gentlemen" had everything of the best, principally in the dining-room. I always had to take particular care to see that there was plenty of cream for their tables when possibly some of the patients had to do without or take skimmed milk, and many times the over supply would sour before it could be used. I just mention cream, but it was the same about many other things, it was always the very best of everything obtainable—cigars and liquors included. Yes, I have carried many bottles of wine to these priests, as well as carrying baskets of empty bottles down the back stairs, that had been emptied by these "holy celibate men of God." A large refrigerator was kept especially for this apartment with a large padlock on the door. It might have contaminated these "holy men of God" if their food had happened to have been mixed with that of a wicked secular, you know. [65]



St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland, Oregon, Where I Served Eighteen Years of My Sisterhood Life.

Another very interesting feature of this new office was the care I had to give sick priests. There was nearly always some priest occupying a private room on my floor, sometimes sick, as they are only human and susceptible to the same ills as others, but many times on "sick leave," in other words, just plain drunk. Many times they would stay with us a month at a time, and once I remember, one made a nice long stay of a year, or more, but he was not drunk. I had to help these "gentlemen" many times, when they were much more able to help themselves than I was. But I was a woman, "a spouse of Christ," and these so-called men were the "representatives of Christ," and that made the difference. [66]

Soon after I had received the appointment of officer of the third floor there were many complaints from the patients and physicians about the food and the manner in which it was prepared. So it was decided that some of the sisters should go to a cooking school which was being conducted by a woman by the name of Miss Porter, in the Exposition Building, Nineteenth and Washington Streets. I happened to be one of the chosen number, and we took a series of twelve lessons, principally on preparing dainty dishes such as could be used for the sick.

After I had completed this course, I was appointed to teach cooking to the nurses in the training school and the young sisters in addition to my other duties. I conducted this class from two to three-thirty in the afternoon. [68]

Our rules prescribe that the hour from two to three be observed by profound silence, and also that no sister shall partake of any food outside of the dining-room without special permission from the superior. During the teaching of this class on cooking, I was compelled to talk to the sisters, and it was also quite necessary that they should talk to me, in order that they could get the proper instruction. When they would cook some dish I would request them to taste it, that they might judge for themselves as to the seasoning. These were serious breaks of the rules, and it caused trouble for me after I had been instructing the class about six weeks.

My young sister pupils plotted with the superior to cause my removal, and wrote to the Mother Provincial, Sister Mary Theresa, who was at that time in Oakland, California, instituting a new house of the order. Sister Mary Theresa did not write to me about the matter, but took it up with my superior, who came to me and said that there was so much complaint about me causing the sisters to break the rule that she would have to change me. She was going to take the superintendency of the third floor away from me and send me to the basement to the fruit cannery to teach cooking. I told her that I could not do that. I had learned how to cook because she had wanted me to, and that if I was going to teach it, I was going to teach it right; and if she would delegate some other sister, I would teach her all I knew about cooking and I would be through with it. But she did not want me to do that, she wanted me to keep the class. [69]

I had done the very best I could with the class, and all this trouble was caused, not because I was

unsuccessful, but because the sisters broke some of the rules of the order, which could not be avoided if they wished to learn. The action of the superior had caused me much distress, both of heart and mind, and with the assistance of two stewards of my floor, I placed all the cooking utensils and supplies of the school in a large box and sent it to the superior's room. For weeks she tried to prevail upon me to take the school back, but I refused to have anything more to do with it.

This instance may not be very interesting to my readers, but I relate it to show how little petty happenings cause so very much trouble, and very often serious trouble for the poor girls in these institutions. There are many more instances of this nature I could relate, but I do not care to burden you with them. My action in this little matter caused me to be looked upon with great suspicion and a certain amount of contempt from the other sisters. It was this sort of treatment that caused me to write notes of the cruelties I, with other sisters, had to endure. I expected to give these notes to some trust-worthy friend to read after my death, but for some unknown reason I kept them and have them at the present time.

About this time, also, I had a class of about twenty young sisters to whom I taught what nursing I had acquired, principally from experience. This was soon abandoned, for the reason that it interfered with evening prayer and retirement at nine o'clock, the only time that could be found during the day to hold the class.

Of all the superstitious and pagan practices that enforces the vow of obedience, is the traditional exercise of penances or penalties. The most inhuman, unjust, humiliating and very often torturing punishments are imposed upon the sisters for breaking any of the many childish rules—rules that just as really and truly bind the poor victim as though she was a criminal in the penitentiary.

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A sister is only human. The "holy" black garb she wears does not change her. She is subject to the same sorrows, the same joys, the same love, the same hate, the same humility, the same pain as you. But here in these hellish, soul-destroying institutions, walled high "to keep the Protestants out," they say, there is a system in vogue that holds women in servitude—yes, slavery—and for failing to heed the "voice of God," which is the voice of the priest, or superior, or the toll of the religious bell, or the observance of the book of rule, there is a penalty imposed, penalties such as will torture or humiliate the poor subject.

Some of the torturing penances are the wearing of the armlet—a chain with little prongs on it to prick the flesh; the scourging of the bare body with the "discipline" or cat-o'-nine-tails—constructed of heavy, knotted cord; kneeling and praying with arms extended in the shape of a cross; and the wearing of the chastity cord—constructed of heavy, knotted cord. This practice ties up our virtues and keeps us chaste and pure.

Some of the humiliating penances are the kissing of the floor many times a day, kissing the feet of our companions, fasting, silence, eating off the floor, and many other little, petty practices and self-denials too numerous to mention.

Think of it, a system here in free, Protestant America, in this day of advanced civilization, holding women in subjection and demanding practices of this nature!

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To illustrate the teaching of this system in regard to penances, I wish to quote from "St. Rita's Prayer Book," compiled by Rev. Chas. Ferina, D.D., and this publication has the imprimatur cross of John M. Farley, then Archbishop elect of New York. On pages 35-36: "She (St. Rita) renounced her property in favor of the poor, renounced every earthly tie to devote herself entirely to austere penance. She professed to have no compassion for her body. She scourged herself thrice every day, the first time being the longest and the instrument composed of little iron chains. Vigils, hair-shirt, the discipline, and rigid fasts were the arms used to afflict her body, knowing that penance is the only means of expiation and salvation for fallen man, although our material age would utterly ignore it. In changing her costume Rita had no need to change her habits, for, as we have seen, as a girl, a wife and widow, she had ever led a stainless life. Her aim now was to attain the height of perfection. But amidst her penances, she had the sweetest consolations; and during her lengthy prayers, her fervent colloquies with God, her daily and nightly meditations on the passions of our Lord Jesus Christ, rapt in her Creator, her soul totally absorbed in Him and almost detached from her body, experienced heavenly delights."

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CHAPTER VII.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE—MASS AND COMMUNION—EXTREME UNCTION—INDULGENCES— ANNUAL RETREAT.

I have previously mentioned that I was compelled by rule to go to confession every eight days. I wish to comment on this Sacrament of Penance, as confession is called, and some of the other practices and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion.

Of all the practices that holds adherents to the Roman Catholic system, the telling of the many faults to the so-called mediator between God and man—the priest—stands paramount. Why not? Roman Catholics are raised to think and believe that by confessing their sins to the man

representative of Christ in the confessional and receiving absolution, God has also forgiven them. God's Word says in 1st Timothy, second chapter, fifth verse, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Not any representative of Christ, but Christ Himself.

The confessional box is a trap for the convent, and after the poor girls are once there they are shackled more than ever in the faith of the religion by the priest in the confessional. The girls abandon themselves, body, heart and soul, to the instructions and directions of this ungentlemanly man—for no true gentleman would ever ask the dirty, filthy, indecent questions in public or private that these men ask many of the girls and women in this so-called holy private place, the confessional—this man, whom we, as sisters and Roman Catholics look to as the mediator between us and God, often in the form of a drunken man. Yes, I have known not a few, and have waited on them in my work at the hospital for a great many years, and I cannot call to my mind one of these "holy men of God" who did not partake of the best liquors obtainable, and I have had to protect more than one from the people there so there would be no scandal. [73]

Then to these liquor-soaked priests I was forced to turn and kneel to confess my sins, to lay bare the innermost thoughts of my soul and most sensitive feelings of the heart and then submit to the most humiliating, shameful questions—so shameful and degrading that I am not permitted to print them or to repeat them.

The priest is the sister's only confidant—she must talk to him on subjects that she would not tell her mother. He is to her what Christ would be if He would come from Heaven and sit there with her. He is her justifier, as she is absolutely in his wily meshes and victimized in his hellish power—for nothing less than hell on earth is the confessional to sisters. It is the destroyer of womanly purity, womanly refinement—destroying the higher instincts and ennobling qualities. A sister does not talk in the confessional of what is best and noblest in her, but is racking her brain all week preparing and gathering everything that is mean, low, degrading, contemptible—digging up secret things to tell and talk about to the priest. The thought of having to stoop and grovel so low and worm-like is sickening, not only soul sickening, but often agonizing physically to the extreme, in the act of ejecting and getting rid of a vast amount of much imaginary wrong and scruples. It keeps the mind poisoned and enslaved in the powers of darkness, busily endeavoring to become sanctified on the mistaken road of pagan degradation, despair and hell. [74]

A form of beginning and finishing confession. This is precisely the same form I used all my life in the church of Rome, but I will copy from Deharbe's Catechism, translated from the German by a Father of the Society of Jesus, of the Province of Missouri, published by Benziger Brothers, Printers to the Holy Apostolic See, and with the Imprimatur of John Card. McCloskey, then Archbishop of New York. Page 110, question 55:

"How do you begin Confession?"

"Having knelt down, I make the sign of the cross and say: 'Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. I confess to Almighty God, and to you, Father, in His stead, that since my last confession, which was ... I have committed the following sins.' (Here I confess my sins.)"

Question 56. "How do you conclude your confession?"

"I conclude by saying, 'For these and all my other (P. III) sins which I cannot at present call to mind, and also for the sins of my past life, especially for ... I am heartily sorry. I most humbly ask pardon of God, and penance and absolution of you, my Ghostly Father.'"

Question 57. "What must you do then?"

"I must listen with attention to the advice which my Confessor may think proper to give me, and to the Penance he enjoins; and whilst he gives me absolution I must excite my heart to true sorrow." [75]

Now, if the priest is good and kind enough to say the magic words, "I absolve the, etc." and absolve the penitent, he is just as pure and free from sin, according to the Roman Catholic belief, as if he had submitted to baptism, and he can go and sin again, so long as he will return to the priest for absolution.

Jeremiah J. Crowley, in his book, "Romanism—A Menace to the Nation," tells of the "moral theology" which the priests have to study to become priests, and which I think will interest my readers. Mr. Crowley was a priest in the church of Rome for twenty years.

Page 74. "Moral Theology of the Roman Catholic Church, printed in Latin, a dead language, containing instructions for auricular confession, is so viciously obscene that it could not be transmitted through the mails were it printed in a living language; neither would priests and bishops dare to propound said obscene matter in the form of questions to female penitents if their fathers, husbands and brothers were cognizant of the satanic evils lurking therein; in fact, they would cause the suppression of auricular confession by penal enactment.

* * * Confessors search the secrets of the home, and so are worshiped there, and feared for what they know.

(Page 76.) "If it is the purpose of state or government to prevent crime and eradicate its causes, the whole of this diabolical system called the Confessional, which is known to worm out the secrets of families, the weaknesses of public men, and thereby get them under control—to either

silence them or make them active agents in the Roman Catholic cause—above all, the debauching of maids and matrons by means of vile interrogatories prescribed by Liguori, and sanctioned by the Church—should be abrogated by a national law in every civilized country on the globe." [76]

While I was a novice, the Master of Novices in his religious instructions to the novices, told us that the worst Catholic stood a better chance of saving his soul than the best Protestant, because the Catholic, no matter how many or grievous the sins he might commit, could confess them to the priest and be forgiven; while the Protestant, though he might be a very good man, had no priest to confess his sins to, and cannot be forgiven. Therefore, he dies in sin, as every man is sinful, and is lost, for the Scripture says, "Nothing defiled can enter Heaven."

Three things are necessary for absolution—contrition, confession and penance. Of course, the priest pronounces the words of absolution before the penance is performed, but the remission of the sins confessed is not complete until the penance is performed. Every sin must be confessed to the priest, the most secret and grievous, or there can be no remission, according to the Roman Catholic teaching.

With these teachings and this papal practice of confession you can readily understand how this one sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church, more than any other binds the people to it. Let me say as Mr. Crowley said to the American brothers, husbands and fathers who have sisters, wives and daughters being entrapped in this terror of all terrors, the confessional—get educated on this subject. And let me say that when you do, if there is any manhood in you, the confessional in the Roman Catholic Church will cease. [77]

"Mass is the perpetual sacrifice of the New Law, in which Christ offers Himself in an unbloody manner, as He once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the Cross." (Deharbe's Catechism, page 98.)

To hear mass, we are witnessing in a sort of "mummyfied" manner, a show at the altar, which is lighted with candles, decorated with flowers, costly images of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints, holy pictures, relics of the saints, gold or silver ciboriums and ostensoriums, and many other articles of altar and sanctuary use too many to enumerate.

During this or other ceremonies, the priest is dressed in a long oriental robe covered with a kimona-style surplice—which is often nearly all costly lace—chasuble, cope, maniple, stole, mitre, and other gaudy-colored, gold-fringed, embroidered pieces of apparel.

The mass must be recited in Latin. The priest at the altar with his back to the congregation, recites Latin prayers for from one-half to three-quarters of an hour. During these prayers the act of "transubstantiation" takes place. That is, the changing of the wine and bread into the actual body, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. That is the actual belief of the Roman Catholic adherents, as in the creed of Pope Pius V, it says, "I profess, likewise, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is truly, really, and substantially the Body and Blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calleth Transubstantiation. I also confess that under either kind alone Christ is received whole and entire, and a true sacrament." (Chamber's Ency., Collier 1890, under Roman Catholic Church.) [78]

To receive communion, the sisters in the convents where I have been, marched to the altar by twos, knelt and received the "body of Christ," but never the "blood." No one is allowed any of the wine, or "blood," except the priest or "substitute Christ."

If, during this ceremony, a crumb of the "body of Christ" should happen to drop on the communion cloth, that spot must be marked, and after the ceremony is completed, the priest sprinkles some "holy water" on the spot, says a few Latin words, makes a few signs with his "holy hands," then it is purified, and whatever is used in this purification is burned, or sometimes washed. The Corporal, which is a piece of linen used for handling the "body and blood of Christ" in the mass, must always be washed or rinsed by the priest before it goes to the laundry, because the sisters who do the work in the laundries have not "holy hands," and the priest's fingers have been consecrated and are therefore "holy."

In speaking on transubstantiation, William Cathcart, in his book, "The Papal System," says (pages 170-171), "The priests scorn the idea that there could be any figure in the declaration: 'This is my body,' but when Paul says: 'For as often as you shall eat and *drink the chalice*,' they must grant that it is not the *chalice* but its *contents* that are to be drunk. If it is not a figurative expression, the priests of Rome should swallow the cup as well as the contents. The words, 'I am the vine, I am the door,' are literal if the expression is not figurative, 'This is my body.' No community would suffer more than the Catholic Church from a non-figurative interpretation of every scripture word. In the Catholic New Testament, Matt. xvi. 22, 23, it is said: 'And Peter taking him began to rebuke him, saying: 'Lord, be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee'; who turning said to Peter: 'GO BEHIND ME, SATAN, THOU ART A SCANDAL UNTO ME, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.' If the words, 'This is my body,' must be taken literally, we would mildly insist that Christ's address to Peter shall be taken literally too when He said to him: 'Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto me.' According to that interpretation, Peter is the chief of devils, and the Church of Rome, built on Simon, is founded on Beelzebub himself. A literal interpretation of the words, 'This is my body,' leads to sacred [79]

cannibalism; and of the saying in Matt. xvi. 22, 23, makes Peter the devil, and Lucifer the foundation of the Papal Church. A figurative view of both passages is the true one."

"Extreme Unction is a Sacrament, in which by the anointing with holy oil and by the prayers of the priest, the sick receive the grace of God, for the good of their souls, and often also of their bodies." (Deharbe's Catechism, Page 114.)

Extreme Unction is commonly known as the Last Sacrament of the Roman Catholic Church. It is administered only when there is danger of death.

I often had to prepare the dying for this sacrament. The articles used were a crucifix, holy water, lighted candles, a piece of bread, and five "wads" of absorbing cotton. The priest would come, unwrap his silk bag containing the holy oil (chrism), dip the cotton in the holy oil and apply to the parts of the body where the five senses are located—the forehead, to cleanse the mind of the sins of thought; the eyes, for the sins committed by the sight; the mouth, for the sins of speech; the ears, for the sins of hearing; and the hands and feet, for the sins of feeling. The last members of the poor suffering, I often had a difficult time to get handy for the priest to apply his chrism, particularly in paralysis or accident cases. During all the ceremony the priest is reciting Latin prayers.

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The piece of bread is for the priest to cleanse his fingers after the ceremony. It must be destroyed, together with the cotton used, by fire so that no particle of the holy oil will be desecrated.

This sacrament is supposed to help the soul of the person receiving it to heaven, but it does not keep him from the torments of purgatory.

Before a person is entitled or can accept this sacrament he must be baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. The sisters in the hospital must do all in their power to convert Protestants to the Roman Catholic faith before death. I was instructed that I was not a secular nurse, but a religious and Sister of Charity, and as such it was my duty to convert all Protestants and non-Catholics possible.

I remember one very interesting case of this kind that happened soon after I went to St. Vincent's Hospital. My officer, Sister Mary Bonsecours, requested me to go with her to a room occupied by a Methodist lady who was dying, and she would show me how to make converts. In addressing the lady, among other things, she said that the Roman Catholic Church was the only true church. All who were not baptized in it would not be saved and would surely never see God. The lady simply remarked that she was satisfied with her religion. About the third time I accompanied the sister to the lady's room, she was passing into the last agony, and the sister leaned over her and shouted into her ear that her soul was going to hell forever for not being a Roman Catholic. That is the manner in which many of the sisters endeavor to obtain the patient's consent for baptism into the Roman Catholic Church, and if they are yet rational, they are entitled to the last sacrament, Extreme Unction.

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A very convenient practice for the Roman Catholic adherents is that of gaining Indulgences.

"An Indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment due to our sins, which the church grants outside of the Sacrament of Penance." (Deharbe's Catechism, Page 112.)

"Can Indulgences be applied also to the Souls in Purgatory?"

"Yes, all those which the Pope has declared to be applicable to them." (Deharbe's Catechism, Page 113.)

"Temporal punishment due to our sins" is that which we have to suffer here on earth or in purgatory. This includes the penance imposed upon the penitent by the priest after confession. If the penitent is truly contrite for his crime, the priest has the privilege to relax the penance and grant indulgence, that is, he cannot be granted indulgence unless he is in a "state of grace," which is after having confessed and having been absolved, and fulfilled the requirements of the absolution.

One of the means of gaining indulgences for the sisters was the saying of short prayers, for each one said, so many days indulgence being gained. For instance, for saying:

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"My Jesus, mercy! Mary, help!" 200 days' indulgence.

"Sweet Heart of Jesus, be my love." 300 days' indulgence.

"Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation." 300 days' indulgence.

If we should have some friend or relative dead whom we thought was in purgatory, we could offer these prayers, with many others, for them and in that manner shorten their days of torment in that middle region, as well as shorten our own sufferings there.

Once each year every sister is required to spend eight days in what is called "annual retreat." That is, eight days' religious exercises and spiritual instructions by a priest—generally a Jesuit priest in the order I was a member of—conferences, the performance of penances, etc.

The priest gives five spiritual instructions each day of this retreat, each one lasting about an hour. We must keep absolute silence during these eight days, except to speak to the Mother Provincial on our shortcomings and to the priest in confession. At this confession the poor sister

is supposed to tell all the wrongs and sins committed during the past year, and hours are spent in preparing and waiting, kneeling outside the confessional box, crouching in fear and trembling, hoping and praying that she may escape some of the indignities of this terrible exercise.

At these "retreats" the sisters were allowed to take notes of the spiritual instructions, and I will copy from some of the notes I took. These instructions were given by "Father" McGuckin at the Mother House at Vancouver, Washington, on the subject of "Poverty."

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"It is not according to the spirit of poverty if we think we must require a remedy for every little ache or suffering or pain. We must bear those things with Christian fortitude without a remedy or alleviation. We must not make a superfluous use of things, even of things we are allowed to have for our use of necessity. If we have things that we are attached to, we should take them to the superior, even if she should make us take them back, then we have made the sacrifice, and God accepts the will for the deed.

"Why deprive ourselves of that merit? There is nothing small in regard to poverty, even to a piece of thread. We cannot be too scrupulous in detaching ourselves from the world and ourselves.

"The things of the community do not belong to us and we have no right to anything at all nor to dispose of anything—everything belongs to God and should be used as such and taken care of just the same as the sacred vestments. We have no right to make any agreements with any person in the world, where we, personally, would have any responsibility, for we have nothing and it would be shifting the responsibility upon the community.

"We cannot accept a present for ourselves without permission, but we can and ought, whenever no condition is expressed, with the intention to give it to the superior to dispose of for the congregation. We must never refuse an offer when it is for the congregation. It is our duty to accept and let that person do his good work. Every congregation is generally or always in need of means to perform good works. Let everybody contribute to good.

"We must do our work with anxiety or solicitude, doing our best. Cast your care on the Lord and He will take care of you."

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In this chapter I have endeavored to explain some of the many practices and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic system, as I have found that there are very few Protestants who understand the import of these in the Roman Catholic religion.

The Roman Catholic definition for "ceremonies of the Church," is "Certain significant signs and actions, ordained by the Church for the celebration of the Divine Service." (Deharbe's Catechism, Page 127.) So you see that these various ceremonies must be observed by the Roman Catholics because the church says so, not that Christ instituted any such practices while He was here. And, whenever the *Church* wishes, she can add a few more to her already long list of ceremonies, and the Roman Catholic must believe in it and practice it, or he cannot continue to be Roman Catholic.

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CHAPTER VIII.

MY TRIP TO THE GENERAL MOTHER HOUSE.

The sisters of the order to which I belonged were given a visit to the Mother House in Montreal, Canada, once during their sisterhood life, providing they could outlive their turn, as the older sisters came first. This was a great privilege for the sisters, an opportunity to drink deep in their souls the spirit of "holiness" emanating from the saintly sisters who had been spiritually formed and perfected in conventual practices—the Mother Foundresses of the Order.

I will now tell you how I received this privilege.

My father died in 1896, and when his estate was settled I received \$500.00 in cash. It was understood long before this between the sisters and myself that when he died, if I would receive anything from him, I would pay my dowry of \$300.00 to the community. Out of the \$500.00 I received from him, I paid my promised \$300.00 to the community, and placed the remaining \$200.00 on deposit at St. Vincent's Hospital for safe keeping, as I had promised it to the Abbott of Mt. Angel College for the education of a nephew of mine.

While this money was on deposit at the hospital, the Superior General, Mother Antoinette, tried to induce me to take my trip to the Mother House. There were several sisters who wanted the office I filled at that time, superintendent of the third floor, and they also thought it was a good time for me to go on this trip. I could see that it was the \$200.00 and my office they were after, so I refused to take the trip at that time.

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A few years later, 1907, Sister Rita and myself decided it was then time for us to go to the Mother House, so we began to plan in order that we would not be refused when we asked permission of the Superior General, Mother Antoinette.

Sister Rita had been at the hospital all the years I had been there, and we had become very friendly and chummy—that is, as friendly and chummy as sisters can be. We had agreed not to make trouble for each other by telling tales to the superior, and this agreement made it possible for us to come together on some common, sisterly interests with just a little less suspicion. So, on account of this friendly feeling, and because we could talk on a few subjects other than the *Sainte Vierge* and miraculous medals, we were determined to take the trip together.

We made our desire known to one of the leading doctors of St. Vincent's Hospital, whose name I purposely withhold, and he promised to see the officials of the transportation companies, and arrange, if possible, for our transportation. He returned with a very favorable report, and then we asked Mother Antoinette for the permission to go to Montreal, which was granted. Our doctor friend told us that we should visit New York while in the East, and asked us if we would go if he would get transportation. We told him we certainly would if we could get the consent of the Superior General. He informed us a little later that arrangements had been made for the trip to New York. He then suggested that we should return by way of the South, but we feared that we could not get the consent of the officer of the order. Mother Antoinette did not care about giving us the permission to take the trip to New York and through the South, but she knew that the transportation had been arranged, and that Sister Rita and myself were popular with the patients and doctors at the hospital, so she consented, fearing that if she did otherwise it would injure the interests of the institution with the business people and doctors of Portland, who were our friends.

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As soon as our many friends learned of our plans to go East, they very readily came to our rescue with money for our berths, meals and other expenses while stopping at the various cities we expected to visit. One very good friend of Sister Rita's gave her a check of \$200.00. She also had some money from her relatives and friends. I had received some money from relatives and from my friends, and this, together with some "Johnny Morgan" money made several hundred dollars we had between us. I had heard of sisters taking trips East with the so-called "Johnny Morgan" money, and I had also seen one of the superiors of St. Vincent's, Sister Frederick, send presents which had been given to me and been turned over to her by me as our rule prescribes, to her people in Canada, so I decided to use my "Johnny Morgan" teaching now, and I found it very handy. A nurse friend who had trained at St. Vincent's presented each of us with a very fine Japanese suitcase, so we were well equipped for our journey.

I had been sick for a long time before this, several times sick enough to die, and Sister Rita told me that she was almost afraid to go with me for fear that she would have to bury me on the way. I told her not to worry about me; that if I died to see that I was put under ground, and say, "Good-bye, Lucretia," and go on with the journey.

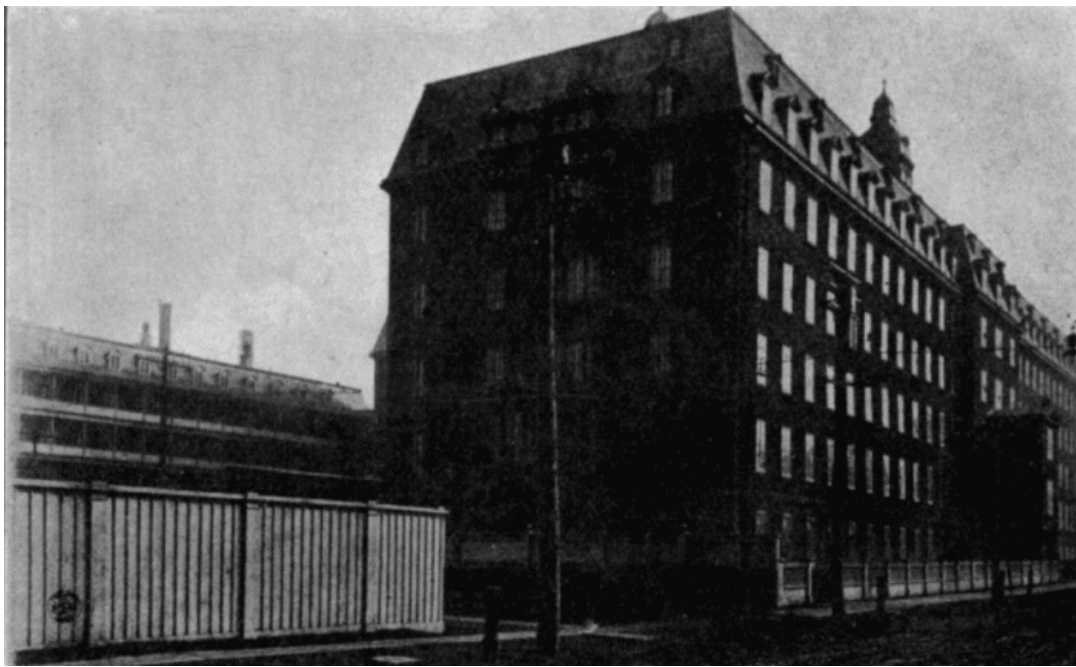
[88]

On the evening of June third, 1907, we were prepared to start and were met by a few friends at the Union Depot, who presented us with dainty lunch baskets with enough good things to eat until we arrived at Chicago, our first stop.

We were met at Chicago by some of my relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Gorman, who entertained us during our stay of ten days. I had a relative in the Notre Dame Convent, whom I visited while there. Her sister, a married woman, asked me if I could do anything for her sister's (the nun) sickness, which I found to be nervousness. I told her the best thing to do for her was to take her out of the convent and let her live like other people live.

The next stop was the Mother House, Montreal, Canada. This building was an immense, dark stone structure, six stories in height, a sure enough penitentiary-looking Roman fortification. The walls of this enormous building encloses a large novitiate, which has about one hundred novices most of the time; large dormitories for the sisters, some of them fitted to accommodate forty, and dark except when lighted by artificial light; a printing plant operated by the sisters, used to print the books and other literature for the many houses of the order; sewing rooms, where clothes are made for the novices in the novitiate and other inmates of the Mother House; a department where the sisters make slippers for the inmates of the house; a chapel, community room, large kitchens, dining-rooms for the chaplain and sisters, bakeries, an infirmary and operating room, and in fact a department for nearly everything used for the sisters in this institution.

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Head Mother House of the Sisters of Charity of Providence, Montreal, Canada.

Most of the professed sisters at this house are those who have passed their years of usefulness in the work done by the order, such as hospital work, teaching, orphanage, etc., or are sickly sisters who cannot do the outside work. There are always several hundred sisters at the Mother House sent from the numerous houses of the order from all over the country, many of which pass their few remaining years in solitude. [90]

There are about six sisters who attend to the business of this house, which is the head of all the different houses of this particular order, and all reports must be made to the head sister, who is called the Mother General.

During our visit there, we were accompanied by two of the holy Maison Mere (Mother House) nuns to an iron vault, to gaze upon and venerate the fleshy heart of the Bishop Founder of the order, Monseigneur Ignase Bourget, which was there preserved in about two quarts of alcohol. We were told by the accompanying sisters that every year on Monseigneur Bourget's feast day, this heart turned to its natural blood-color.

This Bishop was the Christ representative who said to the five foundress sisters who first came to the Northwest to build prison convents here: "Go, my daughters! Fear nothing—I send you in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff. Multiply yourselves to the greater glory of God." (Nov. 1st, 1856.)

We also had the privilege and honor of joining in a novena prayer for the cure of a crippled girl. This novena was offered to Mother Gamelin, a sister foundress of the order, who had been dead since September 23d, 1851, and who was now working miracles which was a final test to prove she was worthy of canonization by the Mother Church. It being time for our annual retreat, we were obliged to listen to eight days of French preaching, confession, prayer and silence in the Mother House. [92]

A large portion of the city of Montreal is now in the hands of the Roman Catholic system—churches, convents, parochial schools or other Roman institutions facing the streets every few blocks. These portions of the city are inhabited by the French Canadians mostly, and as a general thing they have very large families and are poor, almost to a degree of poverty. The church bleeds them of their scanty earnings, then in the winter open soup houses in the name of Charity. One of the sisters at the Mother House told me that she had seen some of these people walk in their bare feet in the snow to some of these "charitable soup houses" to partake of the little bowl of soup that body and soul might be kept together.

The children in these families are nearly all raised in the parochial schools and churches and know nothing but the Romish teaching and that is the reason there are so many French Canadian priests and sisters. The home and family life of the people are so closely related to monastic life that it cannot be called taking a step in life when the boys and girls enter the convent, it is just continuing from babyhood to the end of life in the drudgery of the nunneries.

While at the Mother House, I was told that the French Canadian people were fast losing their faith and becoming infidels, leading a life of worldliness and degradation. Who is to blame for this condition? Surely not the poor people who have been priest-ridden all these years. It is just the same story you hear of every country where Rome has had the control for any length of time. [93]

We visited the Hotel Dieu Nunnery where Maria Monk had her terrible experiences as a black nun. The interior of this convent indicated the truth of her description in her book. In the hospital part there were a few rooms for patients, but principally wards—the beds having curtains around them. We witnessed a doctor making his daily sick visit. He was accompanied by sisters all in black, except a bit of the face and hands. These sisters would handle the medicine and dressings

which were kept in a cabinetlike table, with nothing to protect them from the dust but a curtain around the table. On top of these tables were oratories, such as we had in the chapels, containing flowers, statues, holy water fountains, etc. I asked what these oratories were for and was told they were for the sick to pray to for their cures.

When we were ready to leave this institution, I asked the sister that accompanied us through, if she would come to the gate with us. She came to the threshold of the door and stopped and said that the sisters were not allowed to pass the door without special dispensation from the Archbishop.

In another Black Nunnery Convent we visited there was a large ward, probably one hundred feet long and sixty feet wide, filled with small, low beds, for the accommodation of babies and children. I saw probably forty or fifty children not older than six years. I asked the sister if the sisters there were allowed to take care of babies of that age, for I knew the sisters in my community were *not*, and she told me that they were not; that they had nurse-girls to take care of them and that there was a sister appointed to oversee the work.

We were taken to the basement of this institution and saw the private burial places of the "holy" Mother Foundress of the order and several other sisters particularly distinguished for great sanctity and "supernaturally gifted" while living, as we were told. These burial places were marked by a small, narrow board at one end, and a small wooden cross, about a foot high at the other. The fourteen stations of the cross were erected along the walls that surrounded this burial ground. Special indulgences and blessings were supposed to come to anyone praying in this "holy" place. We were also told that anything that was placed on the grave of the holy Mother, and remained there for some time, became holy, and that if these articles were kept and venerated, the holy person or saint would be the means of special blessings to us. I was given a small sprig of a flower made "holy" in this manner, and Sister Rita and myself had a laugh over it. When I reached the street, I discarded this holy relic. [94]

We spent four days visiting the Longue Pointe Insane Asylum near Montreal. This asylum included seven magnificent stone buildings, and had four hundred and twenty acres of ground. At the time we were visiting, there were two thousand inmates and two hundred sisters who attended the sick. There were also a large number of uniformed men to guard and attend the male patients. We were told that the institution belonged to the government, but had been turned over to the Sisters of Charity of Providence who had the sole supervision of it. A great many sisters of the order I belonged to, and other orders as well, who became drunkards and with other ailments, as well as being insane, are sent to this institution from all over the United States and Canada.

I will give you an example of how some of the sisters go to this institution. A sister I knew very well at Vancouver, Washington, after an eight-days' retreat, was found in a closet by another sister, "sawing" on her neck with a common, ordinary butcher-knife, and had almost succeeded in putting an end to her troubles. When asked what she was doing she just said, "Hell here or Hell hereafter, what is the difference?" and kept on "sawing." Three older sisters sewed and bandaged the wound and as soon as she had recovered sufficiently to travel, was sent to this asylum at Longue Pointe. And this sister was *not* insane but was sick and needed a doctor and medicine, but in order to kill the scandal, she was sent away so it would be forgotten. [95]

We availed ourselves of the opportunity and went on a pilgrimage to St. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec, about one hundred and sixty miles from Montreal on the St. Lawrence River. There were about seven hundred people on the steamer chartered for this pilgrimage. The steamer was equipped with counters laden with small statues, pictures, rosaries, images magnified and encased in pen-holders, lockets and other cheap trinkets for the passengers to purchase as souvenirs. After buying them we would take them to the priest and have them blessed. About every two hours during the entire pilgrimage, we were assembled by order of the priest and made to say the rosary and other prayers.

At eleven o'clock at night we arrived at Cape Holy Sacrament. Here we were all requested to go ashore and assemble in the church for a special benediction. Each passenger was required to purchase a candle, just a simple tallow candle, for which was charged fifteen cents. When we were assembled in the church the priest blessed these candles with some Latin prayers, and then turned his back to us for about twenty minutes for some more Latin prayers. After this "holy" benediction, which very few, if any of us, understood, we returned to the boat and continued our journey. [96]

We arrived at the village of St. Anne de Beaupre about seven o'clock in the morning and went direct to the wonderful basilica of St. Anne de Beaupre, where we heard mass and received the consecrated wafer-god before we could have any breakfast.

This basilica is a magnificent temple, probably six stories in height, with two high spires, and wonderful chiming bells. In the interior there is a large costly decorated altar, and above this on either side are other altars. On either side of the main auditorium are rows of installed chapels, ten on each side, making twenty in all. Each of these chapels has its own altar and is dedicated to some saint and contains a life-size statue of that special saint.

The statue of St. Anne which works the "miraculous cures" is located about the centre of the basilica. It is about twice the size of a man, and standing on an onyx pillar about four feet high. The open hands are extended a little from the body, and from them stream rays of gold,

representing the great richness of St. Anne's dispensing power. It is to this statue that hundreds of sufferers from all parts of Canada and this country travel every year in search of a cure for their infirmities. There were on exhibition hundreds and hundreds of crutches, canes, sticks and supports for all kinds of infirmities hung on the walls in the back of the church and on two immense pillars. These were supposed to have been left there by people who had been cured by this wonderful statue of St. Anne. Then upon believing themselves cured of their ailment or infirmity they would pay whatever sum of money they could afford, and that is the reason for such a magnificent institution in this small village. [97]

On an elevation near the church was a small building called the holy Sanctum. Leading to this building were twelve steps, which, in order to reach the entrance of the building, we had to ascend on our knees. The images and statues in this building were most beautiful to behold—costly shrines, life-sized statues of some of the martyred saints, and our Lord, as represented in the tomb. The fourteen stations of the cross were engraved in fine art on the walls, magnificent paintings on the ceiling, such as the Angelical Salutation of the Virgin Mary, and other views emblematic of religion. These things were all very interesting to look upon, but the more I tried to pray and convince myself in my heart that this show was religion, the more I found myself losing what little belief I then had.

On leaving this holy Sanctum, we passed a spring which had been tapped to make a fountain. This was known as St. Anne's fountain, and the water was supposed to possess great curative qualities. I could not believe in all this sort of "holy rot," it was getting too strong for me, but Sister Rita took a small bottle of the water which she carried throughout the remainder of the trip.

Next we looked in the basement of the church, which was fitted up very much like the basements of our large department stores, where all kinds of "holy" articles were for sale, everything from expensive statues and priest's vestments to hundreds of devotional and superstitious trinkets of the Romish belief.

There were thousands of people from the surrounding country at this village that day, as it was one of the periodical pilgrimages to the St. Anne Basilica. [98]

Returning to Montreal we witnessed the grand processional parade of the French Canadian people celebrating their National holiday, the Feast of St. John the Baptist. This celebration, instead of being a civil affair, seemed to be more of an ecclesiastical show, with all the various societies and clubs of the church parading in all the pomp and glittering raiment characteristic of the Church of Rome. It seemed to me that it was more for the aggrandizement of the church than for the kindling of patriotism in the hearts of the citizens.

In Quebec, Joliette, and other cities and towns, we could neither see nor hear anything of interest except the greatness of the rich churches, the halls and pavilions for the celebration of festival and saint's days and nunneries, and to admire the self-sacrificing spirit of the French Canadian people for the Romish superstition. Of course, the beauties of nature were very grand at that time of the year, and we enjoyed it to a certain extent, as much probably, as a sister could.

Thus seven weeks were spent in Canada and we both rejoiced in shaking off the feeling of morbid depression of Romish domination even though the trip was supposed to be one of pleasure.

In returning to the States, at St. Albans, on the state line, the trainman announced "twenty minutes for lunch." Sister Rita and myself hurriedly ordered some clam-chowder. In a few minutes it was served, and we had just begun to eat it, when we heard "all aboard." We had a forty-cent laugh, minus the stew, and a run for the train. [99]

We stopped at Burlington, Vermont, at Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Albany, New York City, Philadelphia, and Atlantic City. At Atlantic City, Sister Rita took sick, so we went to Washington, D. C., to the Providence Hospital which was conducted by the Sisters of Charity whose Mother House was still in France.

In two weeks Sister Rita had sufficiently recovered to continue our trip. We were determined to see what was dearest to our hearts in all this trip—Washington's Tomb. We went as close as we could to the tomb, knelt down and touched the cement floor inside the vault with our hands, in feeling of gratitude for liberty to our country, even though we were bound to the government of the Pope of Rome. For just after our visit to priest-ridden Montreal, we were surely thankful for the liberty enjoyed in this country, and we could see that it was this liberty that saved us from a greater hell on earth than we were living.

We visited Washington's Monument, the Soldiers Home, the White House, the Capitol Building and various other administration and government buildings.

Our respects were paid to St. Peter's Cathedral, which has become famous for the Pan-American Mass held every Thanksgiving Day, and which has been attended by several of our late Presidents.

Near the city, we visited a new monastery which was inhabited by French Monks. The most interesting part of this place was that portion under the main building where the basement ordinarily would have been. There was a long, narrow zig-zag tunnel, or passage, about six feet wide and probably seven or eight feet high. We were escorted through about one hundred feet of this tunnel and then the accompanying Monk told us that the remainder of it had not been [100]

finished, so we returned. Along the sides of this tunnel were niches, in which were placed statues, which were visible only by the aid of small burning tapers. In fact, most of the tunnel was so dark that we were unable to find our way without the aid of a light carried by the Monk. It was a crude, "spooky-looking" place, and both Sister Rita and myself gave a sigh of relief when we were once again in the light of day and on top of God's green foot-stool.

We were informed by the priest that these tunnels were to commemorate the Catacombs of Rome at the time of the early Christians.

We went to Baltimore, then crossed the Chesapeake Bay to Norfolk, Virginia, where we visited the Jamestown Exposition. The wonderful exhibits at this exposition, the historic and other interesting places visited while there, were a revelation of the achievements and advancements of this great country, and the acquisition of much historical enlightenment. We knew we were acquiring much knowledge forbidden by the Pope of Rome, but we were greatly pleased to think that we were defeating this self-styled ruler of heaven, earth and hell.

From Norfolk we went to New Orleans. For miles the streets of this large city were lined with little, antiquated, unkept homes, many of which seemed to be falling in ruin. The question came to my mind, "Why do these people not advance?" The answer was very apparent when we saw the strangle-hold the Roman Church had on them, and how they had built immense churches, monasteries and convents for the glorification and fat-living of the ecclesiastical gods. We visited the Jesuit church, which was a structure magnificent and beautiful to behold—with its altars and ornamentations of bronze. At that time this church was considered one of the most costly in America. [101]

During our stay in New Orleans, we stopped at the convent of the Dominican Sisters. In conversing with some of these sisters, we learned how they recruited their ranks. Some of the most trust-worthy sisters would be sent to Ireland to talk the poor Irish girls into coming to this country and living good, pure, holy lives as sisters. We were also told that as a rule, these girls died very young, and generally of consumption. We saw some of them, and they surely looked like caged birds, sorry and discontented, home-sick and care-worn. Previous to this, feelers had been placed before the sisters in my community to see what sisters were willing to go to Europe to get recruits for the Sisters of Charity of Providence, and when I saw these girls, once, no doubt, rosy cheeked and beautiful, but now pale and care-worn from the unnatural, caged life they were living, I made a vow that I would never be the means of enticing any foreigners to leave their homes to become slaves for the Roman Hierarchy.

When we were in Burlington, Vermont, a sister-member of the same order I belonged to, asked me to visit a relative sister of hers in the Ursuline Convent in New Orleans. On the twelfth day of September, 1907, we visited this convent—a monstrous prison-looking institution, about five hundred feet long. Within the entrance there was a hall along the outer wall and on the other side of the hall there were a number of small rooms, or "stalls," about eight by ten feet in size. These stalls were separated from the hall by iron bars, about one-half inch in diameter, running from the floor to the ceiling, about two inches apart. I asked to see the sister by name, and when she came we had to talk to her from the other side of these bars. She extended her hand through the bars to shake hands, and we kissed her the best we could with that barrier between us. This was a cloistered order, and yet there was a parochial school within the enclosure. The children's parents and other visitors were only permitted to see the children or sisters as we had seen this sister. About five feet from the floor, in the center of the grating of each of these stalls, was a little door about fifteen inches square, with a padlock on the inside. We were told these were used for articles brought there that were too large to pass between the bars. [102]

We visited some of the large plantations for which the South is famous, seeing the cotton plants in all their different stages, from the flowering to the picking of the cotton.

Returning to the Pacific Coast we came by the southern route, through Texas, Arizona and California. We stopped a few hours in Los Angeles, and about ten days at San Francisco and Oakland. From Oakland we visited Stanford University, which was still very much demolished from the earthquake nearly eighteen months before.

We arrived home—at St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland—on September thirtieth, after an absence of nearly four months, and I wish to impress upon you that in all our travels we did not receive one cent from our order—and they never once offered us any money to pay any of our expenses or showed us any sisterly solicitude. [103]

CHAPTER IX.

I RECEIVE MY DIPLOMA FOR NURSING FROM ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL—TROUBLE AMONG THE SISTERS.

Hundreds of people take trips like Sister Rita and I took in 1907 every year and there is nothing said about it, for it is only a common trip for the people of the world. But for two nuns in their garb to travel from one side of the continent to the other, and from the north to the south, on a trip like this, is extraordinary. In all my sisterhood life, I have never known any other two sisters

to go on such a trip. I have known them to take longer trips, some of them to Europe, but always on business.

Once more at the hospital where we had spent so many years in drudgery, the smoldering pride and natural ambition which had been suppressed and rudely beaten and forced into oblivion, came from the hiding place with renewed vigor. We realized that a great *something* had taken place within us. We could not see things in the same light as before. The trip had been educational for us, and the knowledge acquired had driven deep into our hearts the conviction of the truth with such power that we found a terrible battle raging within us—Romish convent "rot" on one side and light on the other.

[104]

What were we to do? We had no homes, no place to go to live the remainder of our earthly sojourn; we had served the best part of our lives for the Roman institution and were no longer young; our health was not the best; helpless from every point of view, it was a plain case of go to work, "for better or for worse."

It was impossible for us to believe opened-eyed the foolishness of all the silly superstitions we had so long lived, and yet from it there was no escape, as it was by rule and practice and demand, compulsory. We talked it over and realized that we stood in need of a remedy to counteract the wiles of darkness—neither allopathic nor homeopathic prescription could accomplish this for us, and we knew from experience that the Romish priest could do nothing for us as he was the fountain head of the darkness and ignorance, except perhaps administer a spiritual emetic in the confessional. So we just took up our part of the work as tools, grinding for the Roman machine.

Naturally, the conditions at the hospital were the same as they had always been, but the great change that had taken place in my life caused me to be more independent than I had ever been before. I saw that the treatment accorded the sisters, doctors, nurses and patients was not right, as well as they knew it. They soon realized the degree of independence I had delegated to myself, and I was overburdened with complaints of the wrongs that were going on. Not that I could directly correct the irregularities, but that I might have some influence with those in charge of the workings of the institution.

At St. Vincent's there were sixty sisters—simply women—in whose hearts existed the same aspirations, cravings and desires inherent in all human flesh. There were those sisters with their whole heart and soul perfectly sincere in their religion. Others who were the schemers, intriguing in the most cunningly devised plans imaginable, workers of iniquity and the greatest injustices in the guise of religious show. To your face this class would be so sanctified, always saying prayers and looking to heaven, but when your back was turned, they would step on you, trample you under their feet, or knife you to attain their end, and that they might be glorified and exalted in the eyes of their companions and superiors. The outside world will never know the real meaning of the word "scheme" until they have the opportunity of seeing the hellish plottings of a sister-schemer.

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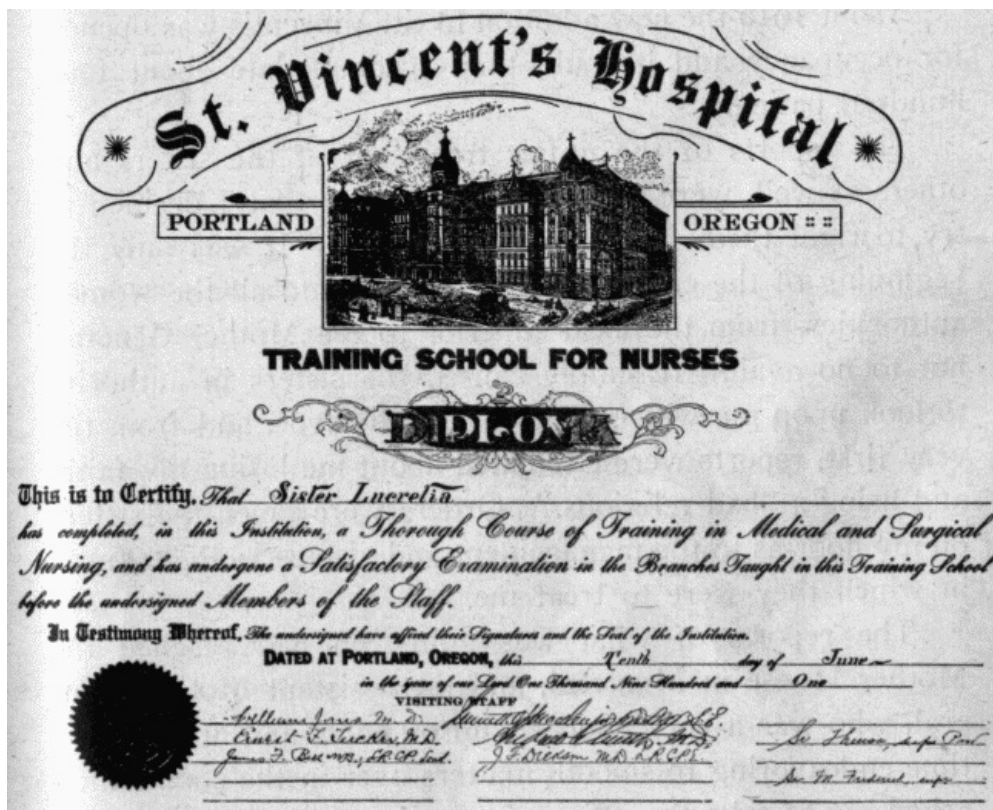
It is only natural that a sister will do her utmost to have work in which she is interested and has some inclination toward, so that she can see and hear those things pleasing to her. Then when she is in her chosen work, she will do all in her power, just the same as other people, to attain the best position possible that life might be brighter and she do the most good, as well as to have a little more authority. In order to gain her aspirations, a sister is compelled by the hell-bound system to live in continual fire—the fire of fear and remorse—the fire of fierce wrangling through pride, jealousy and ambition. Patients and doctors have come to me many, many times, with proof of the awful jealousy and inharmony among sisters. They could not understand that a sister's world was so small and cramped by obedience that they could not get away from their last scene of hell and latest oppression.

It was about this time, soon after my return from the East, that there was a demand from the doctors and patients for more efficient nursing. It had been public talk that the sisters did not train for the care of the sick and consequently did not have diplomas. And yet, these sisters, with only experimental knowledge of nursing, were head-nurses, as superintendents and teachers in the training-school. Superiors were appointed who never had any previous hospital experience, coming directly from orphanages, schools or kitchen work. Others who came direct from Canada, who could not speak a dozen words of English, would be appointed to some high office. From these we would be compelled to take orders which meant blind and military obedience under penalty for the non-observance.

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It was decided that some of the sisters should be given diplomas to show their qualifications for nursing. I was one of the chosen few who received a beautiful scroll of paper certifying that I had completed a thorough course of training in medical and surgical nursing and had undergone a satisfactory examination, in the branches taught in the training school, before certain members of the hospital staff who had attached their signatures. It was also signed by the Superior Provincial and the local Superior. This diploma was a triple falsehood on the face of it, as I had not taken a course of training, I had not taken an examination before these doctors, or any other doctors, on the tenth day of June, 1901, or any other time; and, moreover, I did not receive it until after I had returned from my trip East, which was 1907, which shows that it was either back-dated or had been kept in "cold storage" for several years.

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Fac-simile of the Diploma I Received from St. Vincent's Hospital.

This was simply another delusion of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy to hood-wink the public and cause them to think that the Roman institutions were as efficient as other institutions. Personally, I was qualified to nurse in nearly all branches, as I will prove to my readers before I close this book, but what I knew was not learned by a "thorough training" by any teacher other than the teacher of experience, and now, with over fifteen years of hospital work to my credit, I was receiving what the ordinary nurse receives after three years' training—the diploma. [108]

About 1910 the new addition to St. Vincent's was opened for occupancy and it could then accommodate about four hundred patients.

The reports of the unfair treatment of the sisters and others as well, were coming to me so fast that I decided to try to right them from within the order. It was only the beginning of the end for me. I appealed to all the women authorities, from the local superior to the Mother General, but to no avail. It simply caused the sisters in authority to look upon me with suspicion and disfavor, and from the very first, reports were circulated about me losing my faith, and being a "bad religious." Orders were given the sisters on my floor as to the management and also as to the manner in which they were to treat me.

The reports of what was going on had reached the Mother House in Montreal, and the assistant Mother General, who was a very good friend of mine, and at the same time endeavoring to smooth matters over in the community, asked me to take the office of superior at Astoria. It was simply an attempt to get me out of St. Vincent's and I refused to take the office, knowing that I could not treat the sisters as a superior had to.

A letter soon came from the Mother House, which I will here copy, with others, showing how the news of strife within the community travels. Also how cautious a sister must be with her letters. The envelope was addressed to me, and on the top of it had these words: "P. S. If not there return to me unopened." [109]

Providence Mother House,
Montreal, Feb. 11th, 1910.

(This letter is for yourself alone.)

Sr. Lucretia,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Sister:

What's up? It seems people find you so very, very naughty—so naughty that strong measures are required. Look out, the comet (Haley's Comet) may play serious tricks! But nonsense apart, do write me what has happened in that house? You cannot imagine how anxious I am, knowing what injustice is sometimes meted out under the plea of good order and merely for the sake of carrying out certain plans to attain ones end. Be watchful. I love the community with all my soul, but I hate the iniquity wrought by some of its members through jealousy and ambition. God help the weak! I shall say no more today, but leave it all to the strong right arm of the Almighty.

Good-bye and believe me,

Sincerely yours,

SISTER M. WILFRID.

This letter is proof that I was not the only sister who knew of the wrongs and injustices that were going on under the plea of religion. And believe me, I was very grateful to receive this letter from one so high in the order as Sister Wilfrid. It braced me up for the coming battle.

My reply was as follows:

[110]

St. Vincent's Hospital,
Portland, Oregon, Feb. 20, 1910.

Rev. Mother Wilfrid, Asst. Gen.,
Montreal, Canada.

Dear Mother Wilfrid:

I am not aware of being so terribly naughty, and the same comet (Haley's) that will play unfair tricks on me might get a few played on it, when tricky cards will be played.

When these strange and strong measures will be put to me I will certainly have to know of them and then it shall be my business to learn the reason, and mine to employ whatever means I may require for justice or peace of soul and body. Any grievous wrongs coming to me through jealous and ambitious evil-doers will not be borne by me in a pent up heart any more like in the past. Accusations, as also insinuations, which falsify will have to come to light and proof. They can say all the dirty, wicked remarks about me they please. I know but precious little good has ever been said of me by the community representatives out here in the past, and I do not expect better yet. If I am American in my views and ways, it does not make me irreligious or disloyal. My faults and shortcomings are not worse, nor of meaner character than those I am with, and have lived with. With little effort I can produce plenty comparisons.

I will not again suffer humiliating trials cast upon me without cause, and worse, to no purpose, but to incur the displeasure of God and to please deceitful, jealous, scheming spirits.

You ask me what has happened this house? It would take me six months to put it in writing and make a nervous wreck of myself and then be compelled to leave to others what I attempted to better. Time, and sisters who will be trained by home religious, who will understand our people and sisters, can only right things with us out here. Along these lines the trouble lies in this house. We are even bad for knowing where trouble lies, etc., etc., etc. You know as well as I do.

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I work hard and know that I work well, and I do my duty the best I know. The crime is, I haven't the "L'esprit de la religieuse," because I am not French and they can't bake me over other than God made me. Amen.

With love in prayer, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

SISTER LUCRETIA,
S. C. S. P.

On March 10th, 1910, I wrote her again, further explaining what was going on, as follows:

Dear Mother Wilfrid:

Another item which stands black against me is that I have been taking care of Archbishop Christie this winter. Three weeks' special nurse and for three months I went nearly every day to his residence to give his arm massage treatment. I did my hospital work all but the entering of a few names along with the extra work. I gave classes in nursing to the sisters two evenings per week.

Now, of course, I should be made to feel very sorry that I have been capable of giving agreeable service to such a distinguished patient. It being out of the question to punish him for being pleased with my care or an expression of a word of gratitude. So, it should behoove me to be put through the expiatory system to atone for my sins of having done well and more than the usual effort. I can't tell where the glory of such Christ-like doings belong. No doubt it is the right spirit—too bad I haven't it. What a grievous sin it must be to please, etc.

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Another item, my name was cast a good many times in the ballot box on election evening for the new superior. I suppose I might be called upon to glorify God by expiating for this crime also, in some way or other. Those brilliant gems are being added to other hallows, too. What Paradise! minus innocence. Amen.

As ever.

Very truly yours,

SISTER LUCRETIA,
S. C. S. P.

Just a day or two after I mailed the foregoing letter, I received a note from Mother Wilfrid asking me to write further, explaining more fully the national hatred mentioned in my first letter—she not having received this last one as yet. So on March 18th, 1910, I wrote at length:

Dear Mother Wilfrid:

The only reason French sisters have no use for me, and would never give me a sign of prestige is that I am not French. That is my awful crime. I am liked and approved of by all that I have dealings with—the doctors, the people, the sick—great and lowly—the nurses, the help of the floor—all express happiness and pleasure on seeing me. The English-speaking sisters find a few minutes' comfort of mind and a little peace and enjoyment in my company. In the eyes of jealous, evil minds it must be wicked to possess gifts which radiate peace, happiness and harmony.

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I even admit that I am not dead to approbation or condemnation. I naturally like to give to everybody of the best I have, whatever it may be—to receive people well and friendly, to serve someone a lunch, or to do some little favor of whatever kind, or if it were only a few kind words of encouragement. If anyone wishes my secret, I am not jealous to give my recipe. I always made it a particular point to do everything as well as I could and know that I do it with as pleasing and cheerful disposition as possible. But that is poison to the other side. I am and always have been successful in my office. I taught a class of sisters (nursing) since the beginning of last September, and I know that I did it right and successful the times I could get them.

Why such national prejudice and jealousy? Really what the last election (superior's election) here showed, after all the talking of doing away with the spirit of nationality, the prayers and conferences to the same purpose, then the nationality spirit manifested itself with more force than ever before, at least openly, so that one knows what to call it. It shows clearly, too, that there will never be harmony, and it is obvious that one kind will predominate as long as they can, and when they cannot, the next majority will.

Our community has failed to prove, up to now, that it is a success to have mixed nationalities. In time, of course, anyone can see that one kind will give way to the other, but not by means of harmony—probably by the same methods as of the past, the stronger or the majority shall control the weaker or minority. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Said this time in truth and effect.

First of all, our people, the English-speaking sisters, have no one to go to for redress, who understands them in their troubles and trials and difficulties of a business or social nature, simply silence and obedience without a faint feeling of even a little sympathy in common.

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The Jews did not understand our Lord and His suffering, but the Blessed Virgin did. I believe He had a few other household members who were not only loyal, faithful and devoted to Him, but harmonious, too. If there was jealousy and disagreement, I do not believe that a good and generous worker was taken out of office by the Master and put aside as an evil spirit or put through humiliating and heart-rending trials till there would be nothing left but a grimace and distorted body or an insensible being, an object of pity and sadness.

Should religion, if it was the right kind, make people wish and sigh for death to come and put an end to their misery? Why all this profession of religion if it cannot grow a few flowers and plants of joy and happiness, if it has to legislate people so stiff and cramped in body and mind that they cannot bend without breaking, or breath enough left in them without looking haggard or half dead?

Religion and church are not to blame for want of breadth, harmony and strength amongst ourselves in organizations. It is up to the majority of us sisters to make life part Paradise or all Purgatory on earth, and all the sermons on charity that could be preached in the world and all the good will and generosity put together will fail to produce peace and harmony in a community which cannot organize and legislate just and fair dealings to begin with. Man knows and appreciates this.

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With the other letters I have sent you, you can see the situation. With love as ever.

Sincerely yours,

SISTER LUCRETIA,
S. C. S. P.

The reply I received was as follows:

My dear Sister Lucretia:

Lest you worry about your letter of March 18th, I come, although I have but a few moments to myself, to say it reached me in due time. I have read and re-read it and find that what you say is true. Oh! if trying to please and comfort (without sacrificing one's religious principles) and succeeding therein were crime, I earnestly wish there were more criminals among us. In any case, I would urge you to continue to make other's lives happy, and not allow the narrow-mindedness of some and the unkindness of others to cast bitterness into your own life. It is hard, sometimes, but there are enough beauties and sweetnesses in life if we will only take them, and I am sure you have proved until now you know where they are to be found and how to make use of them. Continue, dear Sister Lucretia; nothing that is good ever dies; we have often heard this and perhaps so far have had occasions to experience its truth. Allow me to quote a few lines I found not long ago and find encouraging: "If you live the most devoted and disinterested life possible, you will find people sneering at you and imputing your actions to selfish motives and putting a cruel construction on all you do or say. Well, it does not matter, for we shall all be manifested at the Judgment seat of Christ, before God and men and angels. Let us live to please Him, for our integrity of motive will be known at the last, and put beyond all dispute."

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I have just learned that Sister Rita has been transferred to Oakland. I hope she will like the South and make herself happy.

Believe me, dear Sister,

Sincerely yours,

SISTER M. WILFRID,
S. C. S. P.

You will observe from the foregoing letters that we, as sisters, do not hold the system accountable for the wrongs we have to endure in the convent. We believe that the sisters alone are at fault, as I have stated in my letters to Mother Wilfrid. But the man or woman with ordinary intelligence, who reads these conditions as they were at that time can readily see the real source. The heads of the institution, who had the sole power, instead of the bettering conditions, tolerated and permitted them to remain. At that, I have my grave doubts if the convent system could *ever* be harmonious. Think of housing a large number of women under one roof, bound by the ironclad, childish rules and precepts. They are a barrier to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," which the Constitution of the United States guarantees every citizen. They make progress an impossibility. The outside world thinks the convent system is a success because they see the institutions grow in size and number, which is due to the economic methods of free sister-service. They never have the opportunity to see "success" from within.

As a further proof that the system is the cause of discord, strife and inharmony among the sisters I will copy another letter I wrote to Mother Wilfrid. There is some repetition of portions of my former letters, but I think the whole of the letter will interest my readers, even though it is lengthy:

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Dear Mother Wilfrid:

I will bring a few other points before you, Mother, which means inharmony in our order. I do not intend to convey to you the idea that I am an oracle of success. The intention being simply to consider some of the principal essentials required for success. Just a little mental view of things.

We all admit that experience is a great teacher—observation its necessary accompaniment. Both are in vain unless a practical application can be made of the lessons to be learned from them.

One of the first essentials of success is common honesty. If those who have had experience in one kind of work could only dare to be sincere enough to express the difficulties they meet, in such a manner as to better conditions. What's in the way? Prejudice, the fear of not standing high as a perfect religious, sisters, whether qualified for leadership or not, ambitious for high offices. If the companion should be a little more gifted in some things than the superior, she should make herself so small and subservient that she can scarcely think. If she cannot look scared, stand back and look perfectly mum. She is proud, independent, trespassing on the superior's rights, disloyal and rebelling against all rightful and lawful authority. She is placed in a responsible position and not permitted to be woman enough to be justified in her own actions. She has to of necessity, due to inorganization, make a blunder of herself and her work. We are constantly blundering and straightening out after each other. Experience should have taught some of us how to improve upon blundering ways. Take for one thing, the frequent changing of the sisters without system or method, often for no reason—then because some have put their heads together to bare so-and-so out, they have to eat "black bread." She has given offence—God alone knows for what trifle. She must be punished and

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made unsuccessful even if the house and place where she is will suffer the loss of her good and successful work. This might be saying a good deal for a subordinate, but it is the price paid for lessons taught by experience. We will have better organization only when we will have our sisters taught from the time they enter the work for which they have aptitude, talent and inclination, and leave them generally where they are contented and successful and not shift them about from house to house, pillar to post, without serious reason. We ought to know by this time that a work one does not care anything about she will not put much effort or interest in.

To stand the hardships in connection with every occupation, one must have some liking for it and be qualified to succeed. And then there will be plenty of room to love God and suffer for Him, and any number of chances to practice the highest degree of religious perfection—entire abnegation, if you will. Such a one can be on the way to Gethsemane every day with greater fervor rather than murmurs.

As a general rule, people who have worked the greater part of their lives or years in certain works, particularly when they reach the years of about forty, adapt themselves with great difficulty to an entirely different kind. They need the efforts and thoughts as well, of younger years to correspond with their generosity and good will. First of all to grasp the situation, and then a renewing of energy, as it were, they need new thoughts to keep in progress with the changing conditions. I cannot see that we have to be a misfit to be a good religious, and to cripple every natural gift—physically or intellectually.

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It takes years of study, practice and experience to acquire the knowledge to fit ones self for the proper and successful way of handling any work or business. People who are every year, or every few years, starting something new, are always beginners, possessing a superficial or smattering knowledge of many things, and thorough in none.

This is the way our house is largely represented here now—and we wonder what is the matter! "What has happened, St. Vincent's?" The greater wonder is that things go on as well as they do.

Another mistake our people make is that of ousting out of office those who do have the good will and energy to capacitate themselves for their work and prove a success all round by making a little more of themselves than the ordinary humdrum routine sisters. The spirit of the rule is one kind of spirit—and there are other spirits. If I have not the spirit, God forgive me. There are plenty of others who have not the spirit. Is it the spirit when one is successful in an office and in all her dealings with the people she comes in contact with, to not even make an effort to have harmony and understanding on the part of her superiors if misunderstanding and discord exists? They are not able to face you with one correction or complaint, but through the religious system, under cover of all that is holy, to oust her and throw her down and out, as it were, regardless of human feelings or sense of righteousness—no, not even common civility. Anyone not made of cast-iron is bound to break—body and spirit—under such tremendous pressure.

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Such is Sister Rita's case, for one.

Yours as ever,

SISTER LUCRETIA,
S. C. S. P.

I want it strictly understood by my readers that all the letters I have here produced were written by me while I was yet a sister at St. Vincent's Hospital, and superintendent of the third floor of that institution. I could tell the same facts without the evidence of these letters, and in a great many less words, but I wish to let the world know that I knew while there that the governing heads of the institution were doing nothing to better the then existing conditions of inharmony and discord among the sisters; but, on the other hand, were making matters worse for them by transferring older sisters who were acquainted with the work and supplanting them with younger sisters who were ignorant in the care of the sick.

In a few words the wrongs could be summed up as follows:

National hatred and jealousy;

The rule of the system compelling the sisters to report on the other sisters to the superior, which means a great many false reports;

The employment of sisters who had no previous experience, and the transferring of those who did know about the care of the sick;

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Superiors who were absolutely unqualified for hospital work;

Non-care of sick sisters;

Ignorance and blind obedience;

The numberless religious practices which took us away from the sick, very often when they needed the most careful attention;

Besides the taking care of the sick, the many other obligations which the sisters were called upon to perform—such as laundry work, janitor work, kitchen work, etc.

And no one to go to for redress in case of wrong.

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CHAPTER X.

MY REMOVAL FROM ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL.

On the tenth of July, 1911, I went to Vancouver, Washington, for my annual retreat. Immediately upon my return to St. Vincent's, July 19, I was summoned to the room of the Provincial Superior, Mother Nazareth, and she informed me that I had been "nominated" to go to Cranbrook, B. C., saying that as my health had not been very good for some time, the change would be good for me. I had undergone a very serious operation some time before this, from which I had not fully recovered. The nervous strain caused by the troubles within the order had not been of any physical benefit to me, owing to the weakened condition of my system from the operation. So I told Mother Nazareth that I did not think that going up in the mountains where the climate was so cold would be very beneficial to my health. I also told her that I did not think that my health was the reason for my removal, but that it was on account of reports, and I wished to know what some of them were. She refused to tell me, and I told her that if she did not care to, or would not, I would go to higher authority, the Superior General.

Talk about system, and the traveling of news! On July 21st, two days after I was informed that I was to go to Cranbrook, I received the following letter:

[123]

House of Providence,
Vancouver, Wash., July 20, 1911.

Sister Lucretia,
St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland, Ore.

Dear Sister:

I am informed by your Provincial Superior that you refuse to accept your nomination to another house.

Please write me to that effect.

Awaiting your answer within a reasonable time, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

(Seal)

SISTER MARY JULIAN,
Superior General.

Can you see how the sisters work to keep ahead of all the other sisters? Using, if necessary, unfair and unjust methods to attain their ends. I had told Mother Nazareth that I would go over her head, and from all evidence she must have immediately sent a messenger to the Superior General with the message that was written me in that letter, which was not true. I had not refused to accept the appointment, but had asked the reason for such a change. Our rule on "Fraternal Charity" and the "Roman Circular" from the Pope, says to "tell the wrongdoer of her faults." So I had the right to be given the reason for my change, after all the reports I had received of my very "irreligious conduct."

Instead of writing to the Superior General, as requested in her letter, I went in person. I asked her to tell me some of the reports she had against me. She informed me that she had heard many reports about me, but that she did not have to tell me. I told her that if I was to correct myself of my faults, I should know what some of them were. She told me that she had heard reports about me counseling a young sister to leave the community, when she was in Missoula, Montana, long before she was Superior General. This I flatly denied, as I had not done so, and I asked her to name the sister, but she refused to do so. She also informed me that a great fault of mine was that I would not report on the other sisters. I told her that this was very true, and that I would not report on the other sisters unless there was something very wrong to report, as I did not think it was right. She became very angry after me questioning her, and said, "I am the authority and you are the subject, and you have nothing to do but to obey your superiors." I said, "All right, I made a vow of obedience, and I will obey; I will go where you send me, and I will do what I am told, but it will be mine to tell the story."

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On my return to St. Vincent's, I went direct to Mother Nazareth and asked her if she had any fault to find with my work. She replied, "No." I asked her if she had any fault to find with my character. She replied "No."

I then went to my local superior, Sister Alexander, to whom by rule I was obliged to go every

month to give an account of my spiritual and material progress or difficulties. It was her duty to tell me if she had any fault to find. She had never found any fault with me all the time she had been my superior, except that I had once given some food to an employee without her permission. I asked her the same questions I had asked Mother Nazareth in regard to my work and character, and she answered the same as Mother Nazareth had. I told her that no one ever had any faults against me before, why all the reports and faults now? To this she made no reply. [125]

My rule gave me the right to appeal to ecclesiastical authority for redress of grievances if I was not satisfied with the decision of my women superiors. So I next went to Archbishop Alexander Christie.

I told him of the wrongs which were causing me many heartaches and sorrows, and also the report the Superior General had told me she had heard so many years before. He told me that the Superior General had no right to handle me on reports she had heard before she had been in office, according to Church or Canon law. He said that I had made a vow of obedience and that the best thing I could do was to obey for the present and maybe he could do something for me later.

I had heard from priests about the justice of Archbishop Christie's Coadjutor, or Vicar General, as he is called, Monsignor Rauw, so I decided to go to him and see if he could intercede for me, or at least cause an investigation. He listened very intently and, seemingly, with much interest to my story of the unjust treatment I was receiving, how I had spent so many years in the service of the community and church. In tears and sorrow I appealed to him to see that the right was done, not that I was complaining about my appointment to another mission, but I was complaining about my appointment to this particular mission on account of the climatic conditions, and in the manner in which I was being sent. There must have been some reason for all this—and I knew well what it was—but I could get no one to tell me so I could defend myself. When I had finished telling my story to this great "holy father," he stood up, and holding himself together with both hands, said, with much force, "In religion we have to make big sacrifices!" [126]

Sacrifice! I was all but sacrificed then, and to get an answer like that from the last one I could appeal to for right! It is impossible to find words to express the feeling that came over me. My heart and very being became chilled. I shuddered at the very thought of religion. In my novitiate I had been taught that if at any time during my community life I would be in need of fatherly kindness and redress, I was free to go in all childlike simplicity to authorized priests or bishops. This was the first time in all my service to the church that I had asked anything of the priestly "fathers." It had always been *my* service and sacrificing for them. And now, when it was my turn to look for some assistance in my extreme oppression—when only a few words from any one of them would have caused the sun of justice to shine on my life—they stood by and did not say a word in my behalf.

"His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." (Isaiah, 56:10,12.)

In all my attempts for redress, the only word of encouragement I had received was from Archbishop Christie, who had said that he "might be able to do something for me later." But, as for the present, I could clearly see that nothing could be done, except for me to reconcile myself to my removal and go. [127]

Remember, dear reader, that I had served eighteen years at St. Vincent's, and it had become as a home to me. Not only had eighteen years of my service been utilized in building this institution, but I had sold hundreds and hundreds of little cards to my friends and patients for five cents each, each card representing a brick in the building. More than that, I loved the work and had made hundreds of friends from every part of Oregon, administering to them in sickness. But laying all these things aside, I wanted to go and have it over with.

So I packed the wreck of a trunk that was assigned to me with what few belongings I had, stealing in a few forbidden books and pictures. In all cases of removals of sisters, the superior is supposed to examine the trunk, but for some reason, unknown to me, the superior did not examine mine, so I succeeded in keeping a great many little articles which otherwise I would not have.

During the last two days, I avoided meeting everyone possible for the final adieu, as the despotic and un-Christian manner of my removal was too sensibly present to me. The friends I did meet expressed great sympathy for me and often there was bitterness of tears from both of us. One of the leading physicians of the staff halted me near the main office, and in the presence of Sister Rita, told me that it was criminal to me after the years of service to that institution and at my years and poor health. He said that it was heartless and most un-Christian treatment. This little speech caused me to think differently of Protestants than I had in the past—that in the end I would rather go to the Protestant heaven than to ever again meet some of these "holy fathers and religious saints."

On July 26th, I left for Cranbrook in company with Mother Nazareth. On leaving St. Vincent's, I placed my arm over my eyes so that I could not see the sisters, or other friends, or even the building where I had lived so long. This was the first of many long, sad, sorrowful days for me. [128]

We arrived at our destination on July 28th, at one o'clock in the morning. The institution which was to be my new home, was a small hospital, which could accommodate about sixty patients.

The next morning, Mother Nazareth and my new superior, Sister Mary Vincent, assigned me to my new work. I was to serve in the dining-rooms—including the priest's—wash dishes, take care of the halls, the sister's community room and the priest's apartment, and to do the work that would be necessary in and about the building. Then, to make everything more "pleasing" for me, they told me that in the near future I could go begging as I had done in my younger years. To this, I told them that I would go, *providing* that I could be home every night, as I did not think I was physically able to be out nights as I had in years past.

This was all for the benefit of my health, and this same Mother Nazareth, who was helping the superior assign me to my work, was the one that told me the change was for that purpose.

After years of struggle and convent slavery, endeavoring to make myself efficient in nursing, this the reward. If I had not been strong and robust, I could never have lasted as long as I had. The average girl in this drudgery goes years before she reaches the age I was at that time. But the years of grind and confinement had begun to tell on me, and the heads of the institution—sly old foxes—could see it; so I had to go. [129]

"Authority intoxicates,
And makes mere sots of magistrates;
The fumes of it invade the brain,
And make men giddy, proud and vain;
By this the fool commands the wise,
The noble with the base complies,
The sot assumes the rule of wit,
And cowards make the brave submit."

—Butler.

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CHAPTER XI.

TWO INTERESTING LETTERS FROM SISTERS—MY LETTERS FOR REDRESS TO ARCHBISHOP CHRISTIE.

I was now permitted to be on mission with my own blood sister, Sister Cassilda. After having been estranged and poisoned in mind against me by the system for over twenty years, she was to be an example for making me a "good religious." And, poor girl, she sure enough was a "good example" of the products of the Roman convent system. She had been on Indian mission nearly all of her sisterhood life. For five years, without ever seeing civilization, she was kept at the Blackfoot Indian Mission, in Alta Territory, B. C. I remember once when she came to Vancouver, Washington, for her retreat, the poor, dear girl looked as primitive as the American natives she had been taking care of. Her sensibilities were dulled from the long practice of mortification and the endurance of terrible hardships. She did not realize it, but she was verily an object of pity. Oh, how sorry I felt, to have my sister there with me, and yet no sister to talk to, owing to the moulding and shaping we had undergone by the Roman Catholic system.

Even though she had never had any previous experience in caring for the sick, she was, at the time I went to Cranbrook, assistant superior of the hospital there. And after all the years I had served in nursing, I was under her direction. [131]

A short time after my arrival at my new mission I received a letter from my dear friend, Sister Rita, as follows:

Dear Lucretia:

Another change. Now they say Mere General (Mother General) intends leaving for your place Thursday the 10th (August 10th). I am not stealing your letter out, as I read it to Mother Nazareth, also to Sister Alexander, then told them that I wanted to see that it got off.

You need your reputation and I would make them prove the *lies*. You were missioned through reports of companions who were out of their rule for not warning you first. Then, superiors have their rule. You have obeyed. Now you sift the matter, though stay in the community and make them take good care of you. That is only fair and just before God and man. When they make use of religion to cover dirty politics it is time to make them face it. You may show this to Mother General or anybody else.

With love, from

Another letter I received from Sister Mary Winifred, about this time, will explain itself:

Providence Academy, Vancouver, Wash.
August 13, 1911.

Dear Sister Lucretia:

Last week I spent a few days in Portland and it is needless to say that I missed you very much, as do all your friends there. [132]

From conversations at recreation I understand that your change was made doubly painful by false charges. You have my heartfelt sympathy in this, for I have experienced that painful ordeal, and I say God help those who must go through it. Let me say to you what dear Father Schram said to me, "Be thankful that you are the accused rather than the accuser. I would rather be in your place than theirs." It is only a matter of time; justice will assert itself in spite of all human power. Your sorrow will be turned into joy. Be brave, dear sister, this will all be righted.

There are some hard things in religious life. God knows why! The words of our dear Lord, "For which of my favors would you stone me," must come to the mind of some religious often during life.

Now, dear sister, I must close.

Believe me in union of prayer and suffering.

Yours ever,

SISTER M. WINIFRED.

Mother General Julian visited Cranbrook on August 13, 1911, and I endeavored to have her right matters, but to no avail. So I decided to write my complaints to Archbishop Christie of Portland. These letters also explain the most important points of the visit of Mother General Julian of August 13th. [133]

St. Eugene Hospital,
Cranbrook, B. C., August 17, 1911.

Most Reverend A. Christie, D.D.,
Portland, Oregon.

Very Dear Bishop:

I am now here three weeks lacking one day; needless to say that I have not been feeling very well, for in the manner I had to take my dismissal from St. Vincent's and move out to mission, I do not think it hardly possible for me to feel extra good, either mentally or physically, unless one was made of cast-iron.

Your Grace, I hate to trouble you; I know you must have enough care on your mind and heavy responsibilities. Nevertheless, I beg you to listen to me a little while. I feel it an awful strain upon my mind and weight upon my heart to have to submit to so much downright cruelty and injustice. Power made use of to take advantage of others. My removal was prompted through ambition and jealousy. I was too successful and well liked, and no means could be found to break my influence except by taking advantage of my sacred vow of obedience to get me out of their way. Now what is this but making use of religion to play dirty politics? This change was brought about over my provincial's head. Our rule says reports are to go to the provincial and she is to make the change or report for such to higher authority. In the visit of our Mother General here, August 13, 1911, I told her I was not satisfied nor at peace in the service of God about the way I had been changed, because I had to feel too keenly that it was as a punishment influenced by reports. She then said that she might have been influenced and talked to the effect that she had all right to make any change, whatever the reasons were. She said that she had reports and that she did not need to tell me where they came from or what they were. I said that if she expected me to correct myself for what was reported against me, I thought I should be told. She insisted that I had been told. I said the only thing I had been told, the one and only charge you already made "counseling [134]

a young sister to leave the community," which I positively denied and said that I might ask an investigation. Moreover, you had this against me before you were in office and I did not believe you could use it against me, even were it true.

Is it not convenient to get into power and take advantage of another for all reports and remarks ever heard about you, years before they knew you?

When I spoke of investigation, she said that she did not say that I was not telling the truth in denying the charge she made. I answered that it was easy to say that now, but the mischief was done; that I was thrown out of the occupation I worked so very hard to become efficient and useful in, and that I did not feel that it should be required of me to begin over as if I was twenty or twenty-five, neither did I think it was required of me to mould myself over according to every new superior's individual ways of thinking and liking, nor to run and jump about my work like a young soldier on picket duty.

I don't claim perfection or sanctity, simply doing the best I know how, and at the same time trying to make the most of myself, becoming a decent human being and Sister of Charity. If I did not appear religious enough to please every sister that knows or hears of me, I could not help it. If I did good work and behaved myself in accordance with our rules and constitution, I thought this was a good deal to be taken into account; and that I did not think that one should be so easily trifled with and annoyed to desperation over faults and imperfections that we are all, more or less, subject to, and for me to be treated like this was injurious to my mind and health.

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She (Mother General) said this was a nice place for me, and I did not need to work if I did not feel well, and that I could do the same work I had done before if I wanted to do it and resign myself.

This is the kind of redress we have, Your Grace. They can even dispense the subject from any or all activity when it could mean torment to some one in their "black book."

I told her I wanted to find out if the church had nothing to say concerning these matters, and also the way I had been removed from office, without one bit of consideration, either for my years of service in the community, which I thought was church service, or my ability or experience. It made no difference in the least how I felt, or what it had cost me to fit myself for my work. All that seemed required on their part was to show me and give me to understand that I was not needed or wanted any longer.

Dismissal in a heartless manner from the work in which I have suffered all sorts of inconveniences, wretched trials due to narrowness, which I could enumerate to you, but would be too lengthy to write. God alone knows the circumstances under which I had to learn my lessons to fit myself for the work I did and managed. I had to be orderly, diet-cook, dish-washer, scrub-woman, painter, seamstress, account-keeper, collector—also take names and history of the patients, nurse and overseeing other nurses' work—these and other things have been my daily round of duties.

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Nice time of the day and years of my life for my superiors to say to my face that they have no fault to find with my work and none of character, and at the same time to do what they have done in the name of good under cover of religion, claiming all right because authority is theirs. Must unfit and unscrupulous ones be left to have their own way entirely? Has justice no weight or meaning in the government of church organizations?

Does it seem fair to take one away from a work that she knows well and gave satisfaction, without giving one a single reason, and put beginners in her place and send the experienced one where beginners ought to start from? If I were even needed here! It really seems as if pleasure had to be taken in seeing how far one could be driven. It is maddening for the victim who has to stand it. I could not have the good will I ought to have, these things embitter one and in conscience I cannot hold myself accountable before God. It is discouraging and checks the better feelings, desires and efforts in doing their best, and in time the result will be callousness, indifference and unfitness for any good whatever. This way of doing is applying the system of authority in the old accustomed way when they want to make a human machine of one—is to deprive them of all chances of interest in life, the final result is bound to be physical and mental break-down or nervous wreck—as I have seen it too many times, unfortunately. Going through this process a number of times hurries our sisters to some cemetery or asylum.

Your Grace, I feel to ask an investigation unless I can be given assurance that I shall be reinstated in my former work and have my name restored.

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Our superiors claim that even an Archbishop has nothing to say in these matters in an order governed by a Mother General. That would be news to me. I thought he was our first ecclesiastical head of church affairs in his domain. I know in Canada

the Mother General is not over Archbishop Bruchasie. There might be a big difference in the States, probably in the West.

Your Grace, I am sorry and humiliated to have to trouble you in this unpleasant manner about so much awful disagreeableness, but I could not endure it without doing my utmost to get such unfairness righted. I cannot tell you in words how much I appreciate knowing you as I do, and that I feel perfectly at home in addressing myself to you during this time of difficulties. I hope and pray that your health remains good, Your Grace.

Awaiting an answer, with much esteem and very best regards,

Yours sincerely and respectfully,

SISTER LUCRETIA,

S. C. S. P.

Letter No. 2:

St. Eugene Hospital,
Cranbrook, B. C., August 28, 1911.

Very dear Archbishop Christie:

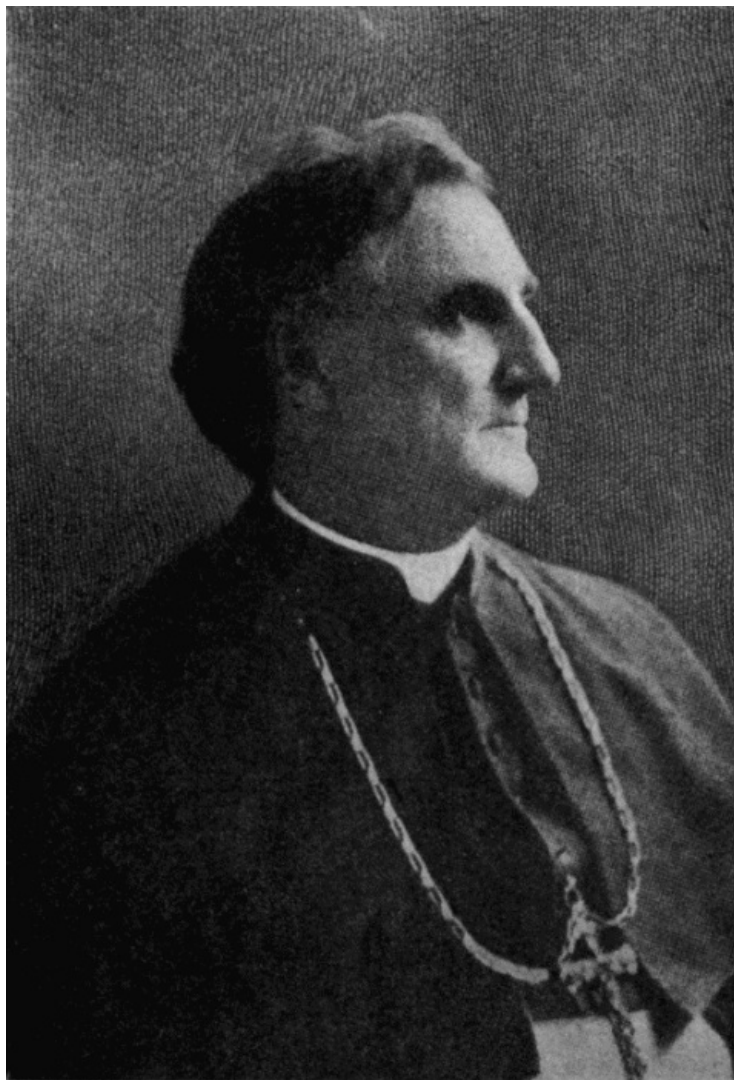
Your Grace, the large letter enclosed in this envelope, dated August 17th, I intended to send at the time, and after I had written it, I thought it was better for me to come to Portland and see you, as some matters in it might require further explanation than I could express in writing, because I wanted you to know the true state of things, and for fear that I might induce you to do anything rash in regard to me, I thought it better to bring the letter myself.

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When Mother General was here on August 13, 1911, I told her that I might ask an investigation. She said it was alright, that I could do so if I wanted to. I supposed that this included my permission to come and see you when I decided to do so—if I needed permission from the lesser authority to speak to the higher. I had told Mother Nazareth that I wanted to go to Portland to see my higher superior on a matter of conscience.

August 26th, last Saturday, I asked her for her pass or transportation to Portland. She said her pass was in Portland and that she would send for it and that it would be here by Wednesday. Instead of that she communicated with our Mother General, this morning she told me so, and that neither Mother General nor she could give me permission or money to go to Portland. I was frank with Mother Nazareth when she spoke of money; I said I could wait a few days for the pass. I cannot understand why this deception. I do not feel good over it, after telling her that I had Mother General's consent for what I was to do. Our people are afraid to make one move without Canada. I do not suppose from this transaction that Mother Nazareth gave Mother General an agreeable account of me since I am here.

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Most Reverend Alexander Christie, D.D., Archbishop of Portland, Oregon.

I am having a much begrudged vacation. I am not any profit to the community just now, having been sick and unable to work for a few weeks. How could I be otherwise, or anyone else with a grain of sense or feeling, I cannot do things slipshod or by halves. Outside of my trip East, I cannot recollect of ever having had more than perhaps a couple of days cessation from hard work in all my thirty years of community life—without speaking of vacation, which I never dared to ask for, feeling sure of punishment of some sort to follow if I did.

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Mother Nazareth quoted Mother General as saying to me, "There was work here if I wanted to do it," and she added, "What was good enough for the sisters here was good enough for me." I told her "Yes, what was good enough for the sisters here was good enough for me, and it was not beneath me at all to do what the sisters here did, but it was out of the question and I do not wish to discuss it, as it is useless."

You see they have determined together—our people having yielded to Canadian "todiers"—to show me that I am to take in silence as much, or as little, as it is theirs to demand. It belongs absolutely to them to subdue me in whatever way they please, to make me see and accept as right the one and only way they see it, and taking upon themselves to refuse me the right of speaking to our own archbishop. This is one of the reasons why I am out of Portland. They are uneasy as what I may say to you. They cannot see it in any other light than that I am telling wrong things and having a bad influence, hence it is better for me to be where there will be no such occasion. What a shame to have to talk of such narrow, childish treatment and small things, but, truths just the same which can make one's life very hard to live.

I also enclose a short letter from Mother Wilfrid, one of our Western sisters General Assistant Councilor. Letter dated February 11, 1910, which is only a little over a year ago now. I found it amongst my things after my letter dated August 17, 1911, was written. I cannot make use of it. It will show that I am not imagining things so terribly in mind, and it is positive proof that I am handled on reports, the nature of which and the numbers of years in gathering I am not permitted to know. They have the advantage of me by my vow of obedience. Your Grace, I leave everything to your wisdom and discretion. I do not want you to do anything hasty or by persuasion, which might be regrettable, though I do think they need to be

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taught the lesson that they are not God Almighty, even though power be entrusted them. I do not say on the minute—but in your own good time and judgment. Mother Nazareth is terribly frightened, and says I will regret going to you.

Our people's talk is that Archbishop Bruchasie is the only ecclesiastical head above our superiors. It is that with them, or pine away out of life seems to be the only alternative permissible. I could address myself to him and then be ordered to go and sit in some dark corner in Montreal the remainder of my days, like poor Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart is doing, and like sickly Sister Gabriel was told that the sheriff would be called to take her to Montreal if she would not go by their orders.

Your Grace, it is a comfort and a miracle to me to be able to tell these things to you, because I know that you can have much good come out of all it now, and more for the future sisters of the country. I am sorry to have to bother you.

Mother General did remark to me here when I told her that I did not feel right about the way this had been done to me, that it might not be for long. Your Grace, I will pray every day that God will bless you with good health and success, and that you will be with us many years to come.

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Awaiting an answer, I remain,

Yours devotedly and respectfully,

SISTER LUCRETIA,

S. C. S. P.

These three letters (one from Mother Wilfrid to me) were enclosed in one envelope and sent to Archbishop Christie by registered mail.

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CHAPTER XII

MY EMANCIPATION.

The many, long, dreary days of suspense that followed awaiting a reply from Archbishop Christie were surely days of indescribable penance. No one for a confident but myself, and my thoughts so pent up within me that I had to contrive some means of relief. My heart was crushed and broken. The suppression of my feelings and the burning sensation of the physical pain I had to endure in the awful conflict of soul and body were almost unbearable. I took advantage of the only remedy within this Roman "house of correction." I would go to the garret, which was the nurses' dormitory, and holding my garb up so that I could move freely, I would pace the floor, hundreds of times, exhausting, so to speak, the surplus energy caused by the unrighteous indignation. And, at the same time, praying in my simple way to the saints for light as to the next step to take. During the late hours of the sleepless nights, with the heavy burden of my troubles on my mind, I would walk the floor of my little room (about ten feet square) like some caged animal pacing his den in quest of liberty.

At the holiday season I wrote a short letter to Archbishop Christie, wishing him the greetings of the season, to which I received the following reply:

[145]

Portland, Oregon, January 2, 1912.

Dear Sister:

I thank you sincerely for your kind Xmas remembrance.

My Xmas was an exceedingly busy one. But it brought me great consolation. The large number of men and women who received holy communion was most edifying. Asking God to grant you a blessed New Year, I am,

Sincerely in Xto,

X A. CHRISTIE.

It had been over four months since I had written my letters for redress to him, and he never once even acknowledged receipt of them, and in this letter, as you can see, he never once mentioned anything about them.

In my depressing perplexities, I had begun to think that there was no such thing as redress in the order, and that the clause in my book of rule, "the right to apply to high ecclesiastical authority," was a blind and a farce, as was the teaching of "fatherly" kindness.

As my eyes opened I realized that I might as well try to tear down the mighty stone walls of the Rocky Mountains, which I could behold daily, as to move the Roman Catholic "religious" machine to interest itself in righting wrongs for a sister in the community. There was nothing for me to do but live on and take whatever wrongs the system was pleased to mete out to me to the end of my days, or to play the hypocrite for a few years, waiting for something better, if those in authority saw fit to give me a change.

I should have had the same privilege of receiving and sending mail in Canada as other American citizens are accorded, but not so. The system, as it always does, demanded and delegated to itself the right to scrutinize all mail sent or received by its subjects. So, in order that I might send and receive letters dealing with subjects other than the Roman Catholic religion and convent, I had to gain the confidence of a "secular" and receive my mail outside the convent. [146]

I had written to a friend in Spokane, Washington, Mrs. A. J. Kearney, who was a graduated nurse from St. Vincent's Hospital, telling her of my trouble and that I was contemplating leaving the order, as I was at last satisfied in my own mind that this was the only step to take. I received an encouraging reply and wrote again, planning further.

In the meantime, I continued my novenas to the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Anthony and St. Joseph, in heart-breaking sorrow and tears—praying for enlightenment, as I had been doing for weeks and months. In all earnestness and sincerity I was bowing, scraping, kneeling, pleading to the images, the statues and the fourteen stations of the cross.

At last, after so long a time, it came to me as if a thunderbolt had come from Heaven, that these statues and images and relics could do me no good. They were all clay and material. What I needed was something divine, but after living what I had lived, I was now ready to believe in nothing. I thought that if God was a just God, He could not and would not permit such oppression and cruelties and injustices to be perpetrated in the name of Christian religion and in His name. I decided that if there was a God who was the Creator of heaven and earth and all things therein, He would surely hear me if I would pour out my heart to Him. So I fell upon my knees and prayed as I had never prayed before—not to St. Anthony, not to St. Joseph, not to St. Vincent de Paul, no, not even to the Blessed Virgin Mary or any other saint, but to God Almighty, asking Him to show me the light and right; that "if what I am living is right, give me strength and courage to live it and endure it to the end, and I will try to believe it. But, O, God! if it is not right, show me the right that I may do Thy will; be Thou my helper now and forever," and I left my future in His hands, continuing to ask His help and guidance each day. [147]

I had been suffering for several months from eye trouble, caused by the excessive cold temperature, it being such a decided change from what I had been accustomed to for so many years. I was being treated by the government physician, but I used the trouble as a pretext to get permission from Mother Nazareth, who was in Portland, to go to Spokane to obtain the services of a specialist. The real reason for which I wished to go to Spokane was to see Mrs. Kearney and make the final arrangements for my leaving the community.

About March 10, 1912, I went to Spokane. During my three weeks there I stopped at the Sacred Heart Hospital. Mrs. Kearney was friendly to the sisters of the hospital, so I had her accompany me to the office of Dr. Hopkins, who was treating me. In that manner, Mrs. Kearney and I had ample time to talk and perfect the plans for my emancipation from the everlasting demands of Rome.

When the time came, I could not reconcile myself fully to the thought of leaving. My childhood and novitiate teaching of the terrible sins of the outside world would come to my mind, and I would then think that I could never leave the convent. The final test came two days before I left Spokane for my return trip to Cranbrook. I concluded that I could not get worse treatment in the world than I had received in the community; that I would not have to work any harder in the world than I had for nearly thirty-one years for the Roman Catholic system; that I would not have to live a more abasing or humiliating life in the world than I had been subjected to, by serving the meanest despotism of government; and I realized that death was preferable and a thousand times more honorable than to remain living in this sort of injustice. I loved the name "Sister of Charity," but I knew I could no longer be a real Sister of Charity under the cruel, oppressive, authoritative guidance I had endured for so many years. I knew that I could be a better Sister of Charity in the world than I could under the dictation of the Pope or his representatives. [148]

On April 2d, I returned to Cranbrook to get my few belongings and to spend a few days with my sister before making the change. My heart was so filled with what I had planned, that I could not refrain from telling her almost as soon as I arrived from Spokane. When I told her of my decision to leave the order, neither of us could restrain our feelings and it was a day of tears and sorrow. We could neither eat nor talk. So in the evening I told her that I had intended to spend several

days with her before going, but as it would do neither of us any particular good, only causing grief, sorrow, and in the end probably nervous prostration, I had decided to leave on the next train, which was on the following afternoon.

The next morning I packed my trunk, then called my sister to my room and asked her to read two letters which I had written while in Spokane, excepting for the date, one to Archbishop Christie and one to Mother Nazareth. I told her that the authorities and sisters of the order would come to her with all kinds of reports in regard to my leaving, and that I wanted her to read the letters so she would know for herself my reasons for leaving. She read them and then said, "You will regret this." I simply replied, "I cannot have more regrets than I have here." [149]

I had my trunk taken to the railroad station, and after lunch, in company of my sister, I went to the post office where I mailed the two letters, sending them by registered mail. Then we went to the station and in a very few minutes the train arrived that was to take me from a darkness to light and liberty that I had no conception of at that time.

At 2:15 I boarded the train and left my poor, deluded sister standing there alone, until the train started, and then watched her walk slowly toward the hospital, until I was carried from her view.

During this last visit to Cranbrook, my sister was in authority at the hospital, the sister superior, Sister Mary Vincent, being away on retreat. This I did not know until I arrived from Spokane, but it would have been just the same if the superior would have been there, as I had made up my mind to leave.

My last letter written to Archbishop Christie, as Sister Lucretia, was as follows: [150]

Cranbrook, B. C.
St. Eugene Hospital, April 3, 1912.

Most Reverend A. Christie, D.D.,
Portland, Oregon.

Very Dear Bishop:

I have now had my situation before my eyes and present to my mind the past eight months. I cannot reconcile myself to live this punishment existence out, as I know others of my companions are doing in exiled corners of this earth, like five-year-old children who dare to speak when they should have been only seen. Really, this sort of treatment is equal to locking a grown woman advanced in years up in a closet as a child for misbehavior. The only difference the parent would tell the child what its punishment was for, while the woman in my case is not to be given a reason, except one false report by my higher superior, which she heard and held against me years before she knew me or was in authority, to knock me as she did shortly after she was in office.

The mission I was sent to was alright as far as mission goes, but I will never believe that it was alright to me, under the circumstances. If this had to be done, the blow might just as well have been applied with a little less cruelty. Of all the houses our very prosperous order owns and controls, I had to go at my years of life to this place enclosed by snowy mountains, the weather temperature being twenty to forty degrees below zero about one-half the year. Having always lived in a warm climate and not feeling well, I was unable to resist the cold. It caused me systemic disturbance and the consequence was eye trouble. The government doctor of the place said the cold did it. [151]

I had to miss Sunday mass from the first of November to the first Sunday in March. I had to sit with a blanket around me near a radiator most of the winter and a comforter over the window to keep the cold out. Splendid remedy to get one over wretched loneliness and sorrow—to make one feel religious and grateful for having worked and sacrificed ones self nearly to the end of ones life and then hear from those over you, "now you can work if you want to," and a sister stays where she is sent, even if she dies, and more bold talk of that kind.

I am not tired of being a Sister of Charity, but I am more than tired living it under the conditions that we have to live it. I will never be anything else at heart than a Sister of Charity; I was that from the age of fifteen, and I will be that to my dying day. It takes nothing short of a trained hypocrite to get along in here. I do not think myself so good or of such excellent worth—I lay no claim above being an ordinary person, but if I do not have the spirit of a good religious and Sister of Charity, I am sure not so many of those I have lived with have it, and I would have to be punished to death, and then I could not in my conscience copy the leading or guiding spirits I lived with knowing all I do from daily practical life and experience for years. If what was done to me in this change is the good spirit, then I have not the least idea what good or evil spirits mean. One thing I know it did for me; I have a dreadful horror of a repetition of anything of the kind and want to remove myself from its possibility. I was not only deprived of every right, but of the least share of

interest in any one thing in the community.

Now you know this is maddening and most cruel and disheartening. This usage kills the body and all ones personalities and fitness for anything. They have done to me in action what others have been told boldly, in so many words, when you are not wanted, get out of the way. After it is plain to see one is about to the end of doing the very hardest work, the meaning is, hurry up and die or get out of the order. It has all it wants of you and is not going to need you or have any further regard for you.

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I have made up my mind to leave and do what I can to get a new lease on a home of some sort, because this means neither home, occupation, nor pastime to me.

I am asking the community two thousand dollars. That would be for my clothing and towards getting myself situated for my support. I cannot expect anyone to take me in on absolutely nothing at my years. I am not able to work like a beginner, but with that amount and with what I can do, I will arrange to get along the best I can.

I have been the means through my economy and ingenuity, of much more than that to the community, without the regular earnings of my services. In Canada, I was told that our community is paying twenty dollars a month to some sisters that left, and have been doing that for years. My request does not come to as much, considering.

I wish to get everything settled quietly. I dislike any publicity about it whatever. As soon as I can get it I intend to leave the country.

I have asked dispensation, not that I intend to break any of God's commandments. I cannot tell you how much I am pained to have to leave you. I have shed many a tear since I left St. Vincent's, and before I could decide to write this letter. If I am to be exiled from friends, that would be only additional sorrow, etc. Or, even if I were stationed where you are and had to feel the uneasiness of some punishment coming upon me for speaking to my higher superiors, that would not add very much to making things agreeable. I appreciate your very great and fatherly kindness to me, and I will always remember you as a very dear friend.

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Begging a remembrance in your prayers,

Most sincerely,

SISTER LUCRETIA.

P. S.—I leave here this afternoon at 2 p.m. My address until things are settled is 0707 Toledo St., Spokane, Wash.

My letter to Mother Nazareth was as follows:

St. Eugene Hospital,
Cranbrook, B. C., April 3, 1912.

Mother M. Nazareth,
Portland, Oregon.

Dear Mother:

I have decided to leave the community. Will you please see about obtaining the dispensation of my vows. I have written to His Grace Archbishop Christie.

If authority is all that is necessary to constitute right, I think I can continue to save my soul better elsewhere, as that was what I took these obligations upon myself for. I am not tired of being a Sister of Charity, but I am more than tired of living it the way we have to do. I did not know until last summer that the spirit of a good religious and Sister of Charity meant to be the victim of evil reports, and that reports were for the satisfaction of the feelings of those in authority. I lay no claim to high perfection, but I cannot see virtue or religion in being taken advantage of as I was. I have always tried to do my best, but at last I see plainly that it is impossible to do enough or to sacrifice enough. The extreme cold has caused me systemic disturbance and the result is eye trouble. The doctor said it was the cold that did it.

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Well, I do not want to refer to too much useless talk. I have made arrangements with a friend of mine for a home. But as I cannot expect anyone to take me in on absolutely nothing at my years, not being able to work any more like I did twenty-

five years ago, I must have some little means, and I ask two thousand dollars which would be for my clothing and towards my support. With that amount and with what little I can do, I will have to manage somehow.

I wish to have things settled quietly, if possible, as I do not care to have publicity about this affair any more than the community I am leaving. I must have some means to go out on or I would not ask anything. As soon as I can get this little sum requested, I will leave the country.

Begging a remembrance in your prayers, and those of the community and wishing the community and every one of the sisters God's blessing,

Very sincerely and respectfully,

SISTER LUCRETIA,

S. C. S. P.

P. S.—I leave here at two p.m. My address, until I get away will be 0707 Toledo St., Spokane, Wash. If I can get the business part settled as soon as possible, I can move on. This same address will forward my dispensation whenever it can be sent to same.

Humbly yours, Sr. L.

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CHAPTER XIII.

I QUIT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

After I had signed and sent these two letters, copied in the preceding chapter, to the agents of the ecclesiastical system, I thought that I had declared the independence of my personal liberty and freedom. I had not the least intention of leaving the Church of Rome, as I still believed that it was the only true church, outside of which there was no salvation. But before many weeks had passed, conditions so shaped themselves, through the persecutions of Rome's representatives, that I decided that the liberty and freedom I hoped to have gained by leaving the convent, was not to be found even in the church.

I arrived in Spokane at nine o'clock on the evening of April 3, 1912, and went direct to the home of Mrs. Kearney. She received me very cordially and we had a long talk before retiring. This first night in the world was a long, sleepless one for me. Everything seemed reversed, so to speak, and my heart was heavy from the terrible ordeal I had endured for the last two days.

The following morning, April 4th, I discarded the burdensome garb, that great load of black serge, and donned a large-flowered kimona, the only other clothes I had, and this was given me. This was the first day since July 30th, 1881, that I had attired myself in any other than the garb of the Sisters of Charity of the Roman Catholic system—nearly thirty-one years. My hair, which was about long enough to hang in my eyes, I tied back with a pretty little red ribbon, which had been on a candy box.

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On Monday, April 8th, Sister Matilda of St. Vincent's telephoned to me, saying that she was at the Sacred Heart Hospital with Mother Nazareth and asked me to come there to see them. When they could not prevail upon me to do so, they condescended to come to Mrs. Kearney's to see me.

Their visit lasted about three hours. In tears and, seemingly, great sorrow at my leaving the community, they tried to get me to return to Cranbrook, saying that none of the sisters except the superior and my own sister knew anything about my leaving the order. Our rule says that if a sister leaves the community of her own free will, she cannot return without dispensation. So I told Mother Nazareth that I could not go back, as it was against the rule. She then handed me a letter from Archbishop Christie and said that that was my dispensation to return. I read as follows:

Portland, Oregon, April 7, 1912.

Dear Sister:

The contents of your letter was a great shock to me. I never thought you would

give way to the temptation to leave your order. I have requested Mother N. (Nazareth) to go and see you.

You did not become a sister in order to be appreciated and praised for the talents which God has given you. You entered religion to do God's work and to save your soul.

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Now, sister, return to your convent. Do not allow the evil one to induce you to leave it. Do as Mother N. directs to do.

Asking God to direct and bless you, I am,

Sincerely in Xto,

X A. CHRISTIE.

I flatly refused to do as Archbishop Christie requested. Mother Nazareth then offered me my choice of the Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, or to return to St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland. When I refused to go to any house as a sister, she offered me my choice of any of the houses of the order, as a home, or boarder, as long as I lived. I had seen too many poor, old sisters, who had received a home such as they were offering me, and knew too well what it meant—"hurry up and get off the face of the earth"—and so I refused this, seemingly, very lucrative offer.

After many more entreaties and the shedding of many tears, I finally said to these two "holy scheming-spirits" of the Roman Catholic system, "I am out, and I am out to stay. If you want someone back, go and take Sister Zita back or some of the other sisters who are sitting in the four corners of the community-world doing penance." (Sister Zita was a poor sister who had left the community for about the same reasons I had left, after serving the church for thirty years. She had begged the system to take her back, but they absolutely refused to do so. Sister Zita told me this herself, together with some of the terrible wrongs that had been perpetrated upon her.)

When they were convinced that I could not be persuaded to return, they then wanted my garb, saying that it did not belong to me. I said that I had worn it long enough, and that I thought I was entitled to keep it. Mother Nazareth then said, "The community might DEMAND it." I answered, "DEMAND! That is the word that has put me where I am, DEMAND. You DEMAND!" (This conversation led to the naming of my book.)

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At last they were beaten and did not know what course to pursue. Finally, Mother Nazareth said, "What will we tell Archbishop Christie?" I said, "Tell him the truth; tell him what has taken place in this room," and with that they left.

On April 9th, "Father" Carti, a Jesuit priest from the Gonzaga College, came to see me.

He had been sent to me by the community in regard to the amount that I had asked in the last letter I had written them. He told me that the community could not give the two thousand dollars, as other sisters would leave and want the same, but that they might give me one thousand dollars.

He then asked me to return to the convent, saying that I did not have dispensation, and that my being out like this could *not* be so, and that I was not out in the world. I looked around to assure myself that I was really out, and said, "Well, I *am* out, and I am out to stay." He tried to convince me that I was in honor bound to go to some religious house till I would be released from my vows by the church, naming several Roman Catholic institutions, lastly, the House of the Good Shepherd. I looked at him in scorn and repeated, "The House of the Good Shepherd?" as the sisters of the order of Sisters of Charity always had a horror for the very name "House of the Good Shepherd." When he saw how I felt over this, he very quickly offered me a home at the Gonzaga College, although that is a Jesuit institution and, as a general rule, women are not allowed there. When all his efforts had failed, he said, in a cunning manner, that as I had trouble in the community, so I would now have trouble in the world.

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I did not realize the significance of this statement at that time—I think Rome's representative had slipped a little—but in the few years to follow I have surely understood the full meaning of it. That is a very true Jesuitical teaching of the Roman Catholic System—Rome rule or ruin.

I told this "holy father" that the community had sent him to see me on business, and that I did not need his exhortation. The business was soon over, I refusing all his offers of every nature, and he retired.

On Thursday, April 11th, Sister Rita visited me. We had as pleasant a time as could be expected under the circumstances. She informed me as to the scandalous manner Mother Nazareth and Sister Matilda had found me dressed when they visited me—"with a flowered kimona and a red ribbon around my hair." She said that they had told Archbishop Christie about it. She also told me that the sisters at St. Vincent's were praying and had forty candles burning for my return.

I read her a copy of my letter for redress to Archbishop Christie, which I had mailed August 28, 1911. She was much surprised that he had not answered, and could not hold him free from blame

for the awful wrongs, as he had the authority to right them if he cared to. She endeavored to get my garb, saying that I had no further use for it, but I was continually on my guard, knowing that even my dear, good friend and former "chum," Sister Rita, could not go beyond the Roman dictation.

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The first Sunday after I had left the convent was Easter Sunday, but I could not go to mass, as I did not have any clothing except "the flowered kimona." By the second Sunday, April 14th, with the assistance of Mrs. Kearney, I had secured sufficient clothes to be attired fairly respectable, and I decided that I would go to church. I did not care to be conspicuous, or to mix with the people very much, as I was not accustomed to the ways of the world as yet, so I decided to go to Hilyard, a suburb of Spokane, to hear "holy mass" and the sermon.

During the entire service, it all seemed darker and more stupid than at any time during my past life. I thought it was due to the newness of my present life, and I left the church in silence.

On Saturday morning, April 20th, Sister Rita came to visit me for the second time since I had left. As she entered the door she said that this time she had taken it upon herself to come and see her dear friend, Sister Lucretia, and that she was going to stay with me till Sunday night.

Think of it, people, how Rome was using this dear, good friend of mine to do its work. I still had enough Roman Catholicism embedded in my heart and mind to watch her, even at night, sleeping with one eye open, so to speak. My suspicions were so strong that I had my few belongings moved to safe-keeping during her stay with me.

She told me that I did not look right in civilian clothes, and that I could never look as nice in any other as the sister's garb. She tried to induce me to clothe myself as a sister again and return with her, saying that she could get the consent of the ecclesiastical authorities and the superiors of the community for us to take a trip to Rome and other parts of Europe.

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This was a mighty temptation to me, as I had wished many times to see the Vatican and visit the Pope, but I knew that if I accepted this offer I would have to return to the community, and now, as I was out, I was determined to stay; so I told her that I could not accept the offer, as I did not intend to return to the sisterhood. Many times since, I have looked back to this visit of Sister Rita, and concluded that some guiding hand, some power, greater and mightier than my own, was directing my actions and decisions on the great temptations that were being placed before me.

On Monday, April 22d, Mother Nazareth and Sister Matilda came to see me again. Mother Nazareth told me that I was living in mortal sin every day for not having dispensation from my vows. I told her that it was through no fault of my own, as I was waiting for them to get my dispensation. She then took a long document from her pocket, asking me to sign it for my dispensation. I looked at it and informed her that it was written in Latin and that I did not understand Latin sufficiently to sign my name to a document written in that language. She then handed me another document, and upon examination, I found that it was written in French. I told her that I did not understand French sufficiently to sign my name to it, and asked her to explain it to me. (I knew from former association with her and Sister Matilda that neither of them could read French or Latin.) Without any explanation she handed me the third document. This one was written in English. I asked them to excuse me for a minute and I went to an adjoining room, where, in the presence of Mrs. Kearney, I copied the following, which was under the heading on the document, "Reasons for leaving the Order":

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"Community life has become wearisome to me, and, therefore, it interferes with the saving of my soul. I am convinced that it is best for me to return to the world."

I returned to the room where the two sisters were and handed them the document, informing them that I could not sign it, as it did not contain the reasons for my leaving the order, as I had never been weary a day in my life. I told them that they both knew the reasons for which I left, and, if they did not, they could find them in my letter to the community which was written when I left the order. "Such lies!" I said, "Why can't you be honest? I can send my own reasons to Rome and get dispensation for myself when I get ready."

Two days later, "Father" Carti came to see me for the second time, with practically the same message as before, viz., to return to the community and in regards to settlement of my claims against them.

The next day, Thursday, April 25th, "Father" Carti telephoned to me and asked me to come to the Gonzaga College, so we could talk further in regard to the settlement and if possible, come to some agreement.

Mrs. Kearney accompanied me to the college, and when "Father" Carti saw that I had a witness, he asked, "Do you want this woman to hear what we have to say?" I answered, "Yes, I want her to hear whatever is said." He hinted that there would be no business transacted in her company, so we left.

From the college I called on my attorney, whom I had retained as my adviser, and he advised me to give them till the first of May to settle for two thousand dollars. On returning home, I telephoned to "Father" Carti, and informed him that I had been to see my attorney since I left the college and that I would give them (the community) until the first of May to settle for the two thousand dollars I originally asked; and that in the future all business was to be transacted

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through my attorney, as I was not physically able to attend to it myself, being on the verge of nervous collapse. He was very angry, saying that I was wrong and had no business to go to secular law (meaning a secular attorney) and that we could have settled it ourselves.

I had been out of the sisterhood nearly four weeks, and had attended church only once, so now I thought I would take up my religion again and attend mass and church service. So, on Sunday, April 28th, I again went to Hilyard and heard the Latin mass and the priest preach. During the sermon I was looking at the statues and other religious show in the church, and then and there, in that house, being used for so-called religious services, God revealed Himself to me. The whole show really was nauseating to me, and before the sermon was finished I retired as quietly as I could. I had heard of the idols and images of the Chinese Joss-house, and that is just as it appeared to me that day. When I arrived home, I told Mrs. Kearney to not awaken me again for mass, unless I told her to do so.

The following week, Mrs. Kearney came to me and told me that "Father" Carti had told her to put me out of her house, that by keeping me there it would hurt her with the sisters, the priests and the Roman Catholics. My answer was that I had left the sisterhood because of the wrongs and oppressive, tyrannical treatment; now I see that there is something wrong with that religion, too. [164] If they are going to follow and hound and down me, I am through with them, and I do not want anything further to do with any of them. I also told her that if anything happened me, or if I got sick, to call the first Protestant minister she could find.

This instance, together with the persecutions that had been going on since I had been out of the sisterhood, caused me to decide conclusively in my own mind that I did not want anything to do with them.

I had been a Roman Catholic up to that moment, and had given them no cause to treat me in that manner, other than having left the sisterhood, as many sisters do, but now they did not care what became of me. Mrs. Kearney was the only friend I had in Spokane to whom I could go and this was probably the last subterfuge of the Hierarchy to force me back to their clutches.

So I became a Protestant, not in reality for some time, but I was no longer a Roman Catholic.

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CHAPTER XIV.

FORM FOR DISPENSATION OF THE "HOLY" VOWS—MY SUIT AND SETTLEMENT WITH THE SISTERS OF CHARITY.

I was informed by Mrs. Kearney that Mother Nazareth had given her fifty dollars so she could purchase some clothes for me. This was a princely sum, after all the years of service I had given them. I have never been able to figure in my own mind, whether this was supposed to be a settlement or whether it was some of the charity the sisters were supposed to do.

Yes, they are called "Sisters of Charity," but with all my experience with them I now have to rack my brain to find the charity done by the Roman Catholic system, through them. If some person died at the hospital and left some clothes that were not claimed by anyone, they would be given to some poor person and call it "charity." If some patient could not or would not pay all of their bill, it would be entered in the books as "charity." But, God forbid that I should blame the poor sisters for what they do *not do*. It is the sisters who do the charity—not for the poor people—but for the church, by giving their life's service. It is their bounden duty to do as they are told, and their troubles are great enough without me adding to their heavy load. On the other hand, may God speed the day when the system, which holds these poor women, as it had me for thirty-one years, will be investigated by the proper authorities; and when this comes to pass, we need have no fear of the outcome. [166]

After Mother Nazareth's last visit to me, and when she was convinced that I would do generally as I saw fit in regard to the dispensation from my vows, I received the following in due time:

St. Vincent's Hospital,
Portland, Oregon, May 10, 1912.

Miss Elizabeth Schoffen,
Spokane, Washington.

Dear Miss Schoffen:

Enclosed you will find form to guide you in petitioning for the dispensation of your holy vows. Copy it upon paper found herein, and fill out No. 2 according to your desire.

Please return as soon as possible, as it has to be signed by the Superiors before going to Rome.

Most sincerely yours,

The form to guide me in petitioning "His Holiness" was:

To His Holiness Pius X:
Most Holy Father:

I, the undersigned, a sister of the Institute of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, of Montreal, Canada, respectfully submit to your Holiness the following:

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1.—I am fifty-one years of age and professed (vocal) twenty-nine years.

2.—Here sister may give her reasons herself, to suit her own disposition. She is perfectly free.....

.....
.....
.....

3.—In consequence I humbly supplicate Your Holiness to give me dispensation from my vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and to grant me permission to live in the world in secular habit.

Spokane, Washington, this (date) 1912.

(Sign) Sister Lucretia, nee Elizabeth Schoffen.

Notice it says, "She is perfectly free." Yes, I was "perfectly free" after the agents of "His Holiness" found out in plain words spoken by me that I was through answering to their demands. I was "perfectly free," and yet in the next breath, according to the Roman Catholic idea, I *had* to have permission from an Italian Pope even to wear the common clothes of an American citizen. Think of it, dear reader, I was an American born citizen, under the protection of the laws of this country; but because I had been born and raised a Roman Catholic, and then induced to take the vows of the Roman Catholic sisterhood, I *had* no rights as an American citizen, and had to have the permission of this self-styled "infallible" pope before I could live like other people live. I might say right here, that I have never applied for, and consequently have never received the dispensation from my vows as a sister in the Roman Catholic Church, as I soon learned after I left that organization that the Church of Rome had no right in the first place to deprive me of the liberties guaranteed every citizen of this country.

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The authorities of the Roman Catholic system will tell the civil authorities and the Protestants that the adherents of the Roman Catholic Church are citizens first and Roman Catholics second. But that is not according to the inner teaching of that system. Read what one of their own representatives, the late "Father" D. S. Phelan, has said, when speaking from his own "throne":

"They tell us that we think more of the church than we do of the United States; of course we do. Why, if the government of the United States were at war with the church, we would say tomorrow, to hell with the government of the United States; and if the church and all the governments of the world were at war, we would say, to hell with all the governments of the world. They say we are Catholics first and Americans decidedly afterwards. There is no doubt about it.... The Catholics of the world are Catholics first and always; they are Americans, they are Germans, they are French, or they are English afterwards." (The Patriots Manual, as copied from the Western Watchman, issue of June 27, 1912.)

Think on these points, my dear American friend! Use the brain which God has given you, and decide for yourself if an institution such as the Roman Catholic system is an American institution. Have we room within our borders for any other than that which will uphold our laws, and fight, if need be, for the protection of the principles upon which this great democracy is builded?

As I have previously stated, I told the community that I would give them until May 1st to settle with me for two thousand dollars. This they refused to do, so my attorney wrote as follows:

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Spokane, Wash., May 2, 1912.

Mother M. Nazareth, Prov. Sup.,
St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland, Oregon.

Dear Madam:

We have placed in our hands for settlement the matter of Sister Lucretia, which we are informed you are familiar with. If this matter can be settled for twenty thousand dollars, we are in a position to settle it, and if not attended to at once, we will take such steps as may become necessary to enforce settlement at once.

Yours very truly,

SCOTT & CAMPBELL.

The community made no favorable reply to the above communication, so it was decided that I, with my attorney, Mr. Scott, would go to Portland, to look into the matter of filing suit against them for salary due me for my services at St. Vincent's Hospital.

In the Spokesman Review (a Spokane daily) there appeared two articles about the case, issue of June 9, 1912. The first article was a lengthy one, discussing in general the case, and containing a statement obtained from me. The second, a dispatch from Portland, I will reprint. It will explain itself:

SUPERIOR SURPRISED AT SUIT.

Hospital Head Gives Sister Lucretia High Testimonial.

Portland, Ore., June 8.—Sister Alexander, superior at St. Vincent's Hospital, was surprised to learn from Spokane tonight that Sister Lucretia threatened proceedings against the order, and gave Sister Lucretia a high testimonial for her work while at the hospital.

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"Sister Lucretia severed her connections with the hospital and with the Sisters of Charity last April," said Sister Alexander. "She was dissatisfied at having been assigned to another field of labor, that at St. Eugene's Hospital at Cranbrook, B. C., after having served in Portland so long.

"There was nothing improper in her leaving, as she was free to leave the order if she choose. She did not express any hostile feelings toward the sisters, however, and seemed to have been perfectly satisfied with her treatment. I have been in touch with her up to a few weeks ago and have received no intimation of her intention to bring suit.

"I cannot imagine on what grounds she bases her contention. She was an excellent nurse while at the hospital and was well and favorably known about the city."

Before entering the order, Sister Lucretia's home was near Spokane, and she has been at St. Vincent's Hospital here almost the entire time of her sisterhood.

On June 10th I donned my sisterhood garb, and in company with Mr. Scott, went to Portland. The reason for my wearing the garb again, was that I had a clerical half-fare railroad book, which had been given to me by the community for my use, and as I had not received my dispensation, I was still a sister and was entitled to wear the garb of the Roman Catholic sisterhood, if I so choose.

During my entire sisterhood I had always traveled either half-fare, or on a pass which would generally be made out for the superior and her companion. The sisters were trained to imitate the hand-writing of the sisters in whose names the passes or half-fare books were issued, so they could sign the name appearing on these passes or half-fare books. At retreat time these passes and books were kept busy, carrying sisters one way, and then returned by mail for others to travel on.

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I remember once when I was traveling on Mother Theresa's pass, and after I had signed her name, the conductor who knew both Mother Theresa and myself, came to me in a good-natured, smiling manner and said that I was a rather young-looking Mother Theresa.

I returned to Spokane, June 18th, again using the half-fare book. The authorities of the Roman Hierarchy may deny that I had this clergy half-fare book, but I might say right here, let them deny! I still have the book with forty-two tickets in it, good only in the year 1912, and with the stamp of the Trans-Continental Clergy Bureau, January 27, 1912, and even the Roman Catholic Hierarchy cannot deny that I was a sister in good standing in January, 1912.

On July 21st I bade adieu to Spokane. I had just boarded the train when a priest, whom I had never seen before, came to me and began to question me as to where I was going, who I was, etc. This was the first time I had been alone since I had been out of the sisterhood, and whether this was an accidental meeting or whether he was sent purposely I am unable to say. I answered his questions, and then asked him his name. He told me "Father Cronin." While he did not annoy me on the journey to Portland, I was very suspicious, and was very careful that he did not have a chance to get any of my few belongings, as I had some very valuable papers in my suitcase.

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Mrs. Kearney had come to Portland before and had made arrangements for hotel accommodations.

The law firm of Kollock and Zollinger were my representatives in Portland, arrangements having been previously made by Mr. Scott with them.

My complaint against the Sisters of Charity having been completed, I signed it on the twenty-fourth day of July, 1912, and it was duly filed in the Circuit Court of Multnomah County.

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Multnomah County.

Elizabeth Schoffen, Plaintiff,)
vs.)
Sisters of Charity of Providence, St.) COMPLAINT
Vincent's Hospital, a corporation,)
Defendant.)

Comes now the plaintiff herein and for cause of action against defendant alleges:

I.

That defendant is a corporation, incorporated, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Oregon;

II.

That at the special instance and request of the defendant the plaintiff performed work and labor for the defendant as a nurse at, in and about the hospital owned and operated by the defendant in the City of Portland, County of Multnomah and State of Oregon, known and described as St. Vincent's Hospital, from and about July 7, 1893, to and including the first day of July, 1899;

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III.

That from and after the 1st day of July, 1899, to and including July 26, 1911, the plaintiff performed work and labor for the defendant as nurse and manager and superintendent of a floor in the hospital owned and operated by the defendant in the City of Portland, County of Multnomah and State of Oregon;

IV.

That during all of said period of the time the account between plaintiff and defendant was an open, mutual and current account, and that plaintiff continuously performed work and labor during said period for the defendant, and defendant during said period furnished and gave to the plaintiff clothing and board and lodging;

V.

That the reasonable value of the services rendered by plaintiff to defendant as a nurse, between July 7, 1893, and the 1st day of July, 1899, over and above and in addition to the clothing and board and lodging furnished by defendant to plaintiff was and is the sum of \$100.00 per month; that the reasonable value of the services rendered and work and labor performed by plaintiff for defendant as nurse and manager or superintendent of the floor in the hospital owned and operated by the defendant, from the 1st day of July, 1899, to and including July 26, 1911, over and above and in addition to the clothing and board and lodging furnished and given by the defendant to the plaintiff during the said period, was and is the sum of \$150.00 per month;

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VI.

That the plaintiff has demanded of defendant payment of said sums, but the defendant has wholly failed, refused and neglected to pay same or any part thereof, and that there is now due and owing from defendant to plaintiff, on account thereof the sum of \$28,800.00.

WHEREFORE, plaintiff prays for judgment against the defendant in the sum of \$28,800.00, together with the costs and disbursements herein.

SCOTT & COMPBELL,
KOLLOCK & ZOLLINGER,
Attorneys for Plaintiff.

STATE OF OREGON,
County of Multnomah—ss.

I, Elizabeth Schoffen, being first duly sworn, depose and say that I am the plaintiff in the above action; and the foregoing complaint is true as I verily believe.

(Signed) ELIZABETH SCHOFFEN.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 24th day of July, 1912.

(Signed) JOHN K. KOLLOCK,

(Seal)

Notary Public for the State of Oregon.

The summons was served on the Sisters of Charity and on Sister Alexander personally, on July 28, 1912, according to the record of the sheriff's office. Soon after this, and several other times before the answer to the complaint was filed, which was nearly four months later, the attorneys for the defendants endeavored to settle for various amounts up to \$1,500.00. The answer to the complaint was as follows: [175]

In the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Multnomah County.

Elizabeth Schoffen, Plaintiff,)
vs.)
Sisters of Charity of Providence, St.) ANSWER
Vincent's Hospital, a corporation, v)
Defendant.)

Now comes the defendant and answers the complaint herein as follows:

Admits that it is a corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Oregon.

Save as herein admitted, defendant denies each and every allegation of the complaint.

Further answering, defendant alleges that its incorporation was effected by and on behalf of members of a charitable and religious organization known as "Sisters of Charity of the House of Providence in the Territory of Washington," and that its affairs during all the time stated in the complaint have been managed and are still managed by and through the said religious organization acting through the medium of the corporation. Said organization has been engaged during all the time stated in the complaint and is still engaged in charitable and religious work, conducting, among other institutions, a hospital in the City of Portland, State of Oregon. [176]

Prior to the 7th day of July, 1893, plaintiff applied to the members of said religious organization to be admitted as a member thereof, for the purpose of gaining the spiritual advantages accruing to the members thereof, and for the purpose of engaging in religious and charitable work with the members of said religious organization. On some day prior to said 7th day of July, 1893, the plaintiff, upon such application, was admitted to membership in said religious organization and has been engaged since that time and up to the 26th day of July, 1911, in religious and charitable work with the members of said organization, including work in and about the care of the sick at the said St. Vincent's Hospital in the City of Portland, Oregon.

At the time when plaintiff applied for membership in said religious community, and at the time she was admitted as a member thereof, and during all of the time plaintiff continued to be a member thereof, and during all the time plaintiff was engaged in such religious and charitable work aforesaid, it was distinctly understood by plaintiff and her acceptance into said religious community and the permission to engage in charitable and religious work, with the members of said religious community, through the medium of the corporation defendant herein, and otherwise was based upon the distinct and expressed understanding that no pecuniary reward or financial return of any kind whatsoever was to be paid to plaintiff for any work done at the instance of the members of said religious community, or at the instance of the corporation defendant herein, or for any services of any kind in any manner connected with the work of said religious organization and of the corporation, the defendant, herein.

Wherefore, defendant demands that plaintiff take nothing by this action, and that it has judgment for costs and its disbursements. [177]

M. M. CONNOR,
CAREY & KERR,
Attorneys for Defendant.

STATE OF OREGON,
County of Multnomah—ss.

I, Sister Alexander, being first duly sworn, depose and say that I am an officer, to wit., Superioress of the defendant in the above entitled action; that I have read the foregoing answer, know the contents thereof, and believe the same to be true.

SISTER ALEXANDER.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 15th day of November, 1912.

(Seal)

M. M. CONNOR,

I have explained throughout this book the kind of "religious and charitable" work I was engaged in. Very true, as stated in the above document, when I entered, I believed, as I was taught by the priest and sisters, that the most certain way to save my soul was by entering the convent and living a good, pure, "holy" life as a "virgin spouse of the church and Christ," and, if possible, to become a great "saint" so that I might secure a high place in Heaven among the "saints" and near our Lord. But, the spiritual benefits I derived were that I was compelled by the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic convent system to be an unwilling hypocrite, and in the end had to seek religion and consolation out of the convent and the Roman Catholic Church.

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My suit against the community was evidently causing them much discomfort, as the attorneys for the defendant, several times during the winter offered to settle, but for such small amounts that I could not accept. By spring they had reached the sum of three thousand dollars, and asked me to pay my attorneys from that amount. This I refused, as I believed I could force them to pay more than that if the case would come to court. I knew at least that I could cause them very much uneasiness.

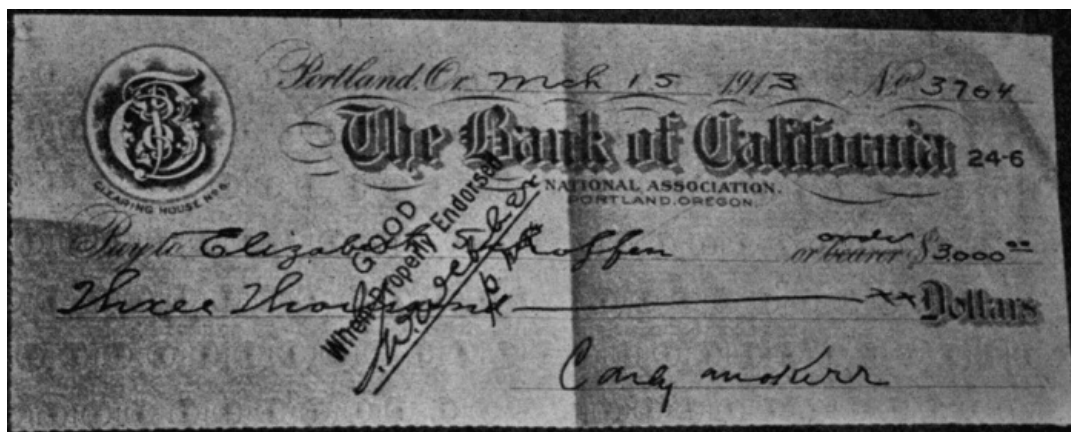
By March, I was offered three thousand dollars, and the Sisters of Charity promised to pay my attorneys' fee. My attorneys and myself conferred in this matter, and as I was nearly destitute, I thought it best to take what I could get and have the strain off my mind, and I authorized Mr. Scott and Mr. Kollock to notify the defendant's attorneys that I would accept their offer. So, on March 15, 1913, I received from the Sisters of Charity of Providence, through their representatives, the sum of three thousand dollars for thirty-one years of service to them. My attorneys' fee was fifteen hundred dollars, which was promptly paid. So it cost the Roman Catholic Hierarchy the sum of four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500.00) for the service I had given them, and to keep the case out of court and the publicity of the same, which would have been a bankruptcy producer for St. Vincent's Hospital.

A great deal has been said by the Roman Catholics about the *large* sum of money the church paid me after I left the sisterhood. I will agree with my Roman Catholic friends that the amount I received from the community was a magnificent sum, when seen in *silver dollar pieces*. But, if they will consider the thirty-one years' service I gave them, they will very readily see that I received just about one dollar and eighty-six cents (\$1.86) a week, most of the time nursing and managing one of the floors of St. Vincent's Hospital. A nurse in the world ordinarily is paid twenty-five dollars a week; now my good Roman Catholic "knocker," compare that with the "large" sum I received. If the service of a nurse is worth that amount, why is a sister-nurse not worth just as much, if she does the work required or more?

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I am not complaining about the pay I received. I feel that I am repaid, *not in dollars and cents*, but in experience. I am only too thankful to think that I saw the folly of the whole system in time to be free before I would be called upon to face my Maker, and I trust and pray that in His great judgment, He may give me strength and health and wisdom for many years to come that I may be able to tell my story to those in darkness and indifference.

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Fac-simile of Check I Received from Attorneys for Sisters of Charity, as Payment for Thirty-one Years' Service Rendered to Them.

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CHAPTER XV.

MY RECOMMENDATION FROM THE DOCTORS OF PORTLAND—THE GOOD SAMARITAN—I AFFILIATE WITH A PROTESTANT CHURCH—MY NEW WORK.

When I came to Portland, and before I had settled with the community, I decided that I would try to make my living by nursing, as that was practically all I knew.

I had my diploma to show that I was a graduated nurse, that is, so the diploma said, and in addition to that I received the signatures of eighty-eight physicians of Portland, recommending me as an efficient nurse, so I thought I had sufficient proof that I was capable to do at least ordinary nursing.

My recommendation from the physicians was as follows:

Portland, Oregon, July 31, 1912.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that we, the undersigned, physicians and surgeons in the City of Portland, Oregon, have been well acquainted for many years with Elizabeth Schoffen, otherwise known as Sister Lucretia, and have been thoroughly familiar with her work as a nurse and member of the order of Sisters of Charity of Providence at St. Vincent's Hospital in the City of Portland; that in our opinion she is a thoroughly competent nurse; [182]

That for a number of years prior to July, 1911, she was in charge of one of the floors at St. Vincent's Hospital, and was an efficient and capable superintendent and officer; that to the best of our knowledge and belief, while a nurse at St. Vincent's Hospital and particularly while in charge of one of the floors, she performed faithfully and efficiently all duties entrusted to her by the management of the hospital and by the doctors who came in contact with her.

As I have stated above, I received the signatures of eighty-eight prominent physicians and surgeons of Portland to this document, the original of which I have in safe-keeping.

With these recommendations and the promise of several of the physicians who were prominent at St. Vincent's that they would help me get started in my work, I opened a nursing home in East Portland with a friend nurse, in September.

Nearly every day during the fall and winter I went in search of work—most of the time walking, as nickels were not very plentiful—visiting the doctors' offices, hoping against hope that I might induce them to send a few patients to the Home.

During the winter we just about made expenses. As yet, I had a very faint idea of how the Roman Catholic boycott was influencing the public—probably not openly, but influencing it just the same, so that people were afraid to come to the Home, or to send anyone there. By the end of winter I realized that I could not succeed in this manner, but, nevertheless, I put forth every effort.

It had been almost a year since I had left the Romish institution. I had not become accustomed to the ways of the world sufficiently to know how to search for work intelligently. I was completely "down and out," not knowing what to do to make my living except to nurse, and I had been a failure at that up to this time, being unable to obtain the work. My sorrow weighed upon my mind and heart, which was already broken and crushed by the awful Romish convent cruelty and oppression. No priest, no sister, nor was ever a messenger from any of their so-called "religious and charitable" institutions, sent to me to do a kind turn whatever. After thirty-one years of service to the Roman Catholic System, it seemed to me that the hardest and harshest of masters, not of hell itself, would have shown me a little mercy. [183]

It was in this condition that, one day in the late winter I had been out from early in the morning, walking the streets in quest of some honest employment that I might keep body and soul together. My clothing was very thin; my feet nearly bare. I arrived *home* about nine o'clock in the evening, tired and disappointed from the day's unsuccessful effort, as I had done many other nights. Had I been successful, it would have helped the woman I was with just as much as it would have helped me, and it would only be natural to think that she would have been very anxious to know about the day's result. But, quite to the contrary, when I arrived home this particular evening the doors were all locked against me, and by a woman who pleased to call herself Protestant. And I wish it plainly understood that this was not a warm summer night, but just the opposite, a cold, dark, wintry night in the latter part of February. Could anyone blame me for believing the terrible stories I had heard about Protestant people while I was in the convent?

I made my presence known by knocking on the door, but this lady who was comfortably warm in her bed did not condescend to stir herself to admit me. I found a window which was not locked and I entered by climbing through it. When she saw that I was inside she asked, "How did you get in?" Indeed, I will never forget that question. Imagine, if you can, the feeling I had. There were six vacant beds in the house that night, but with the unwelcome feeling which was implied by her actions and talk, I did not retire, but laid on the sofa in the clothes I had worn during the day, as I did for several nights to follow. Shame, shame on such Protestant people! To my sorrow I have found many who have the same spirit that this lady had. She evidently did not care what became of me. If she did not want me there, why did she not tell me? No, she would rather break what little spirits I had remaining. [184]

In the meantime, I had made the acquaintance of two real Protestant people, Mr. and Mrs. E. U. Morrison. I went to Mrs. Morrison the following morning and told her about the above incident. She told me that I did not have to endure this kind of treatment, and that, if I wished, I could move to her home, and that as long as she had a crust of bread it would be shared with me. I accepted her very kind offer, and moved a few days later, March 1st. From that day till now, they have been the Good Samaritan to me, always the same in all kindness and Christian spirit. All I am, all I have today, I owe it, to a certain extent, to these good people, Mr. and Mrs. Morrison. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in

prison, and ye came unto me." Matt. 25:35, 36.

In all my trouble and sorrow of moving, and settling with the sisters, there were many instances which I now look upon with much amusement. I remember about the first thing that happened when I arrived at Mrs. Morrison's home. She came to my room and asked me if I wanted "to eat with the family or eat by myself or how I wanted to eat." There were several men there, and I had never eaten with a man, except once when I was with Mrs. Kearney in Spokane, since I left my home in 1881. I thought for a moment and then I told Mrs. Morrison that I was not accustomed to eating with men, but that I would try it. It was a very peculiar feeling that came over me the first time I sat at the table with them, but I soon became acquainted and felt very much at home. When I would go to the dining-room, I would very often say, "Well, I used to go to mass, now I go to mess."

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As the days and weeks passed by, I more and more realized that the great hand of God was directing me in all my movements. Even though my short experience out of the shadow of the convent cross had not been a success, so to speak, yet it was preparing me for the days to follow. God was very good to me, and my sentiments cannot be better expressed than my repeating that wonderful twenty-third Psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the path of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

I visited a great many Protestant ministers, asking them to explain different parts of the Bible to me, and they all received me and treated me very courteously. I started studying God's Word as revealed by Christ in the New Testament, and the more I read and studied, the more I became convinced that the religion I had been living all my life was not the religion of a Christ "crucified, dead and buried" for the salvation of poor, fallen mankind.

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The Scriptures are replete with teachings that conflict with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, which are traditional and a great many of them are taken from religions other than Christianity.

"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Matt. 23:9.

"We have one Father, even God." John 8:41.

These, and many more verses of the like, show conclusively that it was never intended that the priests of the church of Rome should be called "father," for God is our spiritual Father, and the Good Book does not lie.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." 1st Timothy 4:1, 5.

All my life I had lied in hypocrisy, not that I wanted to, but just what the Roman Catholic system had made of me by their hypocritical teachings, such as the "Johnny Morgan" story; and my conscience had been seared many, many times with a hot iron. Who forbids to marry but the Roman Catholic system? Who commands to abstain from eating meat but the Roman Catholic system on Fridays, ember days and during Lent?

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The Protestant people that I came in contact with from time to time was not the class of people that the Roman Catholic system had pictured to me—they were refined, educated and, above all, charitable. I attended Protestant churches, and heard sermons preached from the Word of God according to Christ's teaching—with the man-made Latin mass missing.

At last, I learned that I was to be saved by faith and not by penance. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1. I also learned that there was no mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ as I have explained under the heading "Confession," and that if I would confess my sins to Him, He would forgive me and help me. So I gave myself to His keeping, and on Sunday, April 20, 1913, I was baptized into the Protestant faith—which was the happiest day of all my life.

The following Sunday I became a member of that church and have been a Protestant, not in name only, but in reality, ever since. God keep me strong in the faith.

I continued doing nursing for a livelihood. Some of my doctor friends gave me a few private cases, and I also was called on by some of the Protestant people I had become acquainted with to wait on them in sickness.

Several times I was asked to take obstetric (maternity) cases, but had to refuse them on account of the lack of training in this particular line. I have stated before that we were kept in ignorance in regard to this line of nursing at St. Vincent's Hospital. Finally, I decided that I would take a special course in obstetrics, and I spent about six months studying very hard. Now, remember,

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that I had spent eighteen years at St. Vincent's besides two more years in hospital work and yet I was not allowed to learn this very important branch of nursing, regardless of the fact that I had the maternity ward on my floor all the time I was superintendent, and was held responsible for any errors in the nursing of these cases.

Before very long the saying of "Father" Carti, "You will have trouble in the world," became very vivid to me. The boycott was working well. I remember one case I was called on, that of an old lady. She was very sick and needed care night and day. She had one nurse, but she could not work all the time. I worked only two days, when the other nurse, who was a Roman Catholic, went to the lady and told her that she could get along without me. This only came about after she learned that I had been a sister in the Roman Catholic sisterhood.

In this, and other cases, my qualifications as a nurse were not taken into consideration. It was only the fact that I had once been a Roman Catholic and sister, but was now a Protestant. Another incident of the boycott that will be very clear to my readers is that a prominent doctor, whose name is on my recommendation, told a nurse I was working with that she could not get any more cases as long as Sister Lucretia was working with her.

In many of the states there has been agitation about a law protecting ex-convicts from the boycott of the public, simply because he is an ex-convict. Let us also have a law for the protection of ex-nuns against the boycott of the Roman Catholic system and the public, simply because she is an ex-nun. [189]

It became very apparent to me that I would have to do something besides nursing. But what? I was no longer a young girl, and I had worked nearly all my life to make of myself an efficient nurse, and I had succeeded thus far. But, circumstances so shaped themselves that I could not secure sufficient work to do to keep body and soul together.

After a great deal of deliberation and much thoughtful prayer, I came to the conclusion that as God had been with me and brought me out of darkness and idolatry, I would dedicate my services to Him, in word of mouth and pen, telling the story of my life as a Sister of Charity in the Roman Catholic sisterhood.

During July, 1915, I had the opportunity to spend a few days at the annual Chautauqua being held at Gladstone, Oregon. There I met several women with whom I had been acquainted in Portland. They knew of my past life and asked me to tell of some of my past experiences to the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. I had never had occasion to stand before any number of people to talk to them, and I was very reluctant about accepting the invitation. But it came to me that this was the opportunity to obtain my first experience, and the few days I stayed there I talked to them twice.

After my return to Portland, and during the fall and winter, I told my story to small crowds in the homes of some of the real Protestant women. Then came 1916. I began to talk upon invitation in the churches, before lodges and in homes. During the year I delivered my lectures one hundred and fourteen times in and about Portland. In the summer, I had to decline many invitations, as I was too busy to fill the engagements. [190]

This is how I began my lecturing, not that I ever intended to do so when I left the sisterhood, but the Roman Catholic system drove me to it, and now I am thankful that it did, for I can do more good telling my story than I ever could by being a Sister of Charity in the Roman Catholic sisterhood, or by being a nurse caring for the sick. I love to aid the poor, suffering sick, but I feel that there are many nurses better than I could ever be, even with my experience, but there are, indeed, very few who live thirty-one years in the sisterhood of the Roman Catholic Church, and live to leave it and tell their experiences. [191]

CHAPTER XVI.

MY "ADVERTISEMENT" IN THE CATHOLIC SENTINEL.

During the spring and early summer of 1916, an election campaign was on, and the issue was very apparent. The patriotic citizens were determined to elect American citizens to office who would uphold the American principles.

I was talking several times each week, and evidently something was hurting, for the *Catholic Sentinel*, published in Portland, which is the mouthpiece of Archbishop Christie, printed a fine "advertisement" for me in its issue of June 8, 1916. There has been many comments on some of my statements regarding the activities of the "Knights of Columbus," and this article from their own paper will substantiate what I have said:

A. P. A.'S FEATURE "ESCAPED" NUN

Former Sister of Charity Appears on Anti-Catholic Platform.

BIGOTRY RUNS WILD

Protestant Churches Are Placed at the Disposal of Miss Schoffen.

Portland is a hotbed of religious bigotry. While the rest of the world is storming Heaven for peace, the "patriots" here are doing everything in their power to stir up religious dissension. To this end they are using Miss Elizabeth Schoffen, a former nun.

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This unfortunate woman was for 31 years a member of the Sisters of Charity of Providence. For 17 years she was a nursing sister in St. Vincent's Hospital here. She left the order four years ago as a protest against having been transferred from Portland to Vancouver against her will. The order paid to her or her representatives a considerable sum of money in recognition of her services.

Some months back she went on the lecture platform, billing herself as an ex-nun. The public did not flock to hear her in any great numbers. Her audiences consisted for the most part of that undesirable element in this community who would revive Know-Nothingism and to whom that which is vulgar and salacious carries an appeal.

Miss Schoffen, more widely known as "Sister Lucretia," is a plain featured woman about 55. For the last few weeks she has been delivering afternoon lectures "for women only." Several Protestant ministers have extended to her the hospitality of their churches. Among the churches in which she has spoken are the First Methodist Church, the Woodlawn Christian Church, the Sunnyside Methodist Church, the Brentwood Methodist Church and the Sellwood Christian Church. She was billed to speak at the White Temple (Baptist) last Tuesday afternoon to women only, but the strong disapproval of the trustees of that church resulted in the cancellation of her engagement.

Miss Schoffen is a studious disseminator of malicious inuendoes, suggestions and hints. She is careful to say nothing that would render her liable to prosecution for criminal libel or defamation of character. She has much to say on the divided allegiances of Catholics, on the "military activity" of the Knights of Columbus and on the deep, dark Roman dungeons. She is no orator. Her discourse is full of inconsistencies and is couched at times in the language of the gutter. She adduces no evidence in support of her insinuations and declines to answer questions during or after the "lecture." The stage is well set. The proceedings generally open with a prayer! This is often followed by the singing of "America," in which the audience joins. Her manager then drapes the American flag over Miss Schoffen's shoulder, saying as he does so: "This is to show that during her lecture Miss Schoffen is under the protection of the Stars and Stripes!" These words never fail to elicit tremendous applause.

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... Her lectures have become so obnoxious that the Knights of Columbus have decided to take action and to that end have appointed the following committee: J. W. Kelly, W. J. Prendergast, Roger B. Sinnot, James Clarkson, J. N. Casey, D. J. Malarkey, M. G. Munley, R. J. O'Neil, Joseph Jacobberger, H. V. Stahl, John F. Daly.

I do not care to take space here to comment on this article at length; there is a great deal of truth in it and then there is a great deal that is not true. I will say that the time spoken of when the White Temple turned me down, there were about three thousand women that congregated to hear my message, and I delivered it to them, but not in the White Temple; I hired an automobile and we went to the Plaza, where I talked from the machine. The above article speaks of the "strong disapproval of the trustees of the church." It took them quite a long time to give out the announcement, for the lecture had been advertised for two weeks. Any American can guess why this building was closed at the eleventh hour.

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Of course, I am no orator. How could I be after spending my life in the convents of the Roman Catholic system? And, if I talked in the language of the gutter, where do you think I learned it? Surely it must have been learned in the parochial school, the confessional or the convent.

Four of the eleven Knights of Columbus appointed to take action against me were prominent lawyers of Portland, and no doubt they worked overtime trying to hatch up some scheme to get me before the bar of justice. If they for one moment thought that I could not prove what I was saying about the system I had lived so many years, why did they not call on me to produce my proof?

I have in my possession a letter from the wife of one of these noble "knights," which, in part, reads as follows: "I was not surprised when I heard that you had left the order. The last time I was up there I asked for you and they told me you had been sent to Canada. I felt then it was the beginning of the end. What led up to it all I do not know, but I felt I must tell you that so far as we are concerned, our sympathies are with you. I know such a thing could not have come to pass without your having experienced much suffering and heartache. And I want to tell you we are with you heart and soul. Of course, you know our attitude toward them. We have felt for a long time they are lacking in charity. We could not reconcile ourselves to their attitude towards the nurses. Mr. — and Sister — had a passage at arms the last time he was up there. The old order of things was good, but there seems to have crept in an element which has the money-making. If you have time, I should like to hear from you and something about the work you are doing. I know one thing, that it is effective. We have never forgotten the service you rendered



"A Gift from God"—Five Years' Growth. (Photographed Jan. 29, 1917)

Yes, I did contribute to a great extent to this gentleman's recovery when his two physicians and the special nurse had abandoned all hope. And from this letter it was apparent that he was pleased to hear that I had left the order. Then, why such a radical change in the mind of such a highly educated man? Had some of the "holy fathers" been to see him and demanded, and as a good "knight" he had to serve? Or, was his name placed on the committee for show? The latter is more probable. [196]

I wish my readers to read the article very carefully and thoughtfully and then draw your own conclusions. The fact remains that I was lecturing and the effects were hurting somebody. These "somebodies" were busy in nearly every town where I would be billed to speak, endeavoring, with their threats of boycott and with their committees appointed to wait on the city officials, to close halls, and to even keep me from entering the city. What was evidently hurting them was the fact that I was telling the truth to their own adherents, and in several of the small cities where I spoke, some of them renounced the Roman Catholic faith; others would take their children or some relative out of a Roman Catholic orphanage or parochial school. "An institution that cannot stand the light, needs to have the light turned on it," and that is just what I was trying to do.

It makes no particular difference whether I was drawing large crowds or not (but I was drawing immense crowds), whether I was using language of the gutter or not, whether I produced any evidence to prove my contentions or not, whether the churches turned me down or not, I was doing the work I had started out to do, viz., tell the public of the treatment I had received while I was in the Roman Catholic convent and the treatment I had received since I left the convent at the instigation of the Roman Catholic system, and, thank God, I found the people eager to listen to the truth. It seems that the truth is the very worst thing that can be said about the Roman Catholic system. [198]

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CHAPTER XVII.

THE CARE OF OLD SISTERS BY THE ROMAN CATHOLIC SYSTEM.

I cannot close this book without devoting a few lines to the care of the old sisters—those who

have spent many years serving the Roman Catholic Church—who have passed their years of usefulness, and then—

It would seem only natural and human, that any institution after having received thirty, forty or more years of free service from a human being, would at least see to it that the person would spend their last few years of earthly existence in ease and comfort. Indeed, very few pass their years of usefulness in the Roman Catholic sisterhood—a great many dying in their twenties, and more in their thirties. And I might state right here that tuberculosis is a very common disease to take the sisters to a young grave. Probably forty to fifty per cent of the sisters I knew that died during my sisterhood life was caused by tuberculosis. Surely there must be some cause for this ravaging disease among this people. It is the unnatural, secluded life the girls are forced to live, together with the lack of proper care when they are taken sick.

That I might produce proof to substantiate what I say in regard to the care of the old sisters, I wish to call to your particular attention one dear, old lady I knew very well, and who suffered untold agonies after giving the Roman Catholic Church forty years' service, according to her own letters. I will print three of her letters written to a friend (a Protestant) in Portland, when this dear, sainted old lady, Sister Gabriel, was in Vancouver, Washington. [200]

Vancouver, Wash., Aug. 3d, 1901.

My dear:

These few lines are a secret for yourself. Will you please tell Mother Theresa that I am not able for any more corrections. I have lost my sleep and appetite altogether. I had no care since I came February 18th. I was ordered back to Vancouver to sit in a room alone and suffer as I had for six long years, since they discharged me from teaching. They kept me in this work thirty-six years—four years were spent at apothecary work in hospitals. I have been kept idle altogether for six years. Now they seem pleased to see me loosing my memory. Dr. was called to see me Monday. He seemed to sympathize with me for having nothing to do. The medicine the sister gave me made me vomit and a diarrhea that is killing me. He said he had no time to call and see me a second time.

(Signed) SR. GABRIEL.

House of Providence,
Vancouver, Wash., Nov. 6th, 1901.

My very dear friend:

I send you these few lines by our dear Mother Provincial, who will try to meet you, if not, to send you the note. I am suffering very much from the rectal ailment ever since that seasickness in September. The protrusion is much larger. The inside is getting sore, and a slight hemorrhage of slime and blood keeps me busy. I do not know what to do any longer, there is no one here who understands anything about this complaint. I use glycerine suppositories and sweet oil, etc.... Please write a prescription if you cannot come to see me, and tell Rev. Mother what kind of a tube to get. I feel pretty well, only a dizziness now and then. [201]

Your grateful friend,

SISTER GABRIEL.

House of Providence.
Vancouver, Wash., Feb. 4, 1902.

The dearest of my friends:

I should have written to wish you the many blessings of the new year ere this, but I was not in the writing mood. I hope you enjoy good health as a reward from the great God, and may He prolong your life many years—serving the poor sick.

"I would give the world to see you," but as that is impossible for a few weeks longer, I will try to continue the prescription you gave me when you kindly came here to see me November 12th. I prefer to do all the dressing myself as long as I am able, but sometimes I cry out for relief in pain. No one knows what a painful, tedious disease it is, and only those who have suffered themselves can appreciate a relief.

I fear the interior lining will become ulcerated, owing to constipation for several days. Then I take purgatives, Sedlitz powders, clover-root tea or soda phosphate, which causes a diarrhea that cannot be stopped for so long, causing sleeplessness, weakness and trembling. Will you please tell me what would be a good laxative to prevent all this trouble? Exterior applications have but very little effect. ... Do you think that I will ever get better? Every one tries his best to be relieved from pain. I am pretty old now, "sixty-six years," hoping at least not to become worse. [202]

I dread more the affliction of becoming insane than any other ailment. Every little thing contrary to my way of thinking disturbs my mind and keeps me thinking for hours. I thank God I have a taste for reading and will walk outside when the weather gets warm. I will expect a few lines as soon as convenient. You told me to let you know after a few weeks how I am, so then you will excuse me for intruding on your precious time.

Excuse my quill and old shaking hand.

Your most grateful,

(Signed) SISTER GABRIEL.

Just before these letters were written, Sister Gabriel was at St. Vincent's Hospital for a short time. One day as I was passing the bathroom, I heard moans and cries for assistance, and as I entered the bathroom I found her lying in the bathtub, overcome from her sickness and unable to help herself. I assisted her to her room and nursed her the best I could, as I had no permission from my superior to wait on her. Many times I would talk to her, as she was far more intelligent than the average sister. As soon as Mother Theresa learned that I was taking care of this sister, and talking to her, she forbade me to do so any further, and ordered me to look for the letters she (Sister Gabriel) was sending out. Sister Gabriel remained at Vancouver until about 1905, and then she was ordered to the Mother House at Montreal to sit alone the remaining few years of her life. I know she did not want to make this move, but she was forced to do so, as she was getting to be a drudge to the community here. Sister Gabriel had been a missionary to this part of the country, and she told me many times that she did not wish to go to Canada, but wanted to stay in this country among English-speaking sisters to spend her old age. But it was never so with a sister—it is not what they desire or wish for in their old age, it is the desires of the Roman Catholic system, which has them bound, tied and gagged by the vow of obedience. [203]

Treatment such as this was coming to me. I had served them faithfully for thirty-one years and my health was beginning to break under the pressure of wrongs and the unnatural conditions. When a sister gets in this condition, they move her from mission to mission and very often send reports ahead of her, that she is irreligious and has a "bad" spirit, causing the other sisters to treat her with suspicion and contempt. This is done until her heart is broken, and the final result is a general break-down in health. Then she can go and sit alone in some secluded place for the remaining few years of life. The strongest mind and body would break under the strain and worry and sorrow of such treatment as the Roman Catholic system gives their old sisters. Had I remained with them, no doubt now, five years later, I would be a physical and nervous wreck.

I will quote from another letter written by another sister to me shortly after my transfer to Cranbrook:

"... When one has passed the three score mark the situation is, to say the least, not pleasant. I can only say, 'Courage, dear Sister Lucretia, a few more struggles and Heaven will be ours.' The above quotation was a friend's loving message to our dear saintly Sister Mary Precious Blood but three weeks before her death. She was ill but one week, mental anguish filled many of her days and shortened her beautiful religious life. Sad, but true, that a fearful retribution follows every injustice. 'Revenge to me,' said the Lord.... I know too well what it means to be in your plight, to even hope you are not lonely. Time alone can dull the keenest of that sword's edge. Let your many, many kind deeds comfort you. Those in favor of my poor self when cast on St. Vincent's charity, as well as those to my deceased Sister John, whose loving appreciation was with you to the end, will never be forgotten. Strange how few such souls we meet in this vast world...." [204]

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CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

My sister, Sister Cassilda, and myself corresponded with each other considerably after I left the sisterhood, and I received many letters from her that are exemplary of the Roman Catholic teaching. I would like to quote from one of these letters here:

Cranbrook, B. C., June 24th, 1915.

My very dear Sister:

Your two kind letters, May 24th, No. 13, and the other June 16th, No. 14, have both been received with the greatest pleasure. It is always a pleasure for me to hear from you and to know that you are well and getting on so nicely. It does seem negligent, dear Sister, for me to have delayed so long in writing, and I beg your pardon for the sorrow I have caused you. It was no ones fault, you see I have been changed from New Westminster back to St. Eugene Mission. I always intended to write as soon as I got settled, time passed so quickly, hence the cause of my delay. I am very well and as happy as any one can be in this world....

.... I would no more let anyone say anything against the religion I have practiced all my life, which was taught me by my own dear parents and which I love dearly. I would rather die than go and put my parents and people below those Bible preachers; they better practice what is in the Bible instead of talking about their neighbors. My love for you, my dear sister, is the same as it ever was, nothing can ever change that, but it grieves me to think that you have turned against our dear religion what you and I were taught together in our infancy. I surely would not compare Bible reading with that. I pray the Lord to give me strength to be faithful to it all my life and not to be deceived by false prophets. I have seen enough of the world to know which is right. Unfortunately there are many Catholics that are not what they should be; they will be responsible for themselves; that does not change religion any.

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Now a little news about my mission. It is about the same, only we have a grand, new *cement house*, with all the comforts possible, and the government will build us new barns and stables, and renew all the fences, so it will be a swell place after that.... Hope to hear from you soon again, love and good wishes for yourself and your friends.

Your loving sister,

SISTER CASSILDA.

This letter shows how the sisters are duped about the Protestant ministers and the preaching from the Bible. It also shows how strong they are held in the faith of the Roman Catholic church. At the end of the letter you will notice that the government was building, or helping to build, the new institution at Cranbrook.

The Roman Catholic Church, from time to time, has broken away from the teaching of the Bible, and instituted practices, man-made and traditional. The adherent of the Roman Catholic Church accepts these teachings and practices because he believes, as I did for so many years, that the word of the Pope is God's word, and whatever is dictated to the subject through the pope, or his ecclesiastical representatives, must be obeyed. The reason he believes this, is that he is not allowed to read and study the Word of God. When the priest talks *about* the Bible, that is sufficient for the laity. In all my years of sisterhood life, I never studied the Bible, and when I say "I," I wish it understood that I was no exception.

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Surely if Christ intended that all these practices, and institutions of graft, should be necessary for the salvation of mankind, He would have practiced some of them while He was here.

Since the combining of paganism and Christianity, forming the Roman Catholic Church, here are some of the man-made practices and the time instituted:

	A. D.
Invocation of saints	375
The Latin service	600
Supremacy of the pope	606
Worships of images and relics	787
Transubstantiation	1000
Infallibility of the Church of Rome	1076
The sacrifice of the Mass	1100
Sale of indulgences	1190
Withholding the cup from the laity	1415
Purgatory	1439
Restriction of the Bible	1546
Seven Sacraments	1547
Worship of the Virgin Mary	1563
The creed of the pope added	1564
The immaculate conception of Mary	1854
The infallibility of the pope	1870

I copy this table from ex-Priest P. A. Seguin's book, "Out of Hell and Purgatory," and he asks, "How old is this popish combination?" And well might he ask it. If the popes and cardinals continue to add to the creed of the Roman Catholic Church in the next few centuries as they have in the past, God help the poor people who continue in that faith, for they must believe each and every one of the practices and innovations.

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Why the pope, purgatory, seven sacraments necessary for salvation, worship of the Virgin Mary, the immaculate conception of Mary, worship of images and statues, sale of indulgences, etc.? Yes, there may be Christianity in the Roman Catholic teachings and practices, but if you wish to find it you must search for it.

If the Christianity existed in the Roman Catholic Church that should be there, why is there so much rottenness connected with it? Whenever there is any scandal (this is a great Roman Catholic word) in the Protestant churches, is it hidden and tried to be kept down? Verily, no! It is sifted through, and the cause of the wrong is found and righted. But Archbishop Christie knew there were wrongs being perpetrated right here in Portland, and he knew I knew it, but not once did he endeavor to right these wrongs.

Read this letter he wrote me soon after I left the sisterhood. In explaining this letter, I will say that the letter he speaks of from Mother Wilfrid was sent to him by me at the time I sent my letters for redress, and it was of such a nature that I do not understand how he could have forgotten it so easily; but, doubtless, he wished to keep it rather than to know that I had it. [209]

Portland, Oregon, May 16, 1912.

Dear Sister:

I cannot remember having received a letter from Mother Wilfrid. You must have sent it to some other person and not to me.

I hope and pray you will do nothing what will cause any scandal.

Asking God to bless and direct you, I am sincerely in Xto

X A. CHRISTIE.

If the Roman Catholic system would clean up from within, there would be no need for the ecclesiastical authorities to "hope and pray" that any of the sisters who left any of their institutions "would tell anything that would cause any scandal."

It was ever so, dear reader, and it will always be. The same rottenness will always exist in the Church of Rome that has always existed. It was because of this rottenness and corruption that practically all of the ex-priests have left Romanism, and because of the wrongs perpetrated that practically all of the ex-nuns have left.

The conditions I have written about, as I have lived them, not only exist in the convents of the Pacific Northwest, but in other Roman Catholic convents and monasteries, as the teachings and practices here come from other convents and of necessity they must be the same. "Like father, like son." There may be a few exceptions, where there is convent inspection, or some other law governing them, but as a general thing they are as I have explained, and in a great many, the practices are rigorous to the extreme. [210]

So, the great question arises, "How are we going to better conditions?" I could answer this question in a few words, and it would be the most logical answer, "Abolish all the convents and monasteries." Institutions of darkness and ignorance and evil are surely not necessary for the salvation of the souls of the women of this country, or of any other country. Christ did not institute any such specifications when He was on earth, or did He leave them in written form in His Holy Word. The secluding of girls and women is a man-made institution, and not for the saving of the souls of the poor girls, but for the profit of their work to the church. Is this Christianity?

How long will the American people be blind to this "religious cloak" for graft—school graft, hospital graft, laundry graft, and various other sweat-shop grafts? It is very convenient for the owners of the profitable "religious" institutions to operate them with sister service without paying either the wages or taxes required by the owners of legitimate industries. Think how it must affect competition and the wages of free workers.

Slavery of any degree is a curse to society as well as to the enslaved. I beg every American to look into this question seriously before it is too late. If you continue your sleepy indifference you may some day wake up to find that you have over-slept, to find that your own flesh and blood are being tricked and exploited into these "holy" institutions.

Under no condition should any institution, private or public, be permitted to immure girls and young women and keep them in servitude, hidden from their parents and friends and denied the common justice due every citizen. The laws of this country are made "by the people and for the people," and therefore, it is for the people of every state to see that there is a law on the statute books calling for the inspection of every institution where girls and women are incarcerated; the doors opened, that the truth may be obtained from every inmate and redress granted to all without intimidation. [211]

As the convent system is now in vogue there is no redress, as I have shown you, nor is there any protection from the convent crimes, as they are absolutely under the government of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. From behind the convent walls the heartbroken cries of the victims cannot be heard by the deceived world, and therefore, there is no appeal for justice.

Open the doors of every convent and monastery and let the deluded victims return to the world and live useful lives if they so choose! Let them be free to come and go at will, like any other citizen, and grant them the liberty guaranteed by the Constitution to all within our borders.

For the nuns who desire to leave the convent system, there should be in every state a home where they can work out their own salvation, until such a time as they are prepared to make their own living. Such a home should be supervised in a manner to guarantee that the inmates will not be intimidated by the priests or other representatives of Rome. Convent work is all routine, and from the very day a girl enters she becomes as a spoke in a wheel; her thoughts, judgment and body become an incorporate part of the written rule and customary observances of the system. From long seclusion, peculiar dress, separation from people and all civil society, she becomes estranged to the habits and customs of the world. On account of these conditions, the sisters feel very sensitive and it makes them timid and shrink in embarrassment. If it was not for these difficulties and barriers, and perhaps humiliations, there are hundreds of sisters who would leave the convent system. Many of them stay, not because they desire to do so, but because they do not know where to go or what to do if they leave. I myself would have left many years before, had I known where to have gone or what to have done. [212]

Another thing every American citizen should work for and see to, is that no sectarian school or institution of any nature shall receive financial aid from the State. We are blessed with one of the greatest and best public school systems in the world, and if they are not good enough for the people to send their children to, then this is no country for such a person. The taxpayer has enough to do without keeping up a school system for the purpose of teaching "Hail! Mary!" or the Roman Catholic catechism. Nor do we want sisters of the Roman Catholic sisterhood teaching in our public school, attired in their religious garb. These sisters have taken the vow of poverty, and yet draw their monthly salary from the State school fund. Who do you suppose gets this money? Surely not the poor sister! It of necessity goes to the church. In one county of this state of Oregon we have seven sisters of the sisterhood of the Roman Catholic church teaching in our public schools, attired in their religious garbs. This information comes direct from the county school superintendent's office.

Take away the parochial schools and the Roman Catholic system could not long survive in this country, and, as I have stated in the beginning of this book, the Roman Catholic system would not even have the parochial schools if it were not for our public schools. They must have some means of combating with the popular public education, and to do so institute the parochial schools and demand of the good members of their parishes to send their children to them. [213]

So, it behooves us to have a law compelling every child between certain ages to attend the *public* school and to refuse further aid to sectarian schools.

Theodore Roosevelt in his "American Ideals" says:

"... We stand unalterably in favor of the public-school system in its entirety. We believe that English, and no other language, is that in which all the school exercises should be conducted. We are against any division of the school fund, and against any appropriation of public money for sectarian purposes. We are against any recognition whatever by the state in any shape or form of state-aided parochial schools."

Jeremiah J. Crowley says in his book, "The Parochial School, A Curse to the Church, A Menace to the Nation":

"The Catholic parochial school in the United States is not founded on loyalty to the Republic, and the ecclesiastics who control it would throttle, if they could, the liberties of the American people.

"It is my profound conviction that the masses of the Catholic people prefer the public schools, and that they send their children to the parochial schools to avoid eternal punishment, as their pastors preach from the pulpit, 'Catholic parents who send their children to the godless public schools are going straight to hell.'"

Again Mr. Crowley says:

"Catholic public school opponents declare that at least one-third of the American people favor their position. I deny it. I am morally certain that not five per cent of the Catholic men of America endorse at heart the parochial school. They may send their children to the parochial schools to keep peace in the family and to avoid an open rupture with the parish rector; they may be induced to pass resolutions of approval of the parochial school in their lodges and conventions; but if it ever becomes a matter of blood, not one per cent of them will be found outside of the ranks of the defenders of the American public schools. [214]

"If a perfectly free ballot could be cast by the Catholic men of America for the perpetuity or suppression of the parochial school, it would be suppressed by an astounding majority."

The above quotations were written by Mr. Crowley while he was yet a priest in the church of Rome, and he evidently knew whereof he spoke. I will comment no further, as these remarks speak for themselves and very plainly.

Before I close, I wish to warn every Protestant parent about sending their children to Roman Catholic institutions for some special training which they claim to be superior in, and at the same time raise them to be Protestants. The instructors in these institutions will promise that they will use no influence to change the child's religious belief, but the sisters are bound by rule to convert every person to the Roman Catholic faith with whom she comes in contact, if she possibly can. If influence and coercion are not used, the environment is there just the same. Many times since I have left the sisterhood, mothers have come to me in tears and grief and asked me to help them keep their daughters from joining the Roman Catholic church or sisterhood. They would tell me that when they had placed their children in these institutions, the sisters had told them that no influence would be used to change their religious faith. Maybe not, but if such a person does not accede to the demands of those in charge and go to mass and say the prayers of a Roman Catholic, conditions are made very disagreeable for them and they soon learn that it is best for them to go through the performance, even though they do not believe it. Then, as time goes on, these practices become imbedded in their hearts and minds, until at last they become hypnotized, so to speak, by the superstitious teaching and practices of the Roman Catholic religion.

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In this small volume I have told of the practices and teachings of the Roman Catholic church and convent as I have lived them. I am sometimes asked if I can prove this or that. If any of you, dear readers, will live these things as I have lived them they will be realistic enough to you. God's Word says, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

I may have written with prejudice, and I ask God to prejudice me against *all* wrong that I may live to do His work and glorify Him. He knows that I hold no ill-feeling against *any* Roman Catholic individual—laity, sister, priest or archbishop. But the system they represent—the system that I have served so faithfully for so many years—I have no sympathy for. Whatever a sister, priest or archbishop may be, the system has made them. I only hope and pray that they will all see the light and come out of their superstition and live the religious life they entered the Roman Catholic church to live. God's Word says, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

In the last lines of this book, I wish to plead with each and every American to stand for the right, and do not be afraid to show your colors. Stand for the true American principles; stand by that Wonder of Wonders, the Menace—which has been a Martin Luther in print; and above all, *stand together*. Unite—for without union there is no strength. Follow the Roman Catholic system in this respect. And when the patriotic men and women do unite on one common ground and for the one cause—love of God, freedom and country—there need be no fear of a second St. Bartholemew's Day; there need be no fear of a repetition of the terrible Inquisition of Spain; there need be no fear of internal strife as poor, blood-drenched Mexico is experiencing today.

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All I ask is for you to think on the few thoughts I have endeavored to give you in plain words, and to take the warning as coming from one who lived for thirty-one years.

"THE DEMANDS OF ROME"

Yes, a church without a Bible
Is like a ship without a sail,
Trying to withstand the tempest
In some fearful, howling gale;
Yes, a church without a Bible
Is like a general in the fight,
Who is trying empty-handed
To put enemies to flight.

It will surely be defeated;
Foes without and foes within
Drag it onward, downward, plunging
In a deep abyss of sin.
In the Bible is many a remedy;
If 'twas hidden in its heart,
It from pagan rules and customs
Would forevermore depart.

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APPENDIX.

I hesitate to add this appendix, for I have copied a great many documents and letters in the preceding chapters. But this case, which I will present to you, will be additional proof that the same wrongs which I tried to right, existed years before and that there was no redress.

Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart presented her complaint to her local superiors, but was utterly ignored. She next addressed herself to Archbishop Paul Bruchasie of Montreal, who was her ecclesiastical superior. Archbishop Bruchasie answered her, saying that it was none of her affairs to be busying herself about these matters and that it would be better for her if she would say her prayers, be an humble and obedient religious. That looking after the affairs of the community was her superior's business and that God would punish her for her presumption and pride.

She then addressed herself to the Roman Apostolic Delegate at Washington, D. C., the following being a copy of her statement in behalf of the sisters of this country:

I, Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart, a member of the Order of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, most respectfully submit the following articles to the proper Ecclesiastical Authorities—Subject of Complaint, involving a right to demand justice by the members of the Order who are not French or French Canadian. All members of the Order who are not French or French Canadian are slaves. To prove the above assertion, I will state facts as follows:

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1. All the higher officers of the Order such as Superior General, Councillors General, Provincial Superior and Councillors, have always, with the exception of one German Provincial, been French Canadian Sisters.

2. When rights have been called for, only one provincial councillor was given in the province, which is manifestly of little practical utility, she being one among five, four of which being Canadian.

At the last general chapter, one assistant general was elected, and this only through the interposition of the Archbishop of Montreal. As she was the one who had filled the office of provincial councillor in the province of the Sacred Heart, her place in that council was left vacant, and it was immediately filled by a Canadian sister.

3. The opening clause of No. 200 of our constitution, and all sense of justice, are flagrantly and officially violated, not only in the ways above mentioned, but we are not even permitted to have a sufficient number of representatives in the general chapter, no, nor even one. And thus superiors are thrust upon us without our consent—and laws of which we had no voice in the making.

No. 200 of our constitution reads thus: "The spirit of nationality must be banished as the most dangerous enemy of an institution created to serve the church in all countries of the earth, without distinction of people or language, etc."

4. When it was known by the Superior General and her council that complaints had been made to Ecclesiastical Superiors, a member and representative of the General Council was sent to the Western provinces, and she used her utmost endeavors in our provincial house to make the sisters afraid to address complaints to the ecclesiastical superiors.

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5. Novices of all other nationalities are received into all the novitiates, who, of course, do not realize until after the last vows, that they are to be treated as subordinates in the order. Thus we occupy a position inferior to that of the coadjutrix sister, for they are admitted only on condition of being subject to the vocal nuns, and consent to this condition and therefore are not slaves.

6. Is it not a public insult to the sisters of this country, that only French sisters are constantly kept in offices which have relation with seculars? And this enhanced by the fact that French sisters are, as a rule, not suitable to govern an English-speaking province, as they neither understand the ways of the people nor even of the sisters not French, nor conduct matters in a manner to do them good, not to speak of their imperfect knowledge of the language, and that sisters of a rude and inferior character are often placed in relation with outsiders.

7. Sisters who are not French have been treated with the least consideration, either as to their health (and this even sometimes to the extreme), or to their human feelings. And the schools, which are of necessity taught by English-speaking sisters, have been much neglected by the Canadian superiors as to equipment.

The only reason for this injustice that could be alleged is that there are no English-speaking sisters competent to fill the offices. But this would be false and absurd, for from the time of our Foundresses, there have always been some of these who were able to fill high offices and conduct the business of the order, and at present I could mention many who are able for anything that might be asked for them.

As for the spirit of the Order, is it not possessed far more fully by those who have patiently and faithfully toiled during long years under an unjust administration, rather than those who officially and persistently carry on matters in a spirit of nationality?

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Therefore, in the name of justice, in the name of all of our professed sisters who are afraid to complain to Ecclesiastical Superiors, in the name of those who are too young to realize the position thrust upon them, in the name of future members of the Order, and in my name, I most respectfully ask and demand of the proper Ecclesiastical Authority to arrange these matters in the spirit of religion and justice.

As a simple command given in writing or by word of mouth, or even inserted in the Customary would have no other than temporary effect, I shall consider my petition granted only when there will be inserted in the constitution an explicit and emphatic rule that will give us our own rights and forever prohibit all such injustice and tyranny.

It seems to me that in all conscience it has been borne too long and that after fifty years of endurance we should have our rights as soon as possible.

I feel confident that the wise and holy rulers of the Church will as soon as possible act in accordance with these principles.

Reverently, and with profound respect, I sign myself an humble and obedient child of the Church

As soon as it was reported at the various houses of the order that Sister Paul was endeavoring to obtain the enactment of rules for the equal recognition of all sisters, the local superior of one of these houses wrote a letter containing a petition to the Mother House, asking them not to recognize the appeal of Sister Paul for justice. This letter and petition was sent from house to house, obtaining all the signatures possible. Several sisters told me that they were requested to sign the petition without being allowed to read the contents. [221]

The following is a copy of the letter and petition written by Sister M. Alexander:

Providence Hospital, Everett, Wash., January 9, 1905.

My very dear Sister:

You are no doubt aware that for some time past our poor, misguided Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart has been trying to create disunion and dissatisfaction in the Community, particularly among those who are not French or of Canadian birth. She has gone so far as to write to the higher ecclesiastical authority to obtain redress for fancied wrongs which have no existence save in her disordered imagination.

She has used our names without our knowledge or consent to give color and strength to her assertions. Therefore in justice to ourselves, personally and collectively, it is high time for us to act in a way so dignified, vigorous and religious that our loyalty and unswerving fidelity to our beloved community may never be questioned; and that this testimonial of our devotion to the government, customs and usages of the order to which we have the happiness of belonging, may be placed on the record in the archives of the Mother House and of the Provincial House as an undeniable proof that we forever abhor any act or word or deed contrary to the spirit of our cherished Mother House or its past or present or future government. Therefore, let each American Sister (Member) sign the accompanying document, act of submission, freely and willingly according to the dictates of her conscience. Let the document be transmitted in regular order to all the houses of the Province and then forwarded to our worthy Mother Provincial that she may have the satisfaction of conveying to our esteemed Mother General this undying proof of our filial devotion and everlasting attachment. [222]

Document—We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the action of Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart against the Community, and that her assertions that the constitutions are officially violated in the absence of American members from the general and provincial councils is condemned by us. We denounce any act by which she threatens division on the ground of nationality. We declare our refusal to take part in any act against the government of the community. We further pledge allegiance and loyalty to our community and superiors in office and recognize their authority as emanating from God.

SISTER M. ALEXANDER.

Answer of Sister Paul to the document circulated by Sister M. Alexander:

I, Sister Paul of the Sacred Heart, positively declare that I never tried to create disunion in the community, nor have I ever either taken any action against the community or endeavored to incite any other Sister to do so. Neither have I advocated division or rebellion, but have spoken against both these. Nor have I sent the names of the sisters to higher ecclesiastical superiors.

All that I have done towards ameliorating existing conditions is the following: I have written to higher ecclesiastical authorities and spoken to them, as I have a perfect right to do and shall do so again if I feel such to be my duty.

I also advised other sisters to address ecclesiastical superiors concerning what other sisters of sound mind, as well as myself, considered to be an injustice. These matters are public, and we have a right to speak of them. [223]

Furthermore, I have spoken only to sisters who have spent some years in the Order; while the slandering paper dated Everett, January 9, 1905, which was sent to the American sisters of this province for them to sign, was given into the hands of very young sisters.

I declare that paper to be a libel against my character, as is easily perceived on reading it together with what I have written above.

I therefore demand, in justice to myself, that a copy of this present writing be pasted below the writing of each of the two copies of the paper circulated for the American sisters of the Province to sign, which are kept respectively in the archives of the Mother House in Montreal and in those of the Provincial House in Vancouver.

I also declare, that until my reputation shall be fully cleared from the false

accusations contained in that paper, I shall consider myself as living under the unjust action or sanction of the responsible superiors.

House of Providence,
Vancouver, Wash., Dec. 14th, 1906.

The result: Sister Alexander was made superior and was elevated to the very best houses of the order, among them St. Vincent's Hospital, Portland, Oregon. This is the same Sister Alexander who was superior when I was taken out of St. Vincent's.

Sister Paul was sent to the Mother House in Montreal, Canada, to while away her time translating French into English.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DEMANDS OF ROME ***

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