

# CHIGWELL

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DOMINIC DEVAS, O.F.M.

CHIGWELL

NIHIL OBSTAT:

P. ALPHONSUS BONNAR, O.F.M., S.T.D.,  
*Censor deputatus.*

IMPRIMATUR:

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*Minister Angliae.*

LONDINI; E CONVENTU S. ANTONII,  
*Die 1<sup>a</sup> Junii, 1928.*

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*Die 13<sup>a</sup> Augusti, 1928.*





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Founder of the Congregation of the Servants of the Sacred Heart, and the  
Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

# CHIGWELL

*Being a Brief Sketch of the*

CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS  
OF JESUS AND MARY

*By*

DOMINIC DEVAS, O.F.M.

*With a Foreword by*

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GASQUET

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In obedience to the decrees of Pope Urban VIII and other Sovereign Pontiffs, the writer declares that any graces and supernatural facts which may be related in this volume as witnessing to the sanctity of Servants of God other than those canonised or beatified by Holy Church, rest on human authority alone; and in regard thereto, as in all things else, the writer submits himself without reserve to the infallible judgement of the Apostolic See, which alone has power and authority to pronounce as to whom rightly belongs the Character and Title of Saint or Blessed.

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## FOREWORD

I HAVE been asked to write a brief preface to this sketch of the origin and progress of the Congregation, which I prefer to call—with the author of this sketch—the *Chigwell Nuns*. I have read with more than pleasure the pages that follow, and they evidence the manifest protection of God's Providence over the good religious. As their Cardinal Protector I have made it my business to know them and the work they have been doing for God during the years of their existence; and the letters that I wrote last year to the late Mother-General and the religious of the Institute at the time of their first General Chapter as a fully recognised and approved Congregation of the Church, stated my high appreciation of the work and labours of the late Mother-General and of the entire body.

I need not repeat, even in outline, the story told in these pages. They are so interesting that they will, I am sure, be read and appreciated by those who will begin them. I am glad myself to have them and to know more about the body I have long respected and admired. The true title of the Institute is "The Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary," or, as the original French Con-

gregation was called by the holy Alsatian founder,  
"The Servants of the Sacred Heart."

May God continue to bless and prosper the Congregation, and send many labourers into the field of the many charities they have.

AIDAN, CARDINAL GASQUET.

PALAZZO SAN CALISTO,  
TRASTEVERE, ROME,  
*March 23, 1928.*

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# HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SACRED HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY

## CHAPTER I

### BEGINNINGS

THE Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, better known to many as the *Chigwell* nuns,<sup>1</sup> has established itself so firmly in our midst, with its houses in England, Ireland, and Scotland, as to justify a brief account of its origins. These are essentially bound up with the actual French Congregation of the *Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, and with that we must begin.

Nineteenth-century France—prolific mother of religious congregations of women—saw the birth of the *Servants of the Sacred Heart*. Before going further, I feel there is a question—dare I call it a complaint?—to be, at least, noticed. Briefly put, it

<sup>1</sup> From their Novitiate House at Chigwell in Essex. I feel I must be allowed my little appeal, not to *alter* the title of the Congregation, but to *add* an official subtitle for current usage. The actual title, though beautiful indeed, does not lend itself to this; and in *Cistercians* we have a most approved precedent for adopting a title drawn simply from a locality which had come to embody hallowed associations: *Carthusians* gives us another example, and *Camaldolese* a third.

is this: Are there not too many institutes of women amongst us, many engaged on precisely the same kind of work, and finding it hard, at times, to recruit satisfactorily their numbers? Would it not, one hears said, make for efficiency if some measure of wise amalgamation were effected? Such questions as these presuppose a deliberate multiplication of institutes, whereas, in point of fact, they mostly grew up to meet merely local needs and spread in the most random of ways. In the early days of the nineteenth century, before modern methods of travel had reduced the world into a series of suburbs of the nearest town, a priest would find himself faced with some immediate parochial need which only a group of devoted women could adequately supply. Nowadays, the procedure would be to think out what *existing* congregation would best suit our purpose, and to invite them in. In earlier times, especially in post-revolution France, where spiritual want abounded, the tendency was to fit out the instrument for oneself *sur place*, and fashion it to the local requirements, and in abundance did God raise up just that type of womanhood on which bishop or priest could rely. Thus did a great many congregations of women originate, filling an obvious want, and originally thought of as merely local groups. That they soon spread beyond the narrow limits of diocese or country, and became correspondingly tenacious of life and conscious of strength, is merely an evidence of useful purpose fulfilled which carries its own justification.

In the forefront of any account of the actual English *Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, as we know it today, must stand the name of an Alsatian priest. His life reveals him to us as a man of restless energy and compelling personality, undaunted by obstacles, full of unbounded confidence in God and intense zeal for souls, yet inclined to forget certain practical aspects of human character, and somewhat oblivious of the demands of ordinary human prudence. Such mingled characteristics often enough reduced his work to the verge of extinction, and one may, perhaps, reverently think of him as one whom God looked upon as an utterly sincere but rather wayward instrument of his Providence. Strange though it may sound, one certainly gets the impression, as one reads through the history of his work, that the war of 1870 was a very large contributory factor in establishing the new Institute. The conduct of the Sisters, during the period of hostilities, was certainly of a kind to secure for them such a measure of permanence in France as that country seems ever likely to afford its most faithful sons and daughters. Then, besides, the absence during the war of the *man* on whom all seemed to depend, developed an unsuspected power of initiative on the part of some of the Sisters, which led to most beneficial results. Thus, of particular interest to us, is the fact that the Franco-Prussian War was directly responsible for throwing over into England the first seeds of the new Congregation, from which so much of direct value was to spring;

and it was actually in London that the first vows were taken. In somewhat similar fashion, foundations in Germany and Austria may both be traced to the same source.

A man, then, and a war—these strike the reader as the two chief instruments chosen under God for the birth and spread of the new Congregation. The man was Victor Braun, an Alsatian, born at St Avold in the diocese of Metz, on June 5, 1825. His family was of that sturdy Catholic type met with so frequently in the annals of the Church. His grandmother merited, indeed, to see priests among her kindred, for, in the tempestuous days of the Revolution, she had harboured priests often enough, at peril of her own life and theirs, and, time and again, the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass had been offered up under her roof. On one occasion, drawn by shouts and cries to look out from her window, she caught sight of a statue of Our Lady of Help being dragged to destruction by the crowd. She at once despatched a child of hers to follow the mob and mark what became of the statue. He returned in due course, saying it had been dragged to a bridge outside the town, and thrown down thence into the river. That same night she and two others rescued the statue and hid it in her house till better times might come; today it enjoys once more a place of honour in the Church of *Notre-Dame de Bon Secours*. Of Victor's brothers, one became a Jesuit and died in Canada in 1885. The youthful Victor fostered his own apostolic vocation by ponder-



CHILDREN'S CHAPEL, CHIGWELL



ing on the lives of the Saints and *The Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, but it was no solitary task, this pious reading—it was made in common in the Braun family, night by night, before the recitation of the Rosary.

A vocation to the priesthood shaped itself definitely in the boy's mind, and was welcomed by all, but his health was far from keeping pace with his inclinations. Sent at an early age to the *petit-séminaire* of Metz, he had, on many occasions, to interrupt his studies and return home to recuperate. This he would do by means of long solitary walks, and pilgrimages to the shrines of his choice. In time he passed to the *grand-séminaire*, but his residence was just as occasional as before. Private study, and the help of the priests of St Avold, were really all he had to rely on. This somewhat haphazard education was an obvious drawback in the formation of Victor's character, yet, in the end, he succeeded in satisfying the diocesan examiners at each successive step forward, and was finally ordained priest by the Bishop of Metz on June 14, 1851.

As happens not unfrequently, the restfulness as of an end obtained after years of anxious doubting—which was what the priesthood meant to Victor Braun—brought with it a distinct though temporary improvement in the young priest's health, and he was fit at once for work. For two years he taught in a diocesan college, then he worked in the city of Metz itself, thence he went as curate to Flavigny in the diocese of Nancy. Throughout,

however, he had unsettling yearnings for missionary life as a religious, and from Flavigny he did, indeed, join the *Pères de la Miséricorde*, but left them, partly for reasons of health, mainly because no ideal of his seemed likely to be realised amongst them. He then stayed for some time at Nancy, then went to Paris as chaplain to a reformatory, then home to St Avoild, thoroughly ill. By 1860 he was well enough to take charge of the little parish of Durchthal, near his native place, and in the following year he went back to Paris, where he joined the Institute of the *Brothers of St Vincent de Paul*, established there by the Abbé Le Prévost. After ten years of priestly life he was beginning to find his feet at length.

In Paris Victor Braun had special charge of a club for working men, and of a *home* for apprentices. Besides, he had a confessional at *Notre-Dame des Victoires*. Soon, however, further work was to force itself upon him. With his knowledge of German he found himself brought into constant contact with numberless young working girls of Alsatian or German origin, whose helpless and dangerous position, on first arriving at the capital in search of employment, was only too apparent. To establish some sort of home for these girls became a fixed intention in the mind of Père Braun, and after looking around, in vain, for any who might be willing to undertake the work, he set about realising a plan of his own.

Among his penitents he found, without difficulty, not a few who entered fully into his scheme. Three

were ultimately selected and installed in a little flat in the Rue d'Ulm; and a fourth soon joined them. On the accession of others, a larger home was secured in the Rue Humboldt. On October 17, 1866, the feast of Saint (then Blessed) Margaret Mary, Père Braun assembled his little flock, spoke to them of the purpose they had in view, consecrated them to the Sacred Heart, and decided on the adoption of a uniform style of dress, hardly, as yet, a habit, but sufficiently distinctive to differentiate it from purely lay costume. The work of foundation was on that day begun. Soon a building was hired for the express purpose of affording a home for the harbouring of girls out of work or otherwise exposed to dangers both moral and physical. Despite the straitest poverty, the work prospered. Very soon it was to ramify in various directions, with some danger to its stability.

One day an appeal came for a *Sister*—the title itself shows in what light they were already regarded—to go and nurse a poor, sick, Alsatian woman. The Sister went. It was the beginning of a long series of similar calls and similar work. Before the little group well knew what had happened, they had added to what we may call their *Œuvre des domestiques*, that of tending the sick in their own homes.

In precisely similar fashion yet another duty devolved on them—clear proof there were pressing needs to supply. A workman, engaged in the neighbourhood of the Sisters, on the building of a house, fell from the scaffolding and was killed.

His overburdened widow came to the Sisters and begged them to take charge of two of her little fatherless children. They were accepted. This was enough, as a lead. An immense city like Paris had no difficulty in furnishing other similar cases. The Sisters found themselves in charge of an orphanage.

Thus, within two years, the new Institute is grappling with three kinds of work, each one of which would suffice to give ample occupation to a well-established and endowed community. The SERVANTS OF THE SACRED HEART—Père Braun had told them they would be called that *some* day—were not even an established Congregation at all, let alone *well* established, and as for endowments, they were living simply from hand to mouth, with no resources whatever beyond the slender patrimony of the founder, and such tiny sums as were occasionally forthcoming from the Sisters themselves or from the girls they housed. No need of a prophet to foretell difficulties. Some came from without in the shape of self-constituted critics who declared the whole work uncalled for—which was evidently untrue—and utterly insecure, which was, indeed, sufficiently obvious. Other difficulties arose on the part of Victor Braun's own family. They feared, with only too good reason, that the manifold *œuvres*, on which he was embarking, would make on them the first call for the financial assistance of which they would inevitably stand in need. The worst difficulty, as always, came from within. The founder's choice of subjects had been quite haphazard—just

as they presented themselves, so did he accept them. He soon found himself obliged to get rid altogether of the first Superior he had chosen. She was already an ex-religious—as, indeed, were some of the others—and her evident intention of supplanting altogether the influence of the founder, forced him to dismiss her from the little community. Once outside, however, she continued her efforts at disruption even more actively and directly than before. She succeeded in bringing about an estrangement between the hitherto favourable Archbishop of Paris and the followers of Père Braun; but, as so often happens, these ill-intentioned manœuvres only contributed to the growth of the movement. Père Braun established himself at Grenelles (Paris), *Rue de Théâtre*, where the *Œuvre des domestiques* was henceforward maintained, and transferred the orphanage to Sèvres, in the neighbouring diocese of Versailles. Thus the Institute had two houses now instead of one.

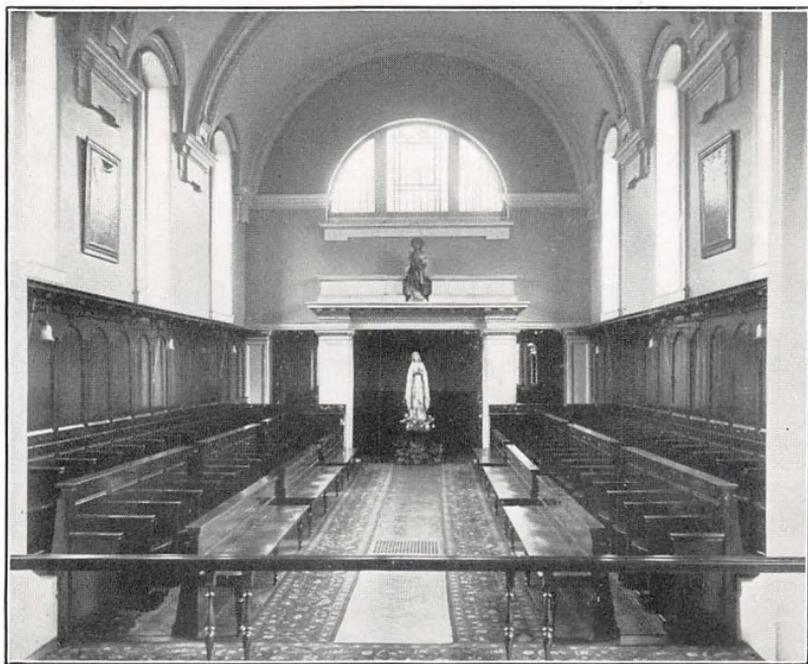
At Sèvres a powerful friend was won in the person of Canon Codant, and a residence for the Sisters, first in the Avenue de Bellevue, and later in the Rue de Troyon. Of greater importance still was the ready welcome of the Bishop, Mgr. Mabile. Not only did he open his diocese to the newcomers, but he authorised them to constitute themselves into a religious congregation, bearing the promised title of *Servants of the Sacred Heart*. Thus established, they were to devote themselves to the tending of the sick in their own homes, and to the work of the orphanage.

In all this rapid development immense help was forthcoming from a community of Dominican nuns, settled in Sèvres, and of whom the chaplain was the above-mentioned Canon Codant. Both convent and convent chapel were thrown open to the Sisters from Paris, the first religious habits—of black cloth—were made by these daughters of St Dominic, and it was in their Chapter-room and before their Superior-General that the *Chapter of faults* was held on the eve of the *clothing* day. At length all was ready, and on February 28, 1868, the first fifteen members of the new Congregation received the religious habit. Sèvres is thus the spiritual cradle of the Institute.

The habit, however, does not constitute the religious life. Many difficulties had yet to be faced and overcome before anything like stability was to be secured. Not in fact till 1872 were the vows of religion to be taken by any members of the Congregation. Still, the ceremony of February 28, 1868, does mark a great step forward in the fortunes of the new undertaking, and Père Braun might well thank God for, at least, a satisfactory beginning of his work.

The year 1868 was to mark further developments. As the family of orphans increased it was found necessary to secure a larger home for them. An old abandoned printing works—at some little distance from the *Rue de Troyon*—was obtained for this purpose. It was a large but incredibly barren sort





SISTERS' CHOIR, CHIGWELL CONVENT

of edifice, named *Cadérousel*, and there, in great poverty, the good work proceeded. In addition, the Sisters were invited by a doctor, a specialist in cancer, to take charge of a private hospital of his at Billancourt. Père Braun acceded readily, and sent off at once four Sisters from Versailles. For the first time appears the name of Mother Gertrude, who was to be a figure of note in the Congregation. She went to Billancourt as Superior.

The gaps thus made in the two establishments at Versailles were soon, however, to be made good. In October of this same year, 1868, nine postulants were admitted to the habit, again in the chapel of the Dominican nuns. Père Braun performed the ceremony, and the ever-faithful Canon Codant preached. The *Servants of the Sacred Heart* now numbered twenty-four. Mother Chantal was named Superior of the two houses at Versailles, and Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament, Mistress of Novices; yet may the frailty of the whole organisation be gauged by remembering that neither one nor the other had, so far, spent even one year in a properly constituted community with a formed conventual life. Père Braun retained, presumably, the direction of the work at Grenelles, multiplying patrons in heaven for his manifold activities, and hoping serenely for the best.

The next step was to re-unite in one establishment the divided community of Versailles. *Rue de Troyon* and the *Cadérousel* were found to be too far apart to be convenient, even had they been other-

wise suitable, and when a building recently secured by the Dominican nuns was offered to Père Braun by Canon Codant, the former readily accepted it. It was partly a laundry and partly an inn. The latter bore the sign *Au Sapeur*, which was henceforth used to designate the whole building. Early in 1869 the entire group of Sisters, with their orphans, moved in. In March of the same year thirteen new postulants received the habit. On this occasion the preliminary retreat was preached by Père Planchat of the Society of Brothers of St Vincent de Paul. He impressed all who heard him. Two years later he fell in Paris, one of the martyrs of the *Commune*.

Thirty-seven was now the number of the *Servants of the Sacred Heart*. It was time for another wave of anxiety and distress to beat around the little venture of faith on which Père Braun had embarked. It was not long in coming, and *Au Sapeur* was at the root of it all.

Already a certain coldness seems to have shadowed the relations between the Dominican nuns and their progressive neighbours. The latter—new, untried—were increasing in numbers with such a wonderful rapidity as might quite likely have developed an unconscious irritation against them on the part of the old-established community. Yet one cannot think that mere jealousy was the moving factor throughout; rather one is almost obliged to allow that Père Braun must have been in error himself, and had no right to be so utterly taken aback as he

was when the Dominicans asked for payment of the rent agreed on for the use of *Au Sapeur*. Endless recrimination followed. One party denied all knowledge of the agreement, the others stuck to their bond. Doubtless there was some reason on both sides. It appears, that, though the laundry had been vacated by its previous tenants, the inn had not, and was not likely to be for some years till the lease expired. Perhaps the agreement turned on this, and was mutually misinterpreted. Canon Codant, however, unequivocally supported what, in friendlier days, he called *his whites* against *his blacks*; and he seems to have been a man of sound judgment. There was nothing for it but to raise the money—or as much as might be—and quit. In June, 1869, the *Servants of the Sacred Heart* left Versailles and went to St Cloud. A passable house had been secured for them, Rue de Montretout, and—best work of all—through the kindly offices of the Curé of St Cloud, Abbé Romand, the sisters were allowed to set up a chapel and plant the Blessed Sacrament in their midst. At long last they had a home to themselves.

Throughout the crisis, Père Braun had taken lodgings at St Cloud and was constantly amongst his spiritual daughters, pouring vigour into their harassed souls. How much they needed it! Barely established at St Cloud before, literally, they are in difficulties again! This time it is the police authorities. They complained of the overcrowded state of the house—probably with some reason—for,

remember, in all their various moves, the Sisters carried around their orphans with them. The preliminary hint was, of course, ignored, as, it seemed, nothing *could* be done to meet the difficulty, and so, in due course, came the official notification that either the personnel of the place must be considerably reduced or the establishment broken up altogether. Something now *had* to be done. Twenty out of the forty orphans were despatched to Paris to the house still retained at Grenelles. Alas! cold was their welcome, as the place was still in direst poverty. Père Braun meanwhile was feverishly house-hunting. He might have spared himself, not the labour, but the anxiety, for God was watching, with more effect, over his work. In the midst of the crisis came an invitation to go to Argenteuil to look after the sick poor in that neighbourhood. Needless to say, the offer was accepted at once. A residence, *Rue de l'Hôtel Dieu*, was placed at the disposal of the Sisters, and in a few days all the orphans were housed there, together with twelve Sisters under the direction of Mother Gertrude. Mother Chantal remained as Superior at St Cloud, with Mother Mary of the Blessed Sacrament as Mistress of Novices. On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in the year 1869, took place the fourth ceremony of clothing. No less than twenty-one postulants were admitted to the habit in the chapel of St Cloud. The Congregation now numbered fifty, divided between the three houses of Grenelles, St Cloud, and Argenteuil. The orphan-

age was at Argenteuil; at Grenelles was the *Œuvre des domestiques*, and from St Cloud was carried on the work of caring for the sick poor in their own homes, a labour much augmented at this time by a severe outbreak of smallpox. Billancourt has disappeared altogether from the history, dissolved in an unrecorded mist from which Mother Gertrude has alone emerged; but, on the whole, the stability of the Congregation was much improved, and the ecclesiastical authorities looked on it with approval. The founder, however, was wisely on his guard. "Take care," he said at this time to his daughters, "take care you do not depart from the poverty which till now has constituted your strength and your merit before God. Remember your penury at Grenelles, and, above all, at Sèvres, in the famous château of *Cadérousel*, with its paper-covered windows and boltless doors, and where you were in such utter want of everything. You were more fervent then than now in your charming villa at St Cloud and in your house at Argenteuil. Be afraid of checking the flow of divine blessings on your community by anxiety for a little wellbeing."

At the beginning of 1870 came two more foundations, one at Vaugirard, in Paris, where the Sisters undertook the entire domestic charge of the orphanage belonging to the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul, the other at Pithiviers, in the diocese of Orleans, where the Sisters—already known in the neighbourhood, from having nursed a distinguished invalid there—were invited to open a house whence

the work of nursing the sick might be carried on. This work being one particularly dear to Père Braun, the offer was very readily accepted, and three Sisters allocated to Pithiviers at once; but before they could take up their residence there, the Franco-Prussian War had begun. Only after its conclusion was the foundation established.

As soon as hostilities broke out, Père Braun moved at once to St Avoild, his native place, took up his abode there with his family, and entered upon a strenuous apostolate among the French troops round about. Yet for one with a religious family of women depending upon him, it was hardly a wise move. The good Sisters were soon left to fend for themselves, as the scheme for carrying on the administration by letter—like many a more ambitious scheme and hope of those days—was dashed to the ground in a few hours.

The first touch of war came in the order for all German *nationals* to leave France. As several of the Sisters were of German origin, this order caused a considerable depletion of their ranks in France. Grenelles was closed down, and for a time remained empty, but Cologne opened its gates in compensation, for thither the German Sisters withdrew. The Sisters at St Cloud and Argenteuil clung on as long as they could, but the houses were full in the zone of military occupation, and no permanent domicile could be hoped for. The Sisters at Argenteuil were busy one day over their *lingerie* on the





REV. MOTHER WINIFREDE  
*R.I.P.*

river-bank, when the order came abruptly to evacuate the house, as the engineers were on the point of blowing up the bridge and cutting off all civilian communication with Paris. Luckily Grenelles was empty. Thither Mother Gertrude and her orphans hastily retired; and when the city was invested a few weeks later, the Sisters from the orphanage served an ambulance, at 67 *Rue Fondary*, through which no fewer than five hundred wounded passed during the siege.

From St Cloud the Sisters went to Versailles. Here generous hospitality was accorded them till they, too, at the express wish of Mgr. Mabile, took over hospital work in the vast ambulance established in the famous château of Versailles. By September the whole place was in Prussian hands, but the hospital and the Sisters were retained. The latter won for themselves genuine and unstinted praise both for their devotion and for their efficiency.

During the course of the war there functioned in France a philanthropic society known as the *Société Internationale de Secours aux Blessés*. It was largely staffed by men and women of English nationality, and had offices in London. Now among the community at Grenelles was an adventurous spirit, an Irish Sister, named Josephine, who conceived the bold idea of going over to England, under the auspices of the *Société*, to solicit help for the sick and wounded, to open up communications, if possible, with Père Braun, and, in any event, *to view the land* to see to what extent it might serve as a place of refuge

for the war-vexed communities of France. With three others, all wearing the red cross brassard, she succeeded in reaching London on August 27. She at once secured an interview with Cardinal Manning, begged for his protection, and obtained his sanction for a party of Sisters to come over to London. Then, without a moment's delay, she hastened back alone to Paris, announced her good news to M. l'Abbé Prévost—the only semblance of an ecclesiastical superior available—and returned to London with five Sisters taken from the community of Vaugirard. This second party reached London on September 3, and, with the three who had remained there from the start, brought up to nine the number of the *Servants of the Sacred Heart in England*. After entrusting four of these to a community of *Mercy* nuns, and three to the *Sisters of Nazareth*, Sister Josephine, with one companion, set off for St Avold to find Père Braun. After many difficulties they succeeded in reaching their destination, and were rewarded by finding there the founder himself. Naturally he rejoiced at the news they brought—gave the habit to Sister Josephine!—no, not even yet had that preliminary been done—and set out for England. Deliberately they passed through Cologne to visit there the German members of the Congregation, who were busy, like their Sisters at Versailles, in succouring the wounded. On September 20 the party reached London. Père Braun found hospitality with the Marist Fathers, and on the following day, in an interview with Cardinal Manning, obtained

an authorisation to establish his community in the London parish of Stratford. He hired a house adjoining the church, and the nuns were soon installed there, 2, *Eden Villas, The Grove*. Père Braun was enthusiastic. His reception by the Cardinal had been, in fact, most friendly, and no less so his welcome by the parish priest of Stratford, Father—now Mgr. Canon Surmont. The latter, in a letter he had the kindness to send me, writes of Père Braun as follows: "As he did not know English, he used to come and see me pretty well every day. I liked him very much as a very good priest. As I left Stratford on Jan. 16, 1871, for Hammersmith, I did not see him again, but I have never forgotten the good impression he gave me." To Père Braun the whole diocese was thrown open; anywhere he might establish convents, everywhere he might solicit alms. The next step was to call on the President of the *Société Internationale*. The latter seems to have recognised in the Sisters the safest channel for bringing help to the wounded of both armies, and he entrusted them in consequence with a sum of money and large quantities of surgical stores of all kinds, destined for the ambulance at Versailles. Sister Josephine—more correctly now, after her clothing, Sister Mary of Jesus—with a Sister Augusta, once again crossed the Channel carrying the money and stores from London. These, in due course, were handed over to the English Committee at Versailles. Then the good Sister called on the Bishop, who showed most cordial interest in this

unlooked-for expansion of the Institute, and finally made her way to the ambulance at the château. One may well imagine the warmth of her welcome and the eagerness with which all her news was received. The Prussian military authorities were even friendly enough themselves. They had come to hold the Sisters in high esteem, and were ready to help. Passports were obtained for five Sisters from Versailles to accompany Josephine and Augusta back to London. Whilst these seven were pursuing their not uneventful journey, a similar party from Cologne, summoned by Père Braun, was also making its way to England. On October 4 the two parties arrived simultaneously and were received with open arms by the community at Stratford. Thus in 1870 was the work of the Congregation begun in England.

Nursing the sick poor in their own homes, and providing for the needs, spiritual and temporal, of working girls by offering them a home, an education, and as far as possible, a future, such was to be the main occupation of the Sisters at Stratford. Very soon, however, they came to be widely employed in teaching in various schools in the neighbourhood.

In November there came to Père Braun in London a call from Germany for three sisters to go to Darmstadt, to work there in an ambulance. Strangely enough the appeal came directly from a Protestant source, the Princess Alice, who had herself established the ambulance in that city and who had

already heard of the devotedness of the Sisters in that kind of work. Père Braun himself accompanied the party to their new abode. Again he passed through Cologne, and there, on November 12, 1870, with an astonishing disregard for correct canonical procedure—*mais que voulez-vous? c'est la guerre*—(which was quite true) he clothed four more of his religious daughters with the religious habit. This was the fifth ceremony of clothing to take place in the Congregation.

After installing his little community at Darmstadt, the founder set out for Versailles, and, overcoming the not unanticipated difficulties of the journey, reached his destination on December 4. All were naturally delighted to welcome one whom some, nevertheless—I cannot help fancying—looked on almost as a sort of *prodigal father* who had left his children. Exteriorly all was well in this, the largest community of the Congregation, but below the surface there were evidently troubles brewing fast. The shallowness of the original foundations, accentuated by the disturbed state of affairs due to the war, was becoming increasingly evident. To the Superior at Stratford Père Braun seems to have opened his heart. On December 13 he wrote:

“My presence here is very necessary. It is always the same ones, who have done us harm wherever we were, who have muddled the cards here. I am more than ever determined to send away all those who won't submit to the Rule and to the Superiors I have set up; to get rid, above all, of

those who, without any permission, through mere whim and fancy, go out making visits, and seeking for direction elsewhere. This is what the Bishop himself advises me to do. I hope all the Sisters in London are thoroughly obedient and follow out your instructions in everything, as I told them to do. What we want is obedience and union of heart, and good example to newcomers on the part of the old."

A few days later he wrote again:

"I have just received your letter, and am delighted at the good report you give. I shall join you soon for a fortnight, and I hope I shall have at least a little more consolation amongst you than when I came here. If I had cleared out long ago four or five *mauvaises têtes*, I should not have had this bother now. Many are desperately in need of reforming themselves before busying themselves about others; Superiors from heaven could do nothing with them. I am determined to have the Rule observed here, and I repeat each day that if a Sister speaks against the house to outsiders she won't sleep another night with the community; it is the advice the Bishop of Versailles has given me. Spiteful tongues, that is what has worked the mischief. The Bishop is very good to me, supports me in everything and does not want other priests to occupy themselves with our Sisters, only myself."

On September 21, in another letter to the Superior at Stratford, he puts his finger clearly on the real root of the trouble:

"I am sorry I cannot come to London yet. I have still a great deal to do here. I see now how necessary it is for me to get a near view of people and things. Our misfortunes will have, at least,

this good result, that knowing our houses better now from the inside, I shall be able to apply the proper remedy. The remedy consists in an absolutely entire and complete obedience to the established Superiors, and in a rigorous maintenance of union of heart, by stopping all particular friendships and mutual recriminations, and by using the special faculty, recently given me by the Bishop of Versailles, which allows me to dismiss without mercy the Sisters—even the senior ones—who ignore the authority of the Superiors, or who sow discord amongst the Sisters.

“When peace comes, and our houses have been reorganised, I shall only appoint as Superiors those who have been obedient. I shall arrange for them a long and serious retreat—with special regulations to be kept during it. It will serve, for the senior ones, in place of the Novitiate they never had. In addition, I shall establish a proper Novitiate for the newcomers where the example of the seniors will no longer be a source of scandal.”

What volumes these letters speak! However, the much-needed work of *internal reorganisation* could not begin yet, for the war still went on, with its inevitable accompaniment of intense work in the hospitals and ambulances. Besides Paris, Versailles, and Darmstadt, the Sisters were also employed in ambulances at Orleans and Beaugency. Then, in February, 1871, came the armistice. At once wise Mother Gertrude came out of Paris, with her orphans, and joined the community at Versailles, leaving only five or six Sisters at Grenelles. Similarly, the Sisters from Darmstadt, who after all, it seems,

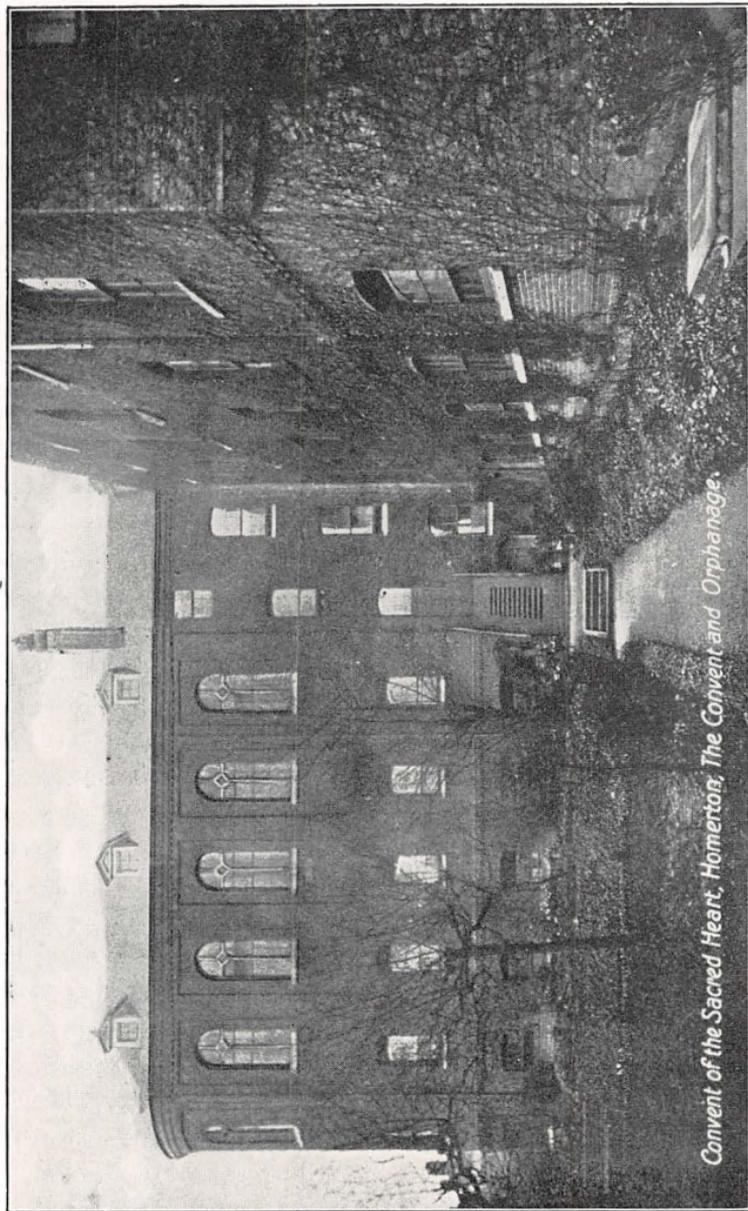
had had much to suffer from Protestant prejudice, were recalled, and made their way painfully back to Versailles. Here the great military hospital was soon closed down and long trains of wounded—with the Sisters still in charge—moved back to Germany.

On March 10, 1871, peace was signed, and, on the 18th, the disastrous Commune broke out in Paris. It was an incredible outbreak of mingled revolution against the State and persecution of the Church, a blind, unreasoning movement which cost many priests their lives, and caused immense suffering to the harassed citizens of Paris, delivered from a foreign enemy, only to fall victims to fratricidal strife. On the advice of the Fathers of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, the little community at Grenelles joined their sisters at Vaugirard. It was as impossible to leave the city as in the days of the Prussian siege. The house at Vaugirard soon came, however, into the direct line of fire from the French guns at Montretout, outside the city. It had, in consequence, to be hastily vacated. All retired to an adjacent building where, obviously, things could not be expected to be much better. For several weeks the Sisters had to live, without Mass, in cellars.

Meanwhile, on their side, the French military authorities set up an ambulance in the park of St Cloud, and once again the *Servants of the Sacred Heart* were busy at their now familiar task of looking after the wounded.

Then, at length, the Commune too came to an end.





*Convent of the Sacred Heart, Homerton, The Convent and Orphanage.*

THE CONVENT, HOMERTON, LONDON

France could breathe again, and peace and some semblance of order were restored.

At once the *Servants of the Sacred Heart* set to work building up again what the war had undone. The house at Argenteuil seems to have been the first to recover. All through the war the building had been occupied by the Prussians, and when, on their departure, Mother Gertrude went to inspect it, she found it in a state of indescribable disorder and dirt. By dint of much hard work, aided by the generosity of the English ambulances and a modest indemnity from the State, the material edifice was soon set in order. Alas! it was not so easy to refashion the living foundation-stones. "Our poor community of Argenteuil is hard hit," wrote Mother Gertrude at this time; "all were dispersed, and now many have left us for good. From being twenty-one, as we were before the war at Argenteuil, we are now only nine."

Next came St Cloud. Here the *charming villa*, which once had roused the fears of Père Braun, was found to have been utterly destroyed, and he had to set to work finding a new abode. This he was fortunate enough in securing, and in due course a community was installed there.

The Founder next turned his attention to England. After strengthening in their vocation the two communities of Argenteuil and St Cloud, by means of a much-needed retreat, he left Paris for Stratford. Here the work of the Sisters had so far been confined to visiting and succouring the sick poor in their

own homes. Suitable accommodation for an orphanage was not forthcoming, and, besides, there was already an orphanage in the parish in charge of another community of nuns. This probably was an advantage at the time, as it left room for the interior development of the spiritual resources of the Stratford community, so necessary if the Congregation was to take root solidly in England. In May, seven, and in June five postulants were admitted to the habit. On both occasions the ceremony took place in the parochial church of St Vincent de Paul, now St Francis's. Thus augmented, the community numbered thirty-two, and their work among the poor continued of such a devoted and self-sacrificing sort as soon to break down altogether the Protestant prejudice of which the Sisters had been victims in the beginning.

All in England was, in fact, so satisfactory that it really looked as if the long-desired moment had come when the vows of religion might be taken in the Congregation. Cardinal Manning was approached, and granted at once the favour asked. On January 29, 1872, thirteen *Servants of the Sacred Heart*—among them the four superiors of the houses in France, Vaugirard, St Cloud, Argenteuil, and Pithiviers—pronounced their simple vows for one year in the little oratory of the Stratford Convent. These were the first vows ever taken in the Congregation. Later in the same year similar professions were made by other Sisters of the Congregation in France. Thus was taken a great step forward.

The disasters of the war were beginning to be made good, whilst its providential influences on the Congregation remained. The English foundation prospered continuously, and Vienna—directly traceable to the war—was soon to follow. Cologne, apparently, was not permanent.

## CHAPTER II

### DEVELOPMENT

**R**APID development was now the order of the day. Foundations were made at Nancy, and also at Issy and Versailles, where the Sisters took charge of all the domestic work in the *petit-séminaire* of both those places.

In 1873 a house was opened at Vienna, due originally to the invitation of an Austrian doctor who, having seen the good work done by the Sisters in the ambulance of St Cloud, wished to see them established in his own country.

In this same year (1873) came the division into provinces. Mother Gertrude was named Provincial of France, and Mother Francis de Sales of England. Shortly afterwards, Mother Mary Teresa of Jesus was named Provincial of Austria.

Was it premature, this division of some half-dozen convents into three separate provinces? Subsequent events certainly incline one to think so; and there were so few really fit to govern. To tighten the bonds of union, by means of the closest

and kindest co-operation between all the houses and all the members of the Congregation, would seem to have been the policy called for. At this early stage, to divide was to weaken. Not yet was the parent stem strong enough to vivify distant provinces with the sap of its own spirit. Père Braun was, however, doing his best. After mature reflection he gave, as basis for his Congregation, the Rule of St Augustine, with Constitutions he had drawn up himself, and, with untiring effort, he sought to put life into the written law by frequent addresses and letters. The training of novices was rightly a point on which he was particularly insistent. Here are some of his instructions for the Mistress of Novices at Argenteuil and at London :

“Lead your novices on to solid virtue and chiefly to self-abnegation. Do not be taken in by words, look more to what they do. The weavings of the imagination vanish very easily; the first gust of temptation is enough to carry away all that feeling of devotion which is merely surface deep, and not well rooted in the heart.

“Do not exclusively nourish them on spiritual delicacies, but get them to take a serious view of life. Do not disguise from them all they commit themselves to in entering upon the religious life. Enkindle keenness amongst them.

“Do not forget that the future of the Congregation is in your hands; the majority of the nuns will always be what you have made them.

“Be watchful over yourself and careful to keep your heart for ever united to the Heart of Jesus. Thus will you sanctify yourself, and your example

will do more good in the way of instruction and exhortation than the most eloquent conferences.

“Instil into your novices a love of the *common life*. If any of them ask you for out-of-the-way penances, give them nothing of the kind, but merely insist on their following out all the community exercises without exemption or privilege of any kind. Experience shows that a religious who is exact in following the common life, receives special grace from God, advances in virtue, and finds time for everything, both spiritual exercises and work.

“See that your conferences are not merely a torch that enlightens, but also a flame that warms; solid, devotional, and always simple, practical, and direct.”

As an additional step in the process of organisation may be mentioned the acquisition of a much more suitable and commodious house at Argenteuil, into which the Sisters—with the orphanage—moved, in April, and which soon came to be regarded as the *Mother House* of the Congregation.

September of this same year, 1873, witnessed the move from Stratford to Homerton. The Stratford parish had just come into the hands of the Franciscans, who were anxious to secure for their residence the house adjoining the church, rented by the Sisters. The transfer was amicably arranged. As Homerton was destined to play so important a part in the history of the Congregation in England, its early fortunes deserve a brief mention. It was at the invitation of Canon—then Father—Akers that the Sisters, on leaving Stratford, came to Homerton.

They acquired the old Manor House, "Sydney House," with a large portion of the ground attached to it. No better witness to the character of their first Superior and to the value of their work in the district can be found than Canon Akers himself.

In 1898, at the Requiem Mass in the Convent Chapel at Homerton, celebrated for the repose of the soul of Mother Francis de Sales, he spoke thus: "Mother Francis de Sales came to England in 1871, during the troublous times in France, and found a temporary refuge in Stratford for herself and about twenty companions. There she began her good works in poverty, without a chair or even a bed to rest on, and often not knowing where the next meal was to come from. About the beginning of 1873 I was inquiring where I should turn for some religious to come and help me to raise the Standard of the Cross, and manifest the Faith of Jesus Christ in this mission, where I commenced with low Mass in a little private house: the spot is now in your own possession. I was recommended to speak to Mother Francis de Sales, and I met with a ready and generous response. She threw herself into the work with a generosity and an earnestness all her own; and were it not for the help she gave me, and that of the first Sisters with her, I should not have been able to persevere under the trials and difficulties of the time. The then few dozen Catholics have now grown to hundreds—I might say, thousands; the Mission has its beautiful consecrated church and spacious schools. This

community has doubled its numbers, besides sending out various branches which have spread over England, Scotland, and Wales. The seed must have been good which produced so fair a tree."

In 1912 an interesting little volume was published by Langton George Vere, Canon of Westminster, entitled *Random Recollections of Homerton Mission*. Naturally enough we find frequent mention in its pages of the Sisters and their work. Among other duties they had charge of the parochial schools, and in this connection Canon Vere writes: "The Schools at Homerton were our greatest consolation. . . . The Mistress in charge of the Girls' School was Sister Laurence (Anna Mary O'Beirne). She was teaching when Father Akers left the Mission and continued her zealous labours till her death. She taught most efficiently and zealously for four years, and died of typhoid fever after a few days' illness on October 14, 1880, in the twenty-seventh year of her age. She was also Directress of the Children of Mary. A marble tablet in Homerton Church records her services to the Mission." Later the valuable help of the Sisters in "Mission" time is duly recorded. In 1882 a Mission was preached by the Redemptorist Fathers, and "the zealous Sisters most energetically assisted the priests in reclaiming the negligent, instructing the ignorant, and performing the glorious works of spiritual mercy during the Mission."

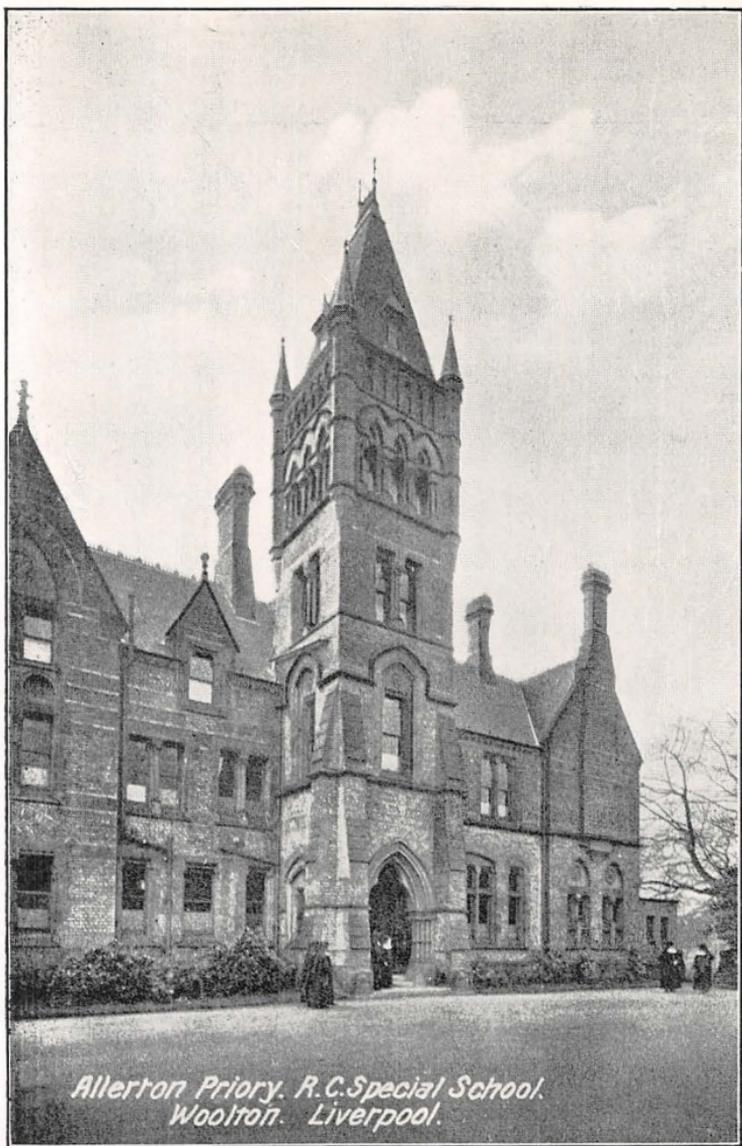
Among the Sisters devoted to the visiting of the sick and poor Sister Thomas is fittingly singled out

by Canon Vere. "Her time was devoted," he writes, "to the visitation of the Mission, which was greatly indebted to her untiring zeal and fruitful labours. She was a real mother to the sick and poor. She knew the district in all its parts. At the junction of Hackney Cut, called Duckett's Canal, is a part of Hackney Wick bordering on Bow, which was a most poor and woe-begone spot. It rejoiced in the sweet appellation of 'Tarry town.' This was the good Sister's favourite hunting-ground. Negligent Catholics and neglected children she found out and brought to us.

"She never tired, she never lost heart, she never gave up a case as hopeless. 'Well, Sister,' we would ask, 'what is it?' Then there would be the same old tale of some ne'er-do-wells, whom the priest had visited again and again, and who seemed to have profited nothing by his visits. She had got the man or woman to come up to the Benediction Service, the children had been sent to the Catholic School, the parents had taken the pledge! None so bad that they might not be a great deal worse—such was her motto, such her mode of action. The good she did lives after her in many a brightened home, in many a reformed family, in many a saved child!

"She had great devotion to St Joseph. Nothing pleased her more than to have given to her a medal or a picture of that great Saint. She would beg for the poor, saying: 'Well, and what are you going to give me in honour of St Joseph?' Her cheerful disposition and her tender nursing of the sick poor,





*Allerton Priory. R. C. Special School.  
Woolton. Liverpool.*

ALLERTON PRIORY, WOOLTON, LIVERPOOL

her blunt, kind interest, her homely and motherly manners, made her very dear to all who knew her."<sup>1</sup>

By 1883—that is, ten years after their arrival in the district—the Sisters had added a new orphanage and convent chapel to the original building. These were solemnly opened on July 25, 1883. Father Vere sang the high Mass, and Father Akers preached. In the afternoon Cardinal Manning came down for the service and preached a short, beautiful sermon on the text: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us." "You will not contend," he concluded, "for the right hand or the left hand of Christ in glory, but you will contend to love him more and more. May God pour out his grace and charity upon all under this roof, and may the day come when he will gather you all in the home of his glory and give you his exceeding great reward."

Towards the close of Canon Vere's little book we have an account of the last hours of Sister Georgia (Hannah Younge) who had succeeded Sister Laurence as head teacher in the girls' school. She, too, died of typhoid fever in the twenty-ninth year of her age. For some time she had taught with great success in the infants' department. "She was," we read, "much attached to the little ones, and it

<sup>1</sup> Sister Thomas subsequently worked in the Sudbury Mission, where she was "beloved by all from the Protestant Mayor to the poorest Catholic in the little town." At length, worn out by age and infirmity, she retired to the Mother House at Chigwell, where she died on April 15, 1927:

was with regret she left them to teach their elder sisters. Her manner was singularly gentle, and her voice was never raised. This gentleness and kindness had a marvellous effect on the children, and her power of discipline was most marked. In her zeal and devotedness she never spared herself. Trained in the Irish schools, she threw herself heartily into that work which even in the world she had chosen as her vocation."

Such was Homerton in the old days, and such it remains still, a great centre of active Catholic life. In the history of the Congregation we are outlining in these pages it must ever hold an honoured place. For many years it was the head house in England and the novitiate for the English Province. The excellent work there of the Sisters must have contributed in no slight degree to that good repute of the Congregation which lay at the root of its wide and rapid spread throughout the British Isles; and the actual Congregation of to-day owes much to the splendid first impressions left on the minds of many London priests by the early Sisters of Homerton.

This is the place, I think, to give a brief review of the spread of the Congregation in England and Scotland prior to the break with France in 1903.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1878 a small house was opened at Aberdare, in South Wales, and school and hospital work undertaken. Similarly in 1890 school work was undertaken at Lyme Regis, in Dorset, but in both cases, circumstances—largely financial—forced the Sisters to withdraw reluctantly from these two houses. In those days little remuneration was forth-

The next permanent foundation after Homerton was made at Rothesay in the Isle of Bute in 1882, and the double work of school and orphanage undertaken by the Sisters. This house, like that at Old Cumnock, Ayrshire, which was opened in the same year, was the outcome of the generosity of the Bute family. Old Cumnock began with a hospital. In 1890 the Dowager Marchioness of Bute asked the Sisters to take charge also of the school, which was erected in the hospital grounds. In 1904, owing to the increase in numbers, a new school was built, and opened by Lady Mary Crichton Stuart. Finally, in 1910, a private chapel was erected for the Sisters through the continued generosity of the Butes.

In course of time the Congregation opened three other houses in Scotland. In 1887 the late Marquis of Bute invited the Sisters to take charge of his newly established choir-school at Oban. It was part of a splendid scheme to maintain the fullest measure of liturgical service in the cathedral church at Oban, which he had himself built. For many years

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coming for Catholic teachers. Mention should also be made of the French hospital in Shaftesbury Avenue, which in 1878 was offered to and accepted by Père Braun. It had been founded some ten years previously for succouring the sick poor of the French Colony, and had been in the hands of the Sisters of St Vincent de Paul. When these returned to France, their place was taken by French Sisters from the Servants of the Sacred Heart, and the hospital has remained in their hands ever since. For a few years the nuns also had charge of an orphanage at Tottenham.

the Sisters had the happy task of teaching, training, and caring for the boys who took part in the daily choral office so much appreciated by the many Catholics who visited Oban. Though the work came unfortunately to an end after the founder's death in 1900, it was by no means barren, for not a few of the boys became in time holy and zealous priests, and even rose to higher dignities.

In 1894 a house was opened at Liberton, outside Edinburgh. Its function was, and is, to provide a home for poor, unfortunate, and homeless women and girls. Mrs. Francis Kerr of Melrose was largely instrumental in securing the present house on the slopes of the Braid Hills, with its magnificent views of Edinburgh and the Forth. Archbishop MacDonald cordially sanctioned the work, and the Sacred Heart Home began its excellent work in 1895. The Vicar-General, Monsignor Grady, was a devoted and most sincere friend to the community, as were also Monsignor Stewart and Canon Hoban. In those days there were no cars or buses to bring people out from Edinburgh, and the good priests who ministered to the spiritual needs of the Home, Father Green, who said the first Mass after the house was opened, and Father Murdoch, had to cover the three miles on foot. In course of time a fully equipped laundry was opened at Liberton, and in 1910, through the generosity of a great benefactress, a chapel was built in the grounds adjoining the house.

In 1900, at the request of Monsignor—then

Canon—O'Reilly, a similar work was undertaken in Glasgow for the rescue and protection from evil surroundings of friendless and homeless girls. The Sisters threw themselves whole-heartedly into a work as dear to the apostolic heart of Canon O'Reilly as it had been, in the old days at Paris, to the devoted Founder, Abbé Braun.

A "Home of Refuge" was opened in Canon O'Reilly's parish of St Alphonsus, and with the spiritual and financial help of this zealous priest, the work steadily progressed. Then, in the course of a few years, the house proving too small, a move was effected to a larger house in the parish of St Patrick. Here again the numbers increased beyond the available accommodation, and in 1905, with the help of Canon O'Reilly and other generous friends, a house with large grounds was secured at Barrhead, a few miles outside the city. A public laundry was soon opened, giving employment to the girls and financial aid to the Home. During their stay at the convent the girls are given religious instruction and trained in various branches of domestic work, and, thus equipped, they are helped to find suitable situations outside. With the aid of their ever-constant friend, Mgr. Canon O'Reilly, the Sisters were able recently to build a beautiful and much-needed chapel, which was opened in 1926 by Archbishop McIntosh; and additions, even more recent still, to the existing house attest both the necessity and the efficiency of the work carried on at Barrhead.

There remains one more house of the Congregation in Scotland to be mentioned. This is the Bute Hospital, Daliburgh, South Uist. As its name shows, this hospital, like so many other charitable institutions in both Scotland and England, owes its existence to the generosity of the Bute family. It was founded in 1894, and proved from the very first a veritable godsend to the poor, scattered fisher-folk of the Outer Isles. In the early days there were no district nurses nor—it may be added—motor-cars, and many were the miles the Sisters walked to visit the aged and the sick. There are those to-day who can still recall with feelings of mingled pride and gratitude these kindly visits of the Nuns. Nowadays patients are received and treated at the hospital from all the neighbouring isles—Barra, North Uist, Benbecula, and Eriskay—as well as sailors off the trawler, cargo, and fishing boats that call at Lochboisdale pier. In time of need these have all found rest and every attention in the Bute Hospital. There is no distinction of creed; suffering is the only “introduction” needed for admission to the wards, and the good and simple folk of the isles turn with the utmost confidence in times of sickness to the home where, as they well know, every possible care and loving-kindness await them. Nor are they unresponsive. When Mother Casimir—who for many years had been Superior—died, the people spontaneously collected money for the erection of a memorial to her. She had won the confidence and love of them all, and was looked on

by them as a mother: her memorial is in the cemetery at Daliburgh.

It was not only in Scotland, however, that the Congregation was to spread out its branches. Two years after the foundations at Rothesay and Old Cumnock, a house was opened at Sudbury in Suffolk, where the Sisters took charge of the small—and, at the time, private—elementary school. The same year, 1885, saw the establishment of the Sisters at Church Row, Limehouse, where they opened a Home of Refuge for Girls. It was given up in 1907, but Etloe House, Leyton, which was opened in that year, is, so to speak, the direct descendant of the Limehouse foundation. When legal measures were introduced for the protection and detention of the mentally deficient, the function of the Home of Refuge at Limehouse largely disappeared, and it was with the sanction of Cardinal—then Archbishop—Bourne that a properly constituted home for mentally deficient girls was opened at Leyton. Etloe House belonged at one time to Cardinal Wiseman, who used it as a country residence. Unfortunately the property came into the market long before the nuns secured it, and a great part of the land belonging to the house was sold and ultimately built on.

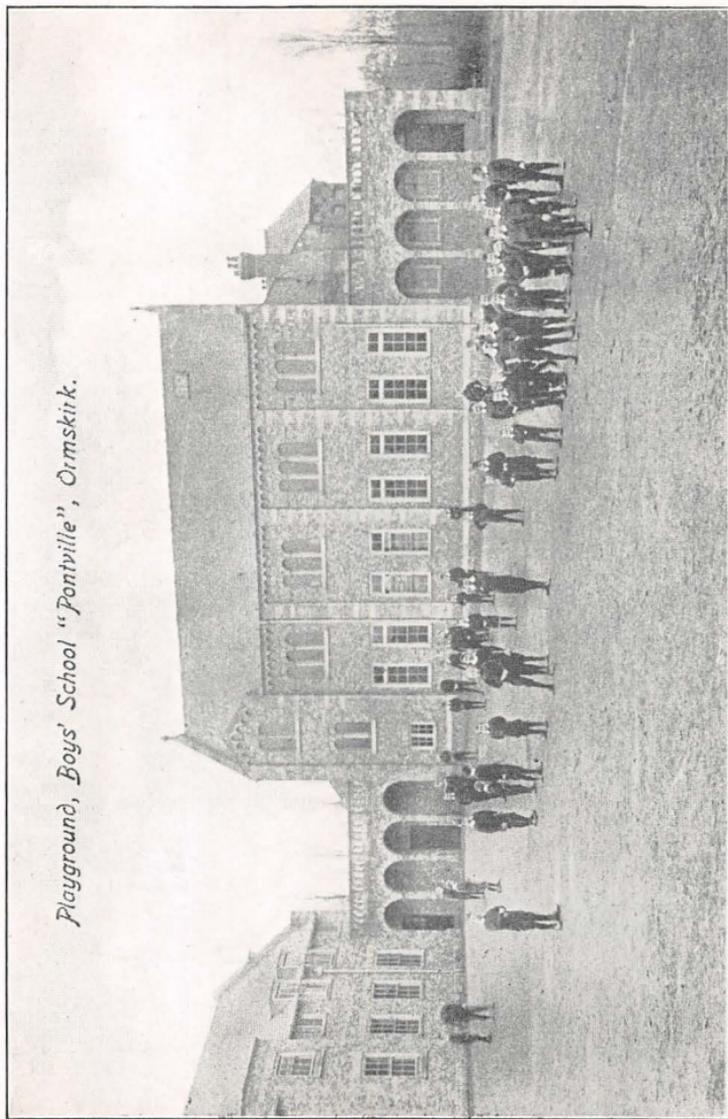
An important foundation, in these early days, was that of a "Penitent Home" for unmarried mothers and babies at Highgate.

The establishment of the Home was the outcome of an effort to meet the pressing need of a refuge

for the numerous destitute girls, who, although they had fallen, were not beyond the hope of obtaining respectable situations. It was opened and blessed by Cardinal Manning in July, 1890. Within two years the number of admissions had so increased as to make it imperative to enlarge the premises. Through the efforts of friends two adjoining houses were secured in Bickerton Road, Highgate, and altered so as to form a single block with accommodation for about fifty girls with their babies. A laundry was set up at the same time, and helped considerably towards the maintenance of the Home. In 1897 the house was found to be in such a bad state of repair that the only course open to the Sisters was to pull down and rebuild. Following the designs of the priest-architect, Canon Scoles, a new building, better adapted to the requirements of the work, was erected on the freehold site of the two old houses, giving accommodation for about a hundred girls. For well over twenty years the work of the Home went steadily forward, till experience began to show that the position was not really suitable owing to the absence of sufficient recreation ground. In 1919 a favourable opportunity presented itself of disposing of the premises for factory purposes. This was accepted, and the present beautiful property at West Hill, Highgate, was secured. This consists of two large mansions with nearly ten acres of ground abutting directly on to the wide expanses of Hampstead Heath. The two houses were at once adapted for the requirements of the



*Playground, Boys' School "Pontville", Ormskirk.*



BOYS' PLAYGROUND, ORMSKIRK

Home. A new chapel was built, with easy accommodation for two hundred, and a new laundry set up. In 1927 a new wing was added with dormitories capable of holding about fifty more mothers and babies.

So much for the material side of the work. Its main purpose, of course, is to rescue fallen girls from a life of degradation and, having won them back to a better state, to find for them suitable positions. Persons of every creed are admitted, and the only conditions demanded of them are to remain in the Home for at least twelve months, to show themselves sincere in their desire to improve, and to take their share in the work of the laundry. Thousands of girls have thus been reclaimed from a life of sin and sorrow. The care they and their infants receive in the Home, the teaching, nursing, and tender, unselfish love of the Sisters, so change their habits that they are able to go back into the world as though their lives had never been tainted and disfigured by sin. Almost invariably the girls look upon the Home as *their* Home, revisit it whenever they can, and by their little presents from time to time show their simple gratitude for what has been done for them.

In 1893 a house was opened by the Sisters at Rotherhithe in Kent, at the invitation of Bishop Butt. Its main purpose is to provide a Home for destitute girls of South London. Besides laundry work, they are trained in domestic work generally, and, after two years, situations are found for those

eligible. The Sisters, as is almost everywhere the case, help also in the general work of the parish, teaching catechism and instructing children for the reception of the sacraments. The house has been very successful, and many of the girls have done remarkably well in later life.

In 1896 came the foundation at Chigwell, in Essex, with its school for ophthalmic boys. Its history, as will be seen later, is intimately bound up with the fortunes of the Congregation in England.

In the following year, 1897, the important House of Providence was opened in Liverpool. Such an excellent little account of the history of this house has come into my hands that I cannot do better than transcribe it, especially as it is, in more ways than one, typical of many.

#### THE HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE, LIVERPOOL

“In the year 1896 Monsignor Nugent invited our Community to undertake the work of ‘The Mother and Child.’ in Liverpool. Negotiations having been concluded, an old Elizabethan mansion standing in picturesque grounds which led down to the river Mersey was leased from the Dock Board, and on January 25th, 1897, Rev. Mother Sylvester, who at that time held the office of Provincial, accompanied by four Sisters, started from the Convent of Homerton for Liverpool. The Superior who had previously gained experience in the Home at Highgate, first as Sister in Charge of the Nursery, and later as Superior, had been put in charge of the new foundation.

“It was a bitterly cold day, with snow thick upon

the ground, when, arriving at Lime Street Station, the travellers were cheered by the sight of the kind, venerable face of Monsignor Nugent, who with two ladies, Miss Bucknell and Miss O'Hagan, had come to bid them welcome. These accompanied the Sisters to the 'House of Providence,' where they had previously occupied themselves in making it as comfortable as circumstances permitted, and where a hot meal had been prepared for them. On going through the House they were pleased with its general aspect—it was commodious, and one could see at a glance that it would afford accommodation for a goodly number of Mothers and Babies. Of course, there was an air of poverty about the place; the house, though imposing in itself, seemed to lack almost everything necessary for housekeeping; and for a long time the Sisters keenly felt the pinch of poverty. Often in those first days, when the Rev. Mother was reduced to almost the last shilling, the late Archbishop Whiteside would come in and, I need not add, leave a generous donation behind him. It was called 'The House of Providence,' and that it was in very truth, for at that time the Sisters had literally to depend upon Providence alone from day to day. Many little touching incidents could be related. One day the Very Rev. Canon Crook visited the Sisters, and on being taken through the house by the Rev. Mother expressed his surprise that she had not shown him the Chapel. 'Oh, Father,' she said, 'there is nothing to be seen in the Chapel except the Altar and what is absolutely necessary for the celebration of Mass. On opening the door the Priest was pained at seeing, with the exception of the Altar, the gift of Monsignor Nugent, a perfectly bare room. Seats there were none, for Sisters or inmates. 'Never mind,' he said, 'I will see what I can do.' In a very short time afterwards

the hearts of the Sisters were rejoiced and filled with gratitude towards their benefactor, who had sent them seating accommodation for sixty inmates and also stalls and kneeling desks for the Sisters.

“On January 25th, 1898—the first anniversary of the opening of the Home—at the request of Monsignor Nugent, there was a large assembly of ladies and gentlemen at the House of Providence. Already the Sisters had received thirty-three mothers and the same number of babies. On this occasion Dr. W. MacMahon Garry, who had accepted the appointment of Medical Officer, and to whom the Home will ever owe a deep debt of gratitude, read the Report. Among other things he said: ‘There is one thing which has struck me very forcibly, and that is the great improvement which takes place in the condition of the little ones a short time after their admission to the Home, and the same applies to the mothers. This I attribute entirely to the great care and skill exercised by the Sisters in charge, and I cannot speak too highly of their great devotion, loving-kindness and interest in all the inmates.’

“Towards the end of the year the laundry-work had so increased that it became impossible to continue it in the small rooms allotted to that purpose in the basement of the house. Accordingly a building was erected equipped with all necessary laundry appliances. Both Sisters and mothers found this a great boon, as hitherto they had been greatly hampered in the work by the absence of sufficient light and air.

“The next move in the House of Providence was the erection of an iron chapel, the room previously used as such being now too small for the number of inmates. In the early part of 1904 Mgr. Nugent went to America. Therefore the business in connection with the proposed chapel

had to proceed in his absence. He returned to England in the spring of 1905, but he never came to the Home again, his health being such that the doctors would not allow him to travel. In the meantime the chapel had been completed and opened on the 29th January, 1905. On that day our deeply regretted and beloved Archbishop Whiteside (who from the beginning had taken a kind, fatherly interest in the work and had helped it by many a handsome contribution) celebrated Holy Mass, which was choral, the singing being rendered by the Sisters and inmates of the Home. After Mass the chapel was solemnly blessed by His Grace, only a few special friends of the Institute being present, amongst whom must be mentioned Mr. Marr and Mrs. English, the generous donors of the Chapel.

“ In 1910 the lease of the property having expired it was thought well not to renew it. Therefore with the sanction of the late Archbishop Whiteside a suitable house was sought. After some months of anxious search the property known as ‘Kelton,’ Woodlands Road, Aigburth, standing in  $12\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land, was purchased for the sum of £7,000. After certain necessary alterations had been made (which owing to the great ability of Rev. Mother were completed in an incredibly short time), the Sisters took up their abode on December 17th of the same year. The following day, Sunday, Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Whiteside in a large hall upstairs which had to be used as a temporary chapel, on account of trouble in regard to restricted ground, for sixteen years.

“ On February 13th, 1922, in order to meet the increasing demands for admission, it was decided to build a new wing, which would consist of large day and night nurseries, infirmary, bathrooms, etc. This building was finished by November of the same

year. In the meantime, a bazaar on a large scale had been inaugurated, which, thanks to the generosity, work and sacrifices made by the many ladies and gentlemen interested in it, realised a sum of money which considerably lessened the debt on the new wing.

“The present Superior and Sisters have at last had the happiness of realising the dream of sixteen years. There is now at the House of Providence a beautiful little gothic chapel designed by Mr. Alfred Gilbertson. The altar is of Carrara and other marbles, as are also the Communion rails and floor of the Sanctuary. There is a Nuns' Choir, organ gallery and spacious sacristy. The foundation stone was laid by the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Canon Pinnington, V.G., assisted by the Very Rev. Canon Crook, Dean Blanchard, and other Clergy on June 22nd, 1925. On May 11th of the following year the chapel was opened by His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool, who preached a most impressive sermon, during which he congratulated the Sisters on having, at last, obtained their hearts' desire, namely a beautiful chapel, where in peace and quiet they would be free to send up their prayers to Almighty God.”

In 1901, at the request of Cardinal Vaughan, the Sisters opened a home at Pield Heath House, Hillingdon, in Middlesex, for mentally defective children. The first Mass was said on August 21, 1901, by a very devoted friend of the Congregation, Father Higley. The school was opened in the following year and certified by the Board of Education for sixty-four children, both boys and girls. In 1912, however, the boys were transferred to Ormskirk in Lancashire, but, even so, many further additions

have had to be made to accommodate an increasing number of children. In 1923 an extremely beautiful little chapel was opened for the use of the Community and the girls.

The last house to mention here is that of Mile End. Since 1877 the Sisters had regularly come out from Homerton to teach in the schools and visit the people of this populous East End parish. In 1903, at the break with France, it was found necessary to secure a permanent residence in the district. The leasehold of a house in Tredegar Square was presented to the Sisters by its owner, Lord Tredegar, and thence the Sisters have continued to carry on their good work of teaching, visiting the homes of the poor, and helping as far as possible in the many activities connected with the Church and parish.

### CHAPTER III

#### DIVERGENCE

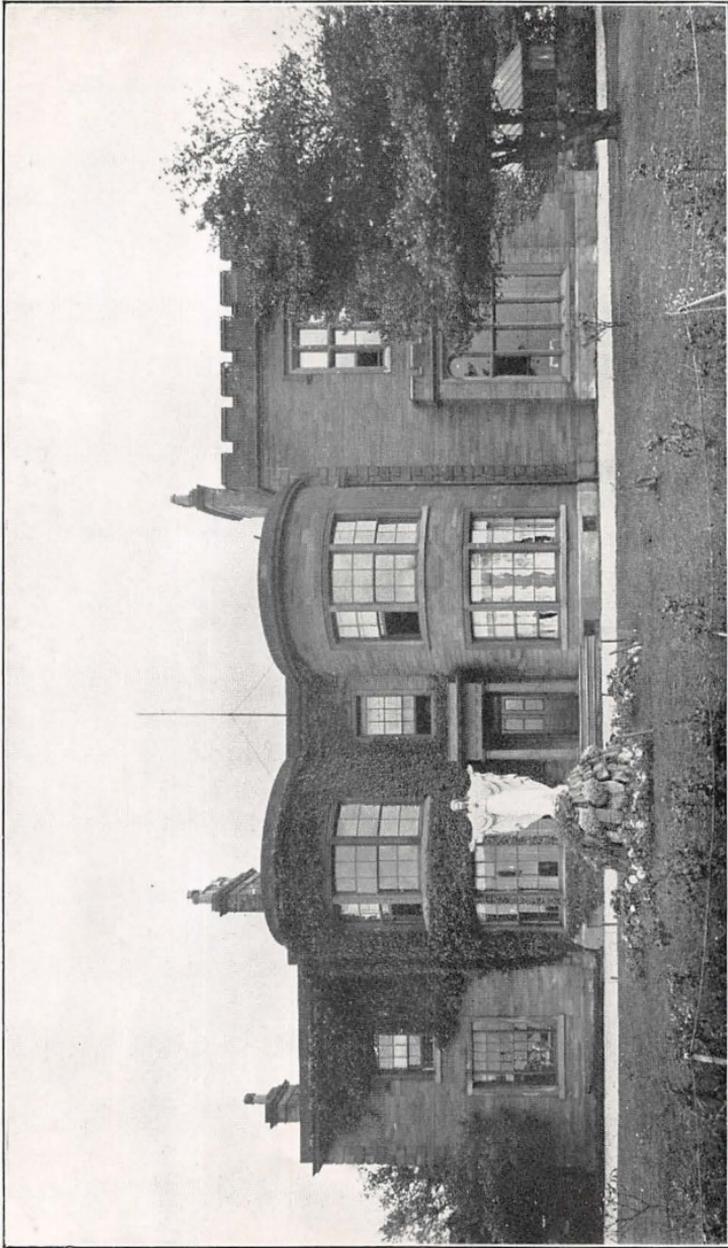
**I**N giving this account of the development of the Congregation in England, we have somewhat anticipated the course of events in the general history of the Congregation abroad. Here, too, a corresponding process of development was going on, but its history is mainly of interest to us as throwing light on the ultimate separation and resultant autonomy of the English Province.

On June 17, 1881, Mother Gertrude, who for many years had to all intents and purposes acted as the appointed Superior-General of the Congregation, died in the convent of Argenteuil. She was only thirty-five years of age, but was assuredly the outstanding figure in the early history of the Congregation, and her loss was deeply mourned by Père Braun.

In March of the same year a canonical election was, for the first time, held in the Congregation, and Mother Francis de Sales, Provincial of England, was chosen as Superior-General. Take a momentary glance backward over the progress of Père Braun's foundations during these first fifteen years of its history, for very soon it will have to work on without him.

It began, as we have seen, in Paris with four members, in the year 1866. By 1881 the number of Sisters had reached nearly four hundred, divided amongst three Provinces, with houses, in France, England, and Austria. Many, of course, had joined and left; thirty-three had died; Mother Gertrude was the thirty-fourth. Very soon the founder was to follow. Whilst the newly elected Superior-General, Mother Francis de Sales, was visiting the houses in England, Père Braun himself, not for the first time, was visiting the Austrian Province. Already he seems to have detected there indications of a tendency to independence. However, on the occasion of his visit, all was peaceful, and he returned, apparently as strong as usual, to Argenteuil;





CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND MARY, DURRAN HILL, CARLISLE

but by the opening of the new year his health, never robust, began visibly to decline. Pneumonia threatened, with a danger of cerebral congestion. He began to put his house in order, arranging for the legal transmission of the properties held in his name for the Congregation in France and England. Already an ecclesiastical superior had been appointed for the Sisters by the Bishop of Versailles. By the beginning of May the Founder became much worse and there were periods of delirium. During a calm interval Père Braun received the Last Sacraments with great expressions of faith and resignation to God's will. On Ascension Day, May 18, 1882, he died in the house at Argenteuil in the fifty-eighth year of his age.

Under God, it is to Père Braun that the Congregation, whether we call it *Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary*, or *Servants of the Sacred Heart*, owes its existence. He, beyond all question, was the chosen instrument, accomplishing, as he said himself, what he had not planned. Full of energy, aflame with the love of God and of souls, he spared himself in nothing. Penury of resources and personnel never kept him back from accepting every opening that offered; he would have his Congregation *international* at once, before it had well taken root anywhere. No wonder difficulties of every kind surged up against him, yet he faced and overrode them all; a man intrepid and courageous, if, at times, imprudent and unwisely counselled; above all, a saintly priest and true apostle, with

immense and tender love for the sick, the poor, and the orphan. On September 19, 1925, the remains of the venerable Founder were translated from the cemetery at Argenteuil to the vault in the Chapel of the Mother House at Versailles. Monsignor Gibier, Bishop of Versailles, preached on the occasion, and gracefully referred to the many Irish Sisters in a Congregation which looked, as to its founder, to one whose birthplace—St Avold—had long centuries before been evangelised by missionaries from Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now trace briefly the general history of the Congregation from the death of its Founder to the final separation of the English Province in 1902.

In 1883 the lease of the house at Argenteuil was due to expire, and one of the first preoccupations of the Superior-General, Mother Francis de Sales, was to secure a new property for the establishment of the Mother House. Versailles was fixed on, land was bought, a convent was constructed, and after a brief sojourn at St Cloud, the new Mother House was opened in a district already familiar to the Congregation from its work there in the earlier days of its history. The new foundation at Versailles was, however, still unpaid for, and very soon the Congregation found itself entangled in the gravest financial embarrassments, which threatened not alone the new Mother House, but the very existence of the Congregation itself. In 1887 a Chapter was held, the re-election of Mother Francis de Sales

<sup>1</sup> Appendix.

was definitely vetoed by the Bishop of Versailles, and Mother Martha was chosen to fill her place. And now we witness an occurrence not unfrequent in the history of good works, a strong difference of opinion among persons all equally desirous of trying to do God's will. The Chapter appointment was far from welcome either in England or in Austria, and the position of the new Superior-General became increasingly difficult in consequence. Vienna refused to accept the Novice-Mistress appointed to the house by the Chapter, and returned the startling proposition that unless the Sister fixed on for the office by the Ecclesiastical Superior of the Austrian House was appointed, the Archbishop of Vienna would make the appointment himself. The Chapter could do nothing but submit.

Less drastic, but hardly less significant, was the attitude of some in England to the new Provincial appointed from Versailles. Here, too, the appointment was opposed. The Superior-General crossed over to England, but it required the intervention of one of the Canons of Westminster, chosen by Cardinal Manning, to whom appeal had been made, before peace was restored and Mother Martha could return to France. Thence she went to Vienna and, though her reception was warm and friendly, she returned with no illusions as to the future position of the Congregation there.

In 1893 another Chapter was held at Versailles, and Mother Martha was re-elected for a second period of six years. The Austrian province did not

even trouble to send a representative, but instead the Bishop of Versailles received a communication from the Archbishop of Vienna notifying him that henceforward the *Servants of the Sacred Heart* in Austria would be independent of those in France, and come immediately and exclusively under his own authority; and such they have remained.

Nine years were to elapse before the English province was to follow the same path. Broadly speaking, it would seem that the root cause of trouble lay in the tendency on the part of the authorities in France to restrict the freedom of action of the English province. The insistence on all professions of Perpetual Vows taking place only in the Mother House did not meet with favour. As early as 1895 Cardinal Vaughan had pointed out that it was unreasonable for the English-speaking Sisters to have to undertake an expensive journey, and follow a Retreat in a language unfamiliar to them, when all that was needed could be had at home; and he insisted on those who were ready to take their Perpetual Vows being allowed to do so in England. An even more disquieting symptom of friction was the restriction of liberty of election to certain offices in the Province. For some time the Province had elected its own Provincial. It had certainly done so in 1893; now the appointments were again made from Versailles. Naturally, fears arose of a French provincial being appointed, and even of the English Novitiate being withdrawn altogether and merged in that of the French province.

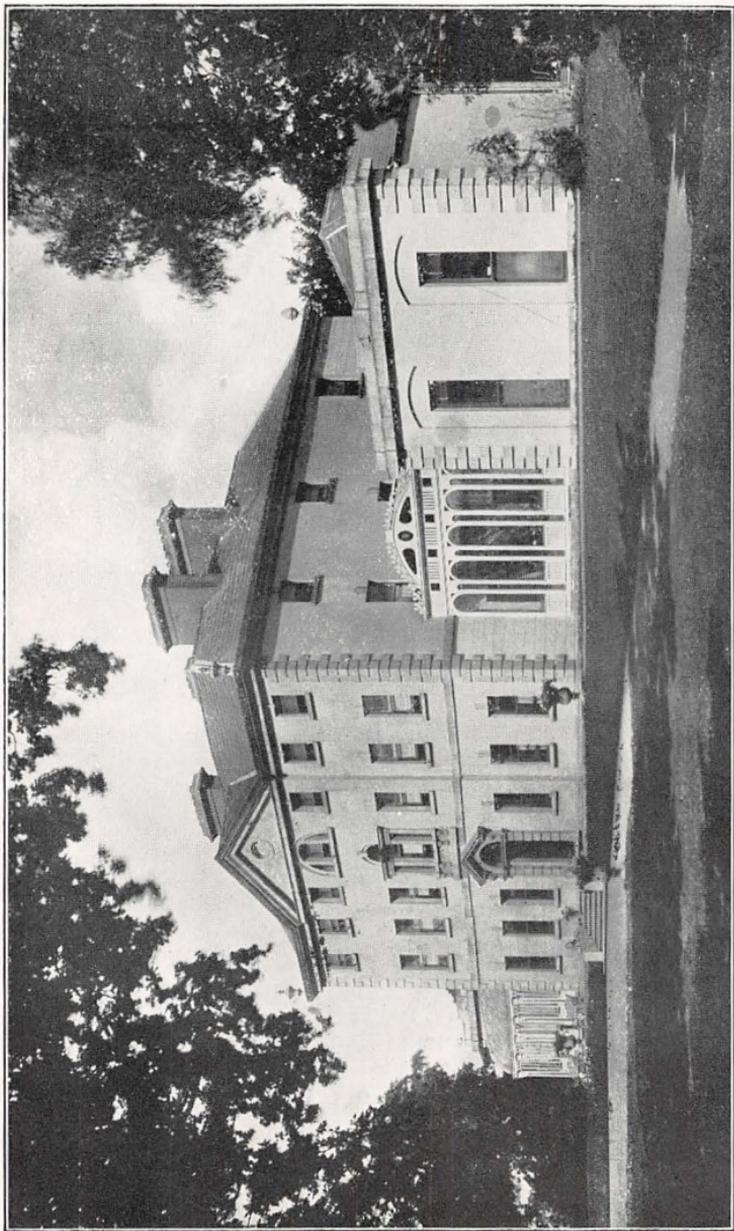
These fears were far from being groundless. The feeling between the two groups was not one of mutual confidence. The secession of the Austrian province had pointed to a great lack of cohesion in the Congregation, and now the French authorities were straining unduly in the opposite direction. The results were the same in both cases. Little endeavour to keep up friendly relations with a distant province had lost Austria. Want of sympathy was to lose England. The same phenomena may be observed in the early history of other contemporary Congregations.

The close of the century witnessed the last stages in the final breach with France. Difficulties arose over the purchase of the country house at Chigwell. The Province favoured the acquisition of what was considered to be a very useful property and building—an estimate which subsequent events have amply borne out. Cardinal Vaughan sanctioned the scheme, and the authorities of the Congregation at Versailles were approached. France remained silent; no word even could be extorted from the Mother House: a prepaid telegram elicited no reply. The Cardinal then told the Sisters to close with the offer and buy the property, which they did. Then only were objections heard from Versailles. Obviously relations of this sort were better at an end. The French authorities seemed unable to understand and approve the good works carried on by the Sisters in England. In 1899 a General Chapter was held, at which the English province was allotted four

representatives, the French twenty-two. Mother Camillus was elected Superior-General. In the following year she was in England, and, as a result of her visit, the Novice Mistress was relieved of her office and replaced by another. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the case, the action of the Superior-General renewed and increased the old fears and lack of confidence. In June, 1902, Mother Camillus was informed by the Bishop of Versailles of the steps Cardinal Vaughan was taking to secure from Propaganda the autonomy of the English province. In due course the Congregation of Propaganda asked Mother Camillus for her own views on the matter. Wisely she replied that she would not oppose the separation; and so it became an accomplished fact. The majority of the Sisters fell in simply with the suggestion of the Superiors of the English province, ecclesiastical and religious, and elected to abide by the step which they had taken. Some of the Sisters, however, failing to see clearly the need or advisability of so drastic a break from the parent stem, decided, in accordance with the freedom of choice allowed them by the Cardinal, to remain in allegiance to Versailles. The greater number of the latter belonged to Homerton<sup>1</sup> and the French Hospital—in all, forty-two Sisters and seven novices.

<sup>1</sup> In 1912, owing to a continuation of the friction and difficulties already mentioned, His Eminence, Cardinal Bourne, through his Vicar-General, the Right Rev. Mgr. Canon Surmont, advocated the amalgamation of the Homerton Community with their Sisters of the then flourishing Chigwell Congregation. This was brought about by a





SACRED HEART CONVENT, CORK

All the other houses (sixteen) in Great Britain were separated from France, and, by a letter dated March 5, 1903, received from His Eminence, Cardinal Gotti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, were recognised as a separate Institute. Shortly before Cardinal Vaughan's death, in this same year, 1903, Monsignor Surmont went to see him at Mill Hill, and obtained his sanction for the new title of the Institute—viz., "The Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary."

Having thus traced the history of the Congregation up to the time when it acquired its independent status, it only remains to say a little on its subsequent expansion in the British Isles.

The separation from France had hardly been carried through before Cardinal Vaughan showed his confidence in the stability of the Congregation by asking Mother Winefride, the new Superior-General, to undertake the charge of St Mary's School, North Hyde, in Middlesex. This had been originally a private orphanage in charge of the Brothers of Mercy. In Cardinal Manning's time it became a certified Poor Law school, the first in England. It required courage on Mother Wine-

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decree of the Sacred Congregation of Religious dated January 22, 1913, and the happy reunion took place, on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, when the Mother-General, Rev. Mother Sylvester, gave a truly maternal welcome to the Sisters who had known and loved her as Provincial Superior in Homerton.

fride's part to accept a work of this magnitude and at such a critical period for the Institute; but subsequent events have amply justified the wisdom of the Cardinal's offer and the venturesomeness of the nuns.

In July, 1903, Mother Laurence, with a community of ten Sisters, took over the North Hyde schools. Its subsequent history has literally been one of continued progress and development, not merely on the material side—though this has been great—but, more important still, on the educational side. For many years the educational part of the work was under the Local Government Board. The Rev. Mother, considering the fact that the Sisters, teaching in the school, held Board of Education certificates, set on foot negotiations which ultimately issued in St Mary's Schools being recognised as eligible for the education grant, and being placed thereby on the same footing as the other schools in the district. This was a very notable achievement; but, in fact, the whole history of the North Hyde foundation, since it was taken over by the Sisters, furnishes a record of progress and good work and lasting influences among the boys trained there of which the Congregation may well be proud.

Foundations have multiplied since then. In 1906 Durran Hill House, Carlisle, was opened as a home for mentally defective girls over sixteen years of age. A devoted friend of the Community was Canon Waterton, who, a year or so before his death, retired to the convent, where he died in 1911.

During his last illness the Canon was tenderly nursed by Mother Ethelburga. She was an ideal nurse and a model religious. From 1906 to 1920 she was Superior at Durran Hill, and then was elected Assistant-General. While devoting herself with characteristic earnestness to the duties of her new office, she gave much of her time to the care of the sick and in particular to the most difficult and trying case (as was her custom) of a Sister dying of cancer. This Sister (Sr. Gonzaga) she tended with motherly care till her happy death. A few months later, March, 1922, this much-loved Assistant-General was summoned to her own reward, and the whole Congregation mourned her loss.

In 1910 Archbishop Whiteside of Liverpool invited the Congregation to make a second foundation in the archdiocese. He wished them to undertake the care of mentally defective children, and a house was secured for the purpose at Ormskirk. As is always the case, the original buildings have grown considerably.

Allerton Priory, the third house of the Congregation in the archdiocese of Liverpool, is also the result of the direct urging of that great Archbishop, and is devoted to the same good work as the house at Ormskirk. This latter, however, has long been exclusively reserved for boys, whereas Allerton Priory—opened in 1915—is for mentally defective girls. In March, 1925, the late Archbishop Keating visited the house and opened a new wing.

Work of a different, though not unfamiliar, kind

was offered the Sisters in 1912—viz., hospital work at Cardiff. The hospital was founded by Lady Bute, in thanksgiving for her son's recovery from a dangerous illness, and three Sisters were asked for to take immediate charge. Bishop Hedley, who knew the Sisters from the days when they were teaching at Aberdare, welcomed them anew to his diocese. During the war, Lord Ninian, to the great regret of all who knew him, was killed. In memory of his brother Lord Bute gave a larger house, to serve as a nursing home, and Lady Bute equipped it. "The Lord Ninian Hospital" was opened in 1915 by Archbishop Mostyn, and the Sisters entered at once upon their arduous but often very consoling duties.

In 1919 a house was opened at Buntingford, in Hertfordshire, as a home for mentally defective boys, and dedicated to St Francis de Sales. In 1924 St Teresa's Home at Lewisham, in the diocese of Southwark, was opened at the request of the Bishop as a home for mentally defective girls.

So the story of foundations goes on unceasingly. In that same year, 1924, the Sisters took over entire charge of the domestic concerns of the new diocesan college for the Southwark diocese at Mark Cross in Sussex; and in 1926 came the opening of a house on Hayling Island—diocese of Portsmouth—as an open-air school, certified by the Board of Education, for poor, delicate children from crowded cities.

One more house in this list of foundations deserves special mention as being the only one so far opened by the Congregation in Ireland. In March, 1922,

at the invitation of his Lordship, Bishop Cohalan of Cork, the Sisters took up their residence in a beautiful mansion four miles outside the city. The primary object, much as at Highgate and Kelton in Liverpool, is the rescue of penitent women and girls. These are trained by the nuns in cookery, housekeeping, needlework, and gardening, besides being well instructed in the sacred truths of religion. After a year or so suitable situations are found for them, and thus they become self-supporting and useful members of society. It is the only institution of its kind in Ireland, and from the outset has been the object of untiring zeal and generosity on the part of the Bishop and many helpful benefactors.

These last few pages have been, I am afraid, a rather blank catalogue of foundations, but, at least, they serve to indicate both the rapid spread of the Congregation and the devoted and eminently practical work to which it has so successfully put its hand. And even now I find I have omitted one house, Bigod's Hall, Dunmow; but it is almost fitting that it should have thus struggled up at the last, for—with all its charming surroundings when one gets there—it is the most inaccessible spot in the world, a veritable oasis of solidity set in a shifting sea of muddy fields and even more muddy lanes,—at least that is its winter aspect. It is a home and school for an extraordinarily cheery set of, so-called, mentally defective boys, and was opened in 1915.

## CHAPTER IV

## " CHIGWELL "

I THOUGHT of calling this last section of my little book an epilogue, but that is really too high sounding a title for so slender a work, so I prefer to call it *Chigwell* instead, since all that remains to be told centres round this fine old house, evoking past memories of Dickens and *Barnaby Rudge*, and yearly gathering to itself newer and more spiritual and more lasting ones.

The property had been secured and the house opened in 1896, when Rev. Mother Sylvester was Provincial Superior, and around its foundation had arisen a whole cloud of difficulties with the authorities of the Congregation in France. The original idea had been to transfer to Chigwell the community of Limehouse with its overcrowded Home of Refuge, but this project was vetoed by France, and instead, at the suggestion of the ecclesiastical authorities in England, a much-needed ophthalmic hospital and school for Catholic boys was established in 1897 under the able administration of Mother Laurence. This has since remained the chief *official* business of the house from the outside point of view, though recently a small school for the benefit of the Catholic children in the neighbourhood has been opened as well by the nuns.

Chigwell, however, has, since 1902, been intimately

bound up with the life and government of the entire Congregation in England. In that year it became the Mother House and Novitiate of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with a community of thirteen Sisters, Mother Osmund as Local Superior, and Mother Winefride as Superior-General. As Provincial Superior, the latter had already proved herself a competent and exemplary ruler, and now, raised by God's Providence to be the first Superior of the autonomous Institute in England, she set herself to the task of guiding it securely through the inevitable trials of that difficult time. Criticism and contradictions of all sorts, on the part of well-meaning people, to say nothing of financial anxieties, had to be bravely faced. However, the lovable and genial personality of Mother Winefride, which had already won for her the devoted loyalty of the Sisters, succeeded, in time, in gaining the goodwill and confidence of all who had the happiness of knowing her; and thus were all difficulties overcome. Amongst those who showed themselves true friends to the Institute in these critical times must be mentioned Monsignor Canon Surmont. As we have seen, he was personally acquainted with the founder, Père Braun, when the Sisters first came to Stratford, and esteemed him highly. In 1902 Canon Surmont was Vicar-General for the Convents in Westminster, and Cardinal Vaughan appointed him Ecclesiastical Superior and guide of the new Institute. For many years he proved himself a sincere friend not merely of

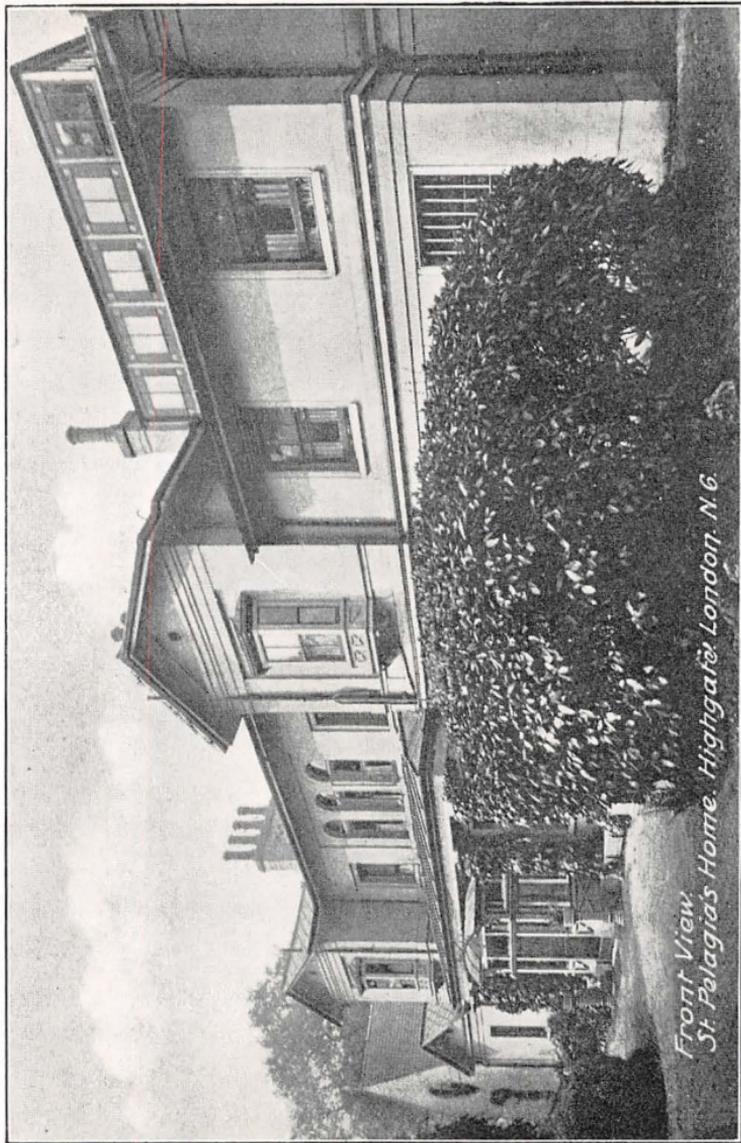
the Congregation as a whole but of each individual Sister. In collaboration with Father Thaddeus Hermans, O.F.M.—another ever-memorable friend—he supervised the drawing up of the new Constitutions of the Institute, which were approved by Cardinal—then Archbishop—Bourne in 1906; and helped in the legal business of getting the property of the nuns made out in English names.

Amongst the many and varied works undertaken by the Congregation, Mother Winefride always evinced a special interest in the *Homes for Penitents*, and during her term of office she brought it about that the Homes already worked by the Sisters, but under committees of lay-people, should be handed over to the complete control of the Sisters, a change which has considerably furthered the spiritual and material prosperity both of the Homes and their inmates.

On August 28, 1903, took place, in the newly-erected temporary chapel at Chigwell, the first ceremony of Profession. Seven Sisters took their vows on this occasion, and since then there has been a regular succession of such ceremonies year by year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>	In 1903	there were	7	Sisters	professed.
	„ 1904	there was	1	Sister	„
	„ 1905	„ „	1	„	„
	„ 1906	there were	8	Sisters	„
	„ 1907	„ „	9	„	„
	„ 1908	„ „	11	„	„
	„ 1909	„ „	4	„	„
	„ 1910	„ „	3	„	„
	„ 1911	„ „	9	„	„
	„ 1912	„ „	5	„	„
	„ 1913	„ „	13	„	„





ST PELAGIA'S HOME, HIGHGATE, LONDON

In 1908 Mother Winefride, now in failing health, retired to Hillingdon. Her work had, indeed, been well done, and the stability and progress of the Institute was at length assured. Surrounded by loyal friends and devoted Sisters she covered tranquilly the last few years of life, and died a most peaceful death at midnight, November 20, 1916. Her old friend and guide, Dean Brady, was with her at the end.

In the year 1908 was held the first General Election of the Congregation: Rev. Mother Sylvester—who had held office in the old days as Provincial—was elected Superior-General. No choice could have been more fortunate. It hardly befits us here to praise those whom God still spares to work amongst us, rather do the facts speak for themselves, no less than the silent witness of so many whose love and confidence and loyalty the new Superior won and kept. For nineteen years Mother Sylvester guided the destinies of the ever-growing Congrega-

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In 1914	there were	7	Sisters	professed
„ 1915	„	„	8	„
„ 1916	„	„	4	„
„ 1917	„	„	13	„
„ 1918	„	„	6	„
„ 1919	„	„	5	„
„ 1920	„	„	7	„
„ 1921	„	„	8	„
„ 1922	„	„	9	„
„ 1923	„	„	3	„
„ 1924	„	„	5	„
„ 1925	„	„	9	„
„ 1926	„	„	9	„
„ 1927	„	„	5	„

tion, being re-elected to office at each of the succeeding Chapters.

Her first care was to raise a fitting chapel for the Mother House and Novitiate at Chigwell. All who know the present building can testify to her success. The foundation stone was laid by Monsignor Canon Surmont on October 13, 1910, and in 1911 the beautiful chapel was opened by His Eminence Cardinal Bourne, who congratulated the Superior-General and the many Sisters present on the completion of so noble a work. On November 5, 1925, the chapel was consecrated by His Lordship, Bishop Doubleday, of the diocese of Brentwood, in which the convent now is.

Some time before this the Superior-General had been fortunate enough to secure the goodwill and kindly offices of Cardinal Gasquet as Protector of the Congregation. Her longing—as, indeed, that of all the Sisters—was to see the day when the seal of Papal authority would be set to the Rules and Constitutions of the Institute, and no better advocate could have been found in furthering so weighty a matter than this eminent Benedictine Cardinal.

The fourth General Chapter was due to assemble in 1927. All the preliminary requisites which Rome demands before approving any new religious Congregation had been complied with, and all were hoping and praying that this year might witness the final step. Hopes and prayers were not disappointed. In June, 1927, the *Sisters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary* had the joy of seeing their

Congregation raised to the status of an independent Pontifical Institute with full papal approbation of their Rule and Constitutions.<sup>1</sup> The General Chapter met at Chigwell in September of the same year, and to it Cardinal Gasquet sent the following beautiful letter:

“ LADY MOUNT,  
 “ DORKING.  
 “ Sept. 18, 1927.

*“ To the Members of the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.*

“ As your Cardinal Protector I am with you in spirit during the important days of your Chapter, and pray that God may guide you and inspire you

<sup>1</sup> The organisation of the Institute is briefly as follows: The Sisters are all of one category, there being no Lay Sisters. The Postulantship lasts for six months and the Novitiate for two years, after which simple vows are taken for three years. Perpetual Vows are taken after six years.

The government of the Institute is vested in the Superior-General, who, together with her Council, is elected by the General Chapter for six years.

The special aims of the Institute are, as this brief sketch of its activities has shown, essentially those of the Founder, Abbé Braun; the Rule observed is that of St Augustine, chosen by him in the early days; the Constitutions have been gradually formulated and adapted to the requirements of Canon Law and the needs of the Institute. The characteristic spirit of the Congregation is like that of St Francis de Sales, a spirit of simplicity, charity, and cheerful submission to the will of God, with unbounded confidence in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, to whose honour and glory the Institute is entirely devoted.

in your deliberations for his glory and the Congregation's welfare.

“ Our first duty is the expression of our unbounded gratitude to the venerable Mother-General, whose devotion and services to the Institute are above all praise and possible recognition. Her reign will remain historic in your Annals, not only for the daily solicitude she has so generously exercised, but also for the fact that through difficult vicissitudes she has led the Congregation to a definite, permanent, and noble status in the Church of God, as an independent Pontifical Institute with its own approved Constitutions, with a clear, useful field of work for God and the Church before it.

“ I know that it would have been the wish of us all to see her continue as Mother-General for many years to come. I took it on myself to make enquiries in Rome as to the possibility of this, but it was pointed out that it would be almost cruel to seek a dispensation in her case from the laws which forbid re-election. At her age and with her weak health, it would seem almost wrong to ask her to bear the burden any longer and to deprive her of that rest and freedom from anxiety which she needs and has so well deserved.

“ But this much you can do and you owe her—*i. e.*, to ensure that her spirit, her policy, her ideals for your Congregation shall be safely maintained and realised. Almighty God has clearly shown that they have his blessing and that in them lies the way of further success for you. I am sure that the newly-elected Superiors will always remember this and look to her for their inspiration and guidance. May God bless and keep her *ad multos annos*.

“ You will be asked to consider some points of the new Constitutions which you may wish to have amended. I can only assure you of my constant

interest in you and of my readiness to assist you in any possible way.

“Believe me,

“Yours devotedly in Xt.,

“AIDAN CARD. GASQUET,

“*Cardinal Protector.*”

To Mother Sylvester herself Cardinal Gasquet wrote in terms which sum up both her own devoted life and the hopes of all who have had the privilege of knowing her.

“LADY MOUNT,

“DORKING.

“*Sept. 17, 1927.*

“DEAR REV. MOTHER-GENERAL,

“The meeting of your General Chapter gives me an opportunity of expressing, as Cardinal Protector of your Institute, the gratitude of all its members and of Ecclesiastical Authority for the great services you have rendered to it during your long successful reign as Superior-General.

“Your devotion to duty, your unstinted self-sacrifice, your unfailing charity, as well as your exemplary observance, have been the means whereby almighty God has blessed the Congregation and brought it now, with newly approved Constitutions and Ordinances, to a definite, dignified permanent status in the Church.

“I know that it would be the wish of all that you should continue to rule over its destinies for many years to come, were it not that wisely conceived laws of the Church determine that after so many labours and sacrifices you should be free to enjoy the well-earned reward of peace and rest and freedom from care, so necessary to guarantee that you may long live to aid us with your counsel and example. But you

can safely pass on the unenviable burden to younger shoulders, because you know that you have sown good seed on good ground, which will surely bring forth the good fruit you desire.

“ I send you the Holy Father’s own thanks and blessing and heartily add to it my own. May Providence grant you health and happiness and spare you among us for many years to see the full realisation of your ideals and desires.

“ Believe me to be,

“ Yours devotedly in Xt.,

“ AIDAN CARD. GASQUET,

“ *Card. Protector.*”

The Chapter proceeded to its task, and its choice fell fittingly on Mother Laurence. With that wise decision our own little task concludes too.

These few pages can lay no claim to being more than a mere sketch; but it is always a pleasure to bring before others, no matter in how halting a way or narrow a range, whatever is beautiful in the garden of God’s Church; and certainly the work of this Congregation, whose history we have just outlined, devoted, as it so largely is, to tending the poor bruised reeds of humanity—bruised often through no fault of their own—and keeping alight and happy the flax which had else sunk into darkness, is a work at once holy and beautiful, rich in its powers of sanctification, and dear beyond human counting to those loving Hearts under whose gentle inspiration and guidance the work began in the past and lives on in the present.

## APPENDIX

### TRANSLATION OF THE REMAINS OF THE REV. FR. BRAUN

*(From the French)*

THE year 1925, being the centenary of the birth of our Rev. Father Founder, was particularly appropriate for the translation of his remains from the temporary grave in the cemetery of Argenteuil to the vault specially made to receive them, in the apse of the Mother House at Versailles. September 19, Feast of Notre-Dame de la Salette, was fittingly chosen for the ceremony, recalling as it does the special devotion which our Rev. Father inculcated among his daughters to Our Lady of la Salette—a devotion much practised by the Brothers of St Vincent de Paul, of which Society he was a member. Trusting in Providence, our Rev. Mother made the necessary applications to the Civil and Religious Authorities, and in neither case met with any objection.

We therefore gathered together at seven o'clock, September 16, in the cemetery of Argenteuil, for the opening of the tomb and the examination of the coffin. There were present Canon Thevenot, Rev. Mother Marie Eustelle, Mother Colombe, Mother Camille, and several Sisters of the Houses at Argenteuil.

It was found that the pinewood coffin was in a state of decay and that the lead coffin had given way in two places. Mons. Bru, municipal councillor of Versailles, who represented the municipal authorities, decided that it would be necessary to make a new coffin in oak to receive the precious remains.

This ceremony took place on Wednesday, September 18, at 8 a.m., in the presence of Canon Thevenot, the Abbé Braun, Curé of Remelfing (Lorraine), nephew of our Father Founder, the Rev. Mother Marie Eustelle, Superior-General, accompanied by several of the nuns, Mons. Bru, the Chief Constable, the representative of the cemetery authorities, and various undertakers of the town.

When the lid of the lead coffin was raised we gazed with reverence, love, and deep emotion on the skeleton of our Rev. Father—the skull bare, and all the other bones still clothed with shapeless and colourless clothes.

What memories! What deep thoughts were stirred by the sight of this dear body hidden for forty-three years! Corrupting human flesh ordinarily emits a nauseous odour, but no such odour exhaled from the venerable body of our Father Founder.

Mons. Bru, to satisfy the filial devotion of the Sisters, took from the skull a thick strand of hair, which he presented to the Superior-General. Then, spontaneously, the Sisters and all present came piously to touch the venerable Remains with their rosaries, crucifixes, and medals. The translation





BACK VIEW, HOUSE OF PROVIDENCE (KELTON), LIVERPOOL

to the new coffin then took place, and this was done with such tender care that not the smallest bone was misplaced.

The skull was placed on a white silk cushion, lovingly made by the Sisters. The bones of the feet, which were lying in well-preserved slippers, and the lower limbs in their stockings, were placed as they were. The remainder of the body was lifted with the clothes and reverently placed in position.

The Rev. Mother then placed a new crucifix on the breast of our Rev. Father and filled up the vacant spaces with cotton-wool. Before the coffin was closed all present sprinkled holy water with deep emotion and fervent prayer.

By 8.45 a.m. all was finished and the coffin was placed in a motor-hearse. Canon Thevenot and the Abbé Braun took their places in the coupé and set out immediately for Versailles, while the Rev. Mother and several Mothers and Sisters followed in motor-cars. At about 9.30 a.m. the approach of the solemn procession was announced to the Sisters of the Mother House by the tolling of the bell, and the Chaplain, vested in surplice and black stole, received the body in the church porch. All the Sisters and Novices assembled in the church, recited with great fervour the *De Profundis* and *Miserere*, whilst the coffin was borne to the choir and laid on a superb catafalque, surrounded by twenty-four candles.

During the remainder of the day and all through the night groups of Sisters and Novices succeeded

each other without interruption as guards of honour round their beloved Father.

On Saturday morning, September 19, the ceremony of the translation was concluded by a solemn High Mass for the repose of the soul of the venerable founder.

The Abbé Braun, who has eagerly taken part in the ceremonies in honour of his uncle, sang the High Mass, while Monsignor Gibier, Bishop of Versailles, so paternally devoted to the Sisters, presided at the ceremony and preached the panegyric.

All the Sisters available from the neighbouring Houses, but especially the thirty-three surviving Sisters who had known the Rev. Father personally, were invited to this solemn ceremony—the large church being thus completely filled by the Sisters and the orphans. No invitations, therefore, were sent to outsiders, a happy arrangement which rendered the ceremony an entirely family affair.

His Lordship, the Bishop, was assisted by his two Vicars-General, M. Millot and M. Quenard. Canon Robert, who acted as Master of Ceremonies, very kindly brought with him some of his Seminarists to help in the ceremony. Canon Boyer, Dean M. Le Guerrier, curé de St Eustache de Viroflay, and M. l'Abbé Fort, Vicar of St Symphorien, proved by their presence their sympathy with and devotion to the Congregation.

The music and singing were perfectly carried out by the choir of the Mother House.

Before the Absolution, the Bishop addressed the

Sisters in words which plainly manifested his Lordship's devotion to the interests of the Congregation. His touching words cannot fittingly be summarised here; we shall therefore reproduce them below in their entirety, as we know how delighted the Sisters will be to read them more than once.

The Bishop, having concluded the panegyric, pronounced the solemn Absolution, and then the clergy, following his Lordship, sprinkled holy water on the catafalque. The coffin was then lowered into the vault prepared for it, after which ceremony the Sisters and the orphans came in procession to sprinkle holy water on the coffin of their dear Father Founder.

The ceremony being concluded, the workmen covered the vault with slabs of stone, over which they placed a large cross of white marble on which was engraved the inscription:

" 19TH SEPTEMBER 1925, THE FILIAL PIETY OF THE SISTERS, SERVANTS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, HAS TRANSLATED INTO THIS TOMB THE MORTAL REMAINS OF THE REV. FR. VICTOR BRAUN, THEIR VENERATED FOUNDER, BORN 8TH JUNE 1825; DIED AT ARGENTEUIL ON THE 18TH MAY 1882."

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

SERMON OF MGR. GIBIER, BISHOP OF VERSAILLES

" My dear Sisters, the pious ceremony which has brought us together to-day is very touching and impressive.

" We see in this sanctuary the Bishop of Versailles,

accompanied by some of his priests; at the Altar, Abbé Braun, and before us a parishioner of Longjumeux, both nephews of the venerable deceased; then the dear Sisters, the venerable Mother-General, so maternal and just, so unworldly and filially beloved by all the Institute; and gathered around her the nuns of the Community of the Mother House, all the Council of the Congregation, and some nuns who once knew the Rev. Father, who saw his face and heard his voice and received counsel from his lips. The others who have not been so privileged, nevertheless surely know him also through his wise teaching and the promptings of their own devoted hearts. And behind this group of the Sisters, Servants of the Sacred Heart, we see a group of children. Thus we have represented here in this church an epitome of the life-work of the Father Founder, the result of his large-hearted charity and apostolic zeal. This, then, is no public manifestation, no, it is a family gathering, an assembly of souls which vibrate in perfect unison, animated with the same veneration, breathing the same prayers and sharing the same hopes. Such an assembly needs no sermon, yet it would be a disappointment for you and a sorrow to me not to say to you a few words of sympathy, of encouragement, of reverence, of veneration, words which are, perhaps, but a repetition or continuance of those of my venerable predecessors in the See of Versailles—Mgr. Mabile, and Mgr. Groux.

“ Your venerable founder died in 1882, at the age

of fifty-seven. He was interred in the cemetery of Argenteuil in a vault near that of Mother Gertrude, your first Superior-General. At that time the Congregation, just established, signified its intention of translating the precious remains to this newly opened Mother House. To-day, after forty-three years of waiting, you have accomplished that desire, and I presume to surmise the intention of your elder Sisters in bringing to this magnificent Mother House of the Congregation the mortal remains of your dear Father Founder, but I need not express that supposition.

“ I have in my mind at this moment a vista of the life and work of your holy founder, the gradual evolution of his plans, his vicissitudes, his virtues, his priestly vocation, his home, and his family. The birthplace, the parents, and the early life of a child presage not unfrequently the greatness, the vocation, and the final destiny of the man.

“ Your Rev. Father was born in Lorraine, in the little town of St Avold, which was evangelised in the sixth century by Irish missionaries. This fact is not without significance, for in the nineteenth century have we not seen large numbers of Irish nuns gathered around your venerable Father ?

“ And his family and home was a profoundly Christian one. His parents, who were of a highly respected merchant class, put religion before all else and took care to transmit this precious gift of Christian Faith in all its fullness to their large

family. The faith and devotion of these pious parents was rewarded in the vocation of two of their sons to the priesthood. Their eldest son became a member of the Society of Jesus, and Victor, the ninth of their eleven children, a Brother of St Vincent de Paul, and the founder of your Congregation. He was ordained priest by Mgr. Dupont des Loges, an illustrious Bishop of Metz, who lived through the 'Terrible Year' and who maintained before the Prussians his rank as a great prelate of the Church and at the same time his reputation as a noble Frenchman.

"As Professor, Curate, Curé and Brother of Mercy, Brother of St Vincent de Paul, Père Braun won the respect and confidence of all with whom he came in contact, and as a Confessor he was very much sought after at Notre-Dame des Victoires at Paris. It was there that his special vocation—the great work of his life—gradually revealed itself to him. A group of Alsatians and Germans was specially confided to his care with a special charge of the evangelisation of the district known as Grenoble. The work was so vast that he found he could not possibly accomplish it unaided, and he soon found some holy women, simple, pious, unselfish, active, and apostolic, in whom he discerned the germs of religious vocation.

"This was the commencement of your Congregation, and the great God who is pleased to bless that which is small and almost insignificant—the child in its cradle, the seedling cast into the ground,

good works in their almost imperceptible beginnings—vouchsafed to bless the work of your holy founder in its very simple origin.

“ His Community was first established in Paris in the Rue Humboldt and in the Rue d’Ulm. But his Congregation once started he did not confine his zeal within the Capital. He soon made Foundations outside Paris in the department of Seine et Oise, where he spent the greater part of his life and where he died, *but he belongs to us.*

“ He established himself first at the gates of the Capital, at Sèvres, where he remained two years during a period of great historical interest. There he met the Abbé Codant, illustrious all over France as an eloquent preacher. There also he made the acquaintance of the Dominicans, whom you may call your elder Sisters, because of those very special relations of which you already know the details. Canon Thevenot has related all this very eloquently and minutely in his beautiful book, which you have in your hands and which will remain an historical document. (I gladly seize this opportunity to express my gratitude to your devoted Chaplain for so noble a work.) For two years, as I have said, the Congregation remained at Sèvres, and it was there the first members of the Order received the Habit. Finding it necessary to leave Sèvres, he moved to St Cloud, Montretout, where he met with new difficulties which forced him to seek a new home for his little Congregation in Argenteuil, where it remained till 1883, during which year the

Mother House was established at Versailles, first at the Avenue de St Cloud, and finally on this very spot where this spacious Convent has grown up—your beloved Mother House in the Avenue de Paris.

“And during those fifteen years of Apostolate how many and how varied were the activities of your founder and of his beloved Daughters. Not only in Paris, Sèvres, St Cloud, Argenteuil, was this Apostolate carried on, but all over France, in Germany, in Austria, in England. It has become an international Congregation.

“Notwithstanding Père Braun’s delicate health and but average intelligence, he managed to cope successfully with various business matters requiring great tact, and never was he disconcerted at having to treat with great official dignitaries, whether ecclesiastical or civil. He was perfectly at his ease in the cottage or in the Court, even at Frosdorft in the Salons of Henry the Fifth.

“Deprived of financial resources he trusted completely in Providence and Providence never failed him. It is this marvellous confidence of his which chiefly reveals to us his great sanctity, for this was his characteristic virtue.

“Let us dwell for a moment on his other eminent virtues, and to this end allow me to recall the words spoken, immediately after your Father’s death, by my predecessor, Mgr. Groux:

“‘Père Braun was truly a priest after God’s own heart.’





REV. MOTHER SYLVESTER

“ I endorse this saying, which I know to be nothing more than the exact truth.

“ What is ‘ a priest according to the heart of God ’? He is a man of God and a man of souls. And was not your founder such a man ?

“ He was a man of God. All his confidence was placed in Divine Providence—that is the mark of the Christian and religious soul—in Providence it lives and moves and has its being. Since God created that soul out of nothing, it recognises its incapacity to act without him and completely abandons itself to his all-wise and loving care—in him and through him it can do all things.

“ And then, how ardent was his devotion to the Sacred Heart and to our Lady ! Above all, what devotion to the Cross, which is the keystone of all Christian virtue ! Yes, during the whole course of his life he walked along the Royal Road of the Cross. He was truly a man of God.

“ And he was a man of souls—of consecrated souls ! He sought them everywhere, found them, gathered them together, formed them, supernaturalised them, detached them from themselves. What a wonderful work !

“ I know that your Chaplain has in his possession the writings, sermons, and letters of your holy founder, relating to the direction and formation of religious consecrated to God.

“ But it was not only with consecrated souls your holy founder was concerned, he devoted himself, as he wishes you to be devoted, to the alleviation of

suffering troubled souls, cast adrift amid the dangers of the world. It is the greatest of errors to imagine one can sanctify oneself without seeking to sanctify others. If we are concerned with ourselves only we are egoists, individualists, but not Christians.

“ To be a Christian is to sanctify oneself for God and for one’s neighbour; it is to forget oneself and to devote oneself entirely to others, especially to the helpless children, orphans, the aged, the poor, and the sick.

“ Such is your life and such the history of your Father, ‘ Man of God and man of souls.’ What a holy life ! What a beautiful death !

“ Let us recall to you his deathbed. Honest as he is holy, his worldly affairs are first set in order. He then asks for and receives the Last Sacraments with full consciousness, offering his life for his Congregation, for the Servants of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In his delirium he recites passages from the Holy Scriptures and Latin phrases from his Breviary or Missal and admonishes his Daughters: ‘ My little Children, love one another ’—and thus he dies. And Mgr. Groux, impelled by duty and affection for your Father, went to you in your bereavement and spoke those memorable and consoling words: ‘ Père Braun was a priest after God’s own heart.’

“ My dear children, it is for you to continue the work so happily begun.

“ Now we will recite together the De Profundis for your good Father and so conclude our beautiful ceremony for to-day. But our devotion to him will

not end here; we will continue to pray for him with increasing fervour. And may we not hope that he prays for us? May he always do so, and from his place in Heaven bless our dear diocese of Versailles. He is entirely ours, he belongs to us, we guard his remains. He has died where he lived and worked. May he bless this dear Mother House of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart and particularly the Mother-General. May he bless also all the Houses here represented as well as those which are with us in Spirit.

“ May God bless you and all your works and may your dear Founder obtain for us all sanctity on earth and eternal happiness in Heaven.”

## LIST OF HOUSES

<i>House.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Diocese.</i>	<i>Work.</i>
ENGLAND.			
Chigwell Convent	1896	Brentwood	Novitiate House, Ophthalmic School for boys.
Etloe House, Leyton	1885	,,	Certified Home for mentally deficient girls over sixteen years.
Bigods Hall, Dunmow	1915	,,	Certified School for mentally deficient boys.
Convent, Homerton	1873	Westminster	Council School and Poor Law Orphanage for girls.
Convent, Highgate	1889	,,	Home for unmarried mothers.
Convent, Mile End	1903	,,	Council School and Mission Work.
Field Heath House, Hillingdon	1901	,,	Certified School for mentally deficient girls.
St. Mary's, North Hyde	1903	,,	Poor Law School for boys.
Hillside, Buntingford	1919	,,	Certified School for mentally deficient boys.
Kelton, Liverpool	1897	Liverpool	Home for unmarried mothers.
Pontville, Ormskirk	1910	,,	Certified School for mentally deficient boys.
Allerton Priory, Liverpool	1915	,,	Certified School for mentally deficient girls.
Durran Hill, Carlisle	1906	Lancaster	Certified Home for mentally deficient girls over sixteen years.
Convent, Rotherhithe	1893	Southwark	Home of Refuge.
St. Teresa's, Lewisham	1924	,,	Certified Home for mentally deficient girls over sixteen years
" Lord Ninian " Hospital, Cardiff	1912	Cardiff	Nursing Home.

## LIST OF HOUSES

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<i>House.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>Diocese.</i>	<i>Work.</i>
ENGLAND— <i>Cont.</i> Convent, Sudbury	1885	Northampton	Certified Home for mentally deficient girls over sixteen years and Elementary School.
St. Patrick's, Hayling Island	1927	Portsmouth	Open-air School, certified by the Board of Education.
SCOTLAND.			
Rothsay	1882	Arygle & Isles	Elementary School and Orphanage.
Cumnock	1882	Galloway	Elementary School and Hospital.
South Uist	1884	„	Hospital and Mission work.
St. Mary's, Barrhead	1900	Glasgow	Home of Refuge.
Mount Vernon, Edinburgh	1894	Edinburgh	Penitent Home for women.
IRELAND.			
Bessboro, Cork	1922	Cork	Home for unmarried mothers.



