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# The Church's Ministry to Sufferers from Typhus Fever in 1847

THOMAS R. MILLMAN

**M**EMBERS OF THE CLERGY of the Roman Catholic Church and of the United Church of England and Ireland were the shock troops who met the first impact of the immigration invasion of Canada by way of the St. Lawrence in 1847. To a considerable degree also they continued to bear responsibility for immigrants who proceeded inland and finally settled in town and countryside in Canada East and Canada West. The story of the labours of the Roman Catholic clergy has been outlined in recent times.<sup>1</sup> The parallel story of the part taken by clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland has not yet been adequately written although extended references to it may be found in older books.<sup>2</sup> The following paper is intended in some degree to fill this gap.

In the Fifth Annual Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Toronto the events of 1847 were summarized as follows:

The year which has just elapsed is one which will ever be memorable in the annals of Canadian history. The disastrous effects of famine in the mother country were rendered visible to us by thousands of unfortunate creatures who were landed on our shores emaciated by want, enfeebled still further by sufferings at sea under an ill regulated and barbarous system of emigration, and worse than all, deeply impregnated with the seeds of pestilence and death.<sup>3</sup>

The immediate cause of the great emigration from Ireland in 1847 was the potato blight of 1845 and 1846 and the consequent famine caused by the failure of the crop, which sustained the life of a large part of the population. It is true that the blight attacked other areas in Western Europe. It is also true that emigration to the United States and to British North America was increasing throughout the 1840s. But it was a combination of the potato famine, undernourishment, typhus fever, and inadequate regulation of an enormously increased emigrant traffic that led to the colossal tragedy of 1847. A consolidating Passenger Act of 1842, which regulated emigration, stipulated the number of passengers that each ship should carry, set out a

1. Cf. John A. Gallagher, "The Irish Emigration of 1847 and Its Canadian Consequences," *Report of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1935-36*; J. A. Jordan, *The Grosse Isle Tragedy* (Quebec: Telegraph Printing Co., 1909).

2. *A Memoir of George Jehoshaphat Mountain, Late Bishop of Quebec*, compiled by his son, Armine W. Mountain (Montreal, 1866), ch. 18; Henry Roe, *Story of the First Hundred Years of the Diocese of Quebec* (Quebec: *Morning Chronicle*, 1893).

3. *The Church*, March 3, 1848. From the Report of the Gore and Wellington Branch of the Society.

minimum diet, attempted to secure tolerable conditions between decks and to protect the emigrant in making contracts. Administering this Act was a permanent government commission of three, set up in 1840, under whose direction a pitifully small corps of half-pay naval men were stationed at Liverpool and Glasgow and at Irish and British North American ports. This administrative machinery operated fairly well in normal years but broke down almost completely when, in 1847, 200,000 Irish alone left their homeland for the new world.<sup>4</sup>

Attempts to relieve the distress were made in Great Britain. A Letter of Queen Victoria to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York called for a collection to be made in aid of famine sufferers in Ireland and part of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> Great exertions were made in the United States with the same benevolent end in view. As early as December 18, 1846, *The Church* of Toronto carried an editorial on the Irish famine, and in the late winter and early spring of 1847 the same newspaper, along with the secular press, repeatedly sounded the alarm. Irish Relief Funds were set in operation in the British North American provinces. The Anglican Bishop of Toronto, John Strachan, requested a special collection to be made in the churches in his diocese on Good Friday, April 7, 1847.<sup>6</sup> Days of Fasting and Humiliation were observed in the Churches by Royal Proclamation. Newspapers questioned whether sufficient buildings called, accurately enough, emigrant sheds had been erected to accommodate the expected influx of newcomers.<sup>7</sup> Boards of Health were set up in many Canadian towns and cities. Yet all these religious and humanitarian endeavours and hasty preparations were inadequate to meet what would be called today a state of emergency.

Until 1832 passengers coming up the St. Lawrence landed near Levis, Quebec, for quarantine. In that year, because of warning of the imminent arrival of Asiatic cholera, legislation was passed setting up a quarantine station at Grosse Isle, about thirty miles down the St. Lawrence from Quebec City. This little island, which despite its name is only about two miles long and on the average a mile wide, was uninhabited until 1832. It was rented at first and then bought outright by the British Government in 1836. Still later it was transferred to the Government of United Canada. In 1832 sheds were hurriedly built, one of which was dignified by the name of a hospital, and a few medical men with staff were stationed there. The establishment was protected, and the quarantine laws enforced, by a detachment of the Royal Artillery.<sup>8</sup> Despite these precautions the cholera slipped past Grosse Isle and appeared at Quebec City in June, 1832. Before it

4. Oliver MacDonough, "Regulation of the Emigrant Traffic from the United Kingdom 1842-1855," *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 9 (1954-55), pp. 162-189.

5. *The Church*, March 12, 1847.

6. *The Church*, March 19, 1847.

7. *The Church*, April 23, 1847, quoting the *Hamilton Spectator*.

8. A. Bechard, *Histoire de L'Île-aux-Grues et des Îles Voisines* (Arthabaskaville, 1902), *passim*. See also Susanna Moodie, *Roughing It in the Bush* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923), ch. 1, "A Visit to Grosse Isle"; Catharine Parr Traill, *The Backwoods of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1929), pp. 39-42.

subsided, over 3,000 persons died in Quebec alone, 4,000 in and about Montreal, and many hundreds in Upper Canada. A vivid picture of the horrors of this earlier epidemic calls to mind the stories of plagues of the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries—lime sprinkled in the streets, fires kindled to make a smoke which it was believed would purify the infected air, death carts which carried as many as seventy bodies to be buried in one day.<sup>9</sup> Despite the severity of this epidemic no members of the clergy are known to have died of it.

From the setting up of the station at Grosse Isle an Anglican chaplain had always been present, with unavoidable interruptions. In 1833 Robert Knight, a catechist, attended to the spiritual needs of emigrants and troops. He was probably there in 1834, and he was assuredly there from late June, 1835, after ordination to the diaconate. In mid-September he went down the river to Metis but returned to live on the Island until navigation closed. In the summer of 1836 a succession of Quebec clergy paid visits until September 16, and then the Reverend Henry Vachell took charge until the hospital was empty. He reported that few emigrants were coming as the season was late, but that "a Minister should not say he has little to do when there are about forty souls unconverted to God about him."<sup>10</sup> Vachell spent further time on the Island in 1837. He tells of a shipload of recently arrived Irish emigrants who were washing their clothes on the rocks:

I went to them, and finding one who had been a Precentor to a chapel in the North of Ireland, with him I mounted upon the steps of a shed hard by and gave out and commenced singing a psalm. Hardly had I gone through two verses ere the washing tubs were deserted and I was surrounded by a large congregation, to whom, after a short prayer that God would bless His Word to His hearers, I gave out my text, and preached in a manner and with an effect I was never permitted of God to do before . . . ; to use a favourite Irish expression "they filled up," that is, their hearts filled up, even to overflowing. . . . After this I preached to the soldiers, and in the afternoon preached again to my congregation of the morning. . . . Our place of worship was new and singular; it was a little spot of green surrounded by elder shrubs and a few overshadowing trees, and the stump of an old elm served me as a pulpit. On Sunday, the 2d July [1837] I had a short service in one of the sheds at 9 a.m. Afterwards I visited the hospital and found four persons dead, all of whom had departed within twenty-four hours. I returned to the hospital and preached to a large congregation of Irish Protestants.<sup>11</sup>

In May, 1838, the Reverend H. D. Sewell began his ministrations on Grosse Isle. He told of a shipload of Scottish emigrants recently landed with cases of smallpox among them. He preached to them with the approval of "a pious Minister of their own persuasion." Sewell emphasized the need of

9. *A Retrospect of the Summer and Autumn of 1832; being a Sermon Delivered in the Cathedral Church of Quebec, on Sunday, the 30th December, in that year, by the Venerable G. J. Mountain* (Quebec, 1833); John J. Heagerty, *Four Centuries of Medical History in Canada*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928), Vol. I, ch. 6.

10. W. J. Waddilove (ed.), *The Stewart Missions* (London, 1838), p. 212.

11. *Second Report of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among Destitute Settlers and Indians of Lower Canada*, Reprinted in *The Church*, July 14, 1838.

a resident clergyman on the station as it was natural for the newcomers to wish to be led in prayer and praise after their long passage. "It is here," he wrote, "that the emigrant . . . first sets foot on the land of his adoption; the wonders of the deep are still fresh in his memory, and a new life is before him."<sup>12</sup>

A small, plain, wooden chapel and a mission house were erected in 1841-42, and regular ministrations were provided at the expense of the newly organized Church Society. The Reverend Charles Rollitt officiated during the season of 1844, with permission to itinerate, as his predecessors had done, when work at the station was not pressing.<sup>13</sup> Immigration increased sharply in 1846, and the need of a chaplain was so great that a number of clergy served during a summer that was a kind of prologue to that of 1847. First of all the Reverend J. E. F. Simpson was in charge. Bishop G. J. Mountain spent a week on the Island in June and was succeeded by E. W. Sewell and William Chaderton. The Bishop's newly ordained son, Armine Mountain, remained at the station for the remainder of the season, with the exception of two weeks in September when the Bishop again took over the charge of the sick and dying. At one time over one hundred Protestant sick occupied beds in the hospital. Over 32,000 emigrants passed through the quarantine in 1846. Thus it turned out that when the pale horse of the Apocalypse rode over the Canadas in 1847 the Anglican Church had a chapel, a mission house, a number of clergy who had received training in the difficult task of dealing with emigrants, and a Bishop of courage and experience. All these resources were about to be severely tested.

It has already been noted that voices were raised in the winter and early spring of 1847 warning of trouble to come unless adequate preparations were made. It was pointed out that new American immigration laws were restrictive and "will have the effect of diverting a much larger portion of that vast human tide to our shores than we expected, or perhaps are prepared for."<sup>14</sup> Word was published in Quebec early in May that typhus fever was increasing in Ireland, and that emigration was proceeding rapidly from Dublin and Liverpool. From one Irish estate alone 1,300 families were emigrating.<sup>15</sup> Quebec, Montreal, and Toronto braced themselves for the flood of immigrants.

Finally the first ships of the season were sighted. A weekly Church newspaper of Quebec gravely reported: "It seems to be true that there are vessels arrived at Grosse Isle from Liverpool and from Limerick, with passengers several of whom died in the passage, and a number were landed ill of fever."<sup>16</sup> The medical staff was increased at the station, and the first of a gallant band of chaplains took up his post. "The Rev. Charles Forest, late of

12. *Third Report of the Society . . .*, 1838 [Printed 1839].

13. *The Berean*, May 16, 1844.

14. *The Church*, April 23, 1847.

15. *The Berean*, May 6 and 13, 1847.

16. *The Berean*, May 20, 1847.

Bury, Eastern Townships, went down to Grosse Isle for the season on Tuesday [May 25]. We understand that the number of Protestant patients in the Hospital so far has been very small."<sup>17</sup>

Then came the deluge. By the first of June forty ships were anchored at the quarantine station with 10,000 passengers. Eleven hundred were sick in hospital, many with dysentery. The medical staff was increased to six and later eleven. Ninety tents, and cooking equipment, were sent to the Island and an advertisement was placed in the papers for twenty men and women to act as nurses. The building of additional sheds went hurriedly ahead and a detachment of the 93rd regiment consisting of fifty men went down from Quebec on June 1. A. C. Buchanan, the immigration agent, hired a small steamer to ply between Quebec and Grosse Isle and to carry out instructions of Dr. George Douglas, the medical superintendent.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of these preparations delays were frequent in passing the immigrants through quarantine. Captain Mitchell of the ship *Argo*, after waiting five days, wrote thus to his owners, Allan, Gilmour, and Co., June 1, 1847:

There is not one of my sick removed out of the ship, not for want of will on the part of Dr. Douglas here, but the want of accommodation to put the sick in, on shore; there are many of the ships here in the same state—the only relief we get is in carrying them to the grave, which is a daily occurrence. While I am writing I have three corpses on board. . . . We have some eight or nine cases of fever. . . . I have done all that can be done to prevent it, as regards ventilation and cleanliness; the ports are out fore and aft, the middle deck washed and whitewashed, and we must now resign ourselves to our fate, whatever it may be. . . . Surely it is in the power of the authorities to devise some way of relieving so many human beings from misery, for famine will soon begin to appear with the fever and it will do its work; many of mine have just the pound of bread that is allowed from the ship, and the water, to subsist on, which, no doubt, will keep a person from starving, but is it enough to keep the body in health to prevent disease? No single individual can help us, however willing. . . . It wants the strength of Government, the united wisdom of all the wise heads that can be got to devise an immediate plan of relief. . . . Our number of deaths is now nineteen.<sup>19</sup>

It quickly became apparent that Charles Forest was unable to deal with the crisis unaided. George Mackie went down to assist for a week early in June, and Bishop Mountain himself, who had already paid a brief visit in May, spent the week June 9–16 on the Island. From then until the end of the season Anglican chaplains were in continuous attendance, most of them staying for a week, but some for longer periods. No persuasion other than that of example was exerted to send these men to their dangerous duty. Their names were Charles Forest, John Torrance, Edward G. Sutton, George Mackie, Richard Lonsdell, Edward C. Parkin, Charles Rollitt, William King, Richard Anderson, Andrew T. Whitten, Charles Morris,

17. *The Berean*, May 27, 1847.

18. *The Berean*, June 3, 1847.

19. *The Church*, June 18, 1847.

Charles P. Reid, Narcisse Guerout, John Butler, Charles Morice. One other, Henry Hazard, came down to Quebec in October to take his turn of duty, but as the station had just closed for the season he returned to his mission.

In the Quebec Diocesan Archives is a small notebook with the following inscription on the first page: "Instructions and suggestions to be passed from Clergyman to Clergyman Serving the Quarantine Station in the Summer of 1847 and to be returned at the Close of the Season to the Bishop of Montreal." Extracts from this document reveal the mind of the writer and stress under which he wrote:

It is not the object of this little book to point out to the Reverend Clergy the spirit in which the task shall be undertaken of attending to the spiritual wants of the patients at the Quarantine Station, or the untiring devotedness with which it should be followed up. They who engage in such a task will do it in faith and love. They will duly enter upon it with prayer, and will feel the necessity of surmounting and subduing, by the help of God, all the repugnance of nature to labours of such a description. They will feel that they must give themselves up unreservedly to the work, and gird up the loins of their mind to minister without flinching and without failing, in scenes of sickness, sadness, horror and death. They will be thankful for this privilege of carrying comfort to the sick, the dying and the bereaved, and will go from building to building, from tent to tent, from ship to ship if necessary, and within all these receptacles, from bed to bed, to carry the warnings and consolations of the Gospel of Christ. They will find much to refresh and encourage them in their labour of love.

The Bishop then noted a few practical "Arrangements for living at the Mission House," including the employment of a female servant to attend the house during the day, and the obtaining of provisions. "Hospital Duties" are outlined in detail:

If the magnitude of the task be such as it was in June and the beginning of August it will be physically impossible for one man to go through the whole extent of the buildings and tents in one day. It will fairly fill up two. It will be expedient, therefore, to make a regular and fixed division of the labour into two portions and to take them upon alternate days. Where patients stand, the whole of the tents with the addition of the large new buildings, will perhaps form about half the labour and may constitute one day's work. All the other buildings occupied as hospitals, amounting to about a dozen, may claim the other day.

Begin work at nine o'clock, the Bishop directed; go home to dinner at three, begin again as soon as dinner is over, attend the burying ground at seven, then go home for tea and the night. After locating the Protestant patients the chaplain was advised to speak a few words of kindness and spiritual advice to all, to lend tracts, to pay close attention to the seriously ill, to pray with them, calling other patients able to walk about to the bedside, to read appropriate passages of scripture with familiar comment and application, to inquire about the religious habits, sentiments, and attachments of individuals. In the Anglican chapel, converted into a hospital, where the patients were all sailors, or captains or mates of vessels, and almost

without exception Protestants, it would be possible to put up a general prayer or exhortation for the whole number. For administering the Sacrament there was a portable case in the Mission House. It would be necessary to have some wine in it as well as small pieces of bread wrapped in paper, cut in the usual size and shape. Clergy were counselled to wear clerical bands on all occasions, as a means of identification that needed no explanation. A memorandum book was to be carried for taking down requests of the sick and dying.

Clergy would be notified of times of burials by Thomas McBrien, who would be in attendance at the burying ground and would keep the surplice in his own apartment on week-days. Registrations should be as accurate as circumstances permit and two witnesses should be asked to sign, McBrien and one of the stewards.<sup>20</sup> Sunday service, including the Litany, singing, and a sermon, was to be conducted for healthy passengers at the east end of the Island. Mr. Symes, deputy emigration agent, was to be informed in advance. An offer should be made to Dr. Douglas for permission to visit the ships unless a particular vessel sent a boat for the chaplain. The Bishop's "Instructions" ended by telling what to do with money and effects left by patients,<sup>21</sup> and by outlining the great care that must be exercised in looking after orphans by consigning them to the Quebec clergy when they left the Island.

When the Bishop instructed the clergy in this fashion he did so out of his own experience. He wrote as follows from Grosse Isle to his son Armine, on June 12, 1847:

We witness most deplorable scenes, but the poor people are so glad to receive our ministrations, and in not a few instances in the midst of dirt, sickness, want and affliction, are so resigned and full of faith, that it is soothing to visit them. In fact if it were not for the reason of one's utter inability to do all that is wanted I would cheerfully give myself up to this kind of work. . . . I had nothing all day after breakfast but a glass of water and a crust of bread in one ship, and a cup of tea with no milk and a mouthful of toast in another. But with such suffering and such intense wants all around it is impossible to care for such trifles as these.

The Bishop confided to his son that he expected to be blamed for remaining on the Island but that he thought it his duty to set an example to the clergy. The only way to meet the present need was through his own labour.<sup>22</sup>

20. The Office of the Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec possesses registrations of burials at Grosse Isle for 1842 and 1843, and for 1853-1860. Registrations for 1847 are missing from the records of this Office but duplicates may be preserved in the Court House.

21. One of the most pathetic records of the 1847 epidemic is the "Return of Money and Effects left by Emigrants," printed in newspapers of the time, e.g., *The Berean*, November 11, 1847. A large number of feather beds were among the "Effects."

22. This letter is preserved in the Quebec Diocesan Archives, Series B, Vol. VI, Folder 155. Years later Armine Mountain wrote in pencil on the back of this document, "Letter from my father from Grosse Isle . . . in 1847. Of no particular interest."

Dr. James Douglas of Quebec, who, like his brother George, was doing his utmost to combat the typhus fever, thought highly of the Bishop. Douglas's son James writes:

Another figure of those long gone days whom my father held in highest esteem . . . was Bishop Mountain. . . . He was a person like a geometrical line—length without breadth, and his lean figure, its leanness exaggerated by his ecclesiastical costume, swayed and waved, like a willow sapling in the breeze. His life in its simple piety, and extended labours, recalled that of such medieval missionaries as St. Boniface.<sup>23</sup>

Many details of the epidemic may be found in contemporary newspapers. Happily for the Anglican story a Church paper, *The Berean*, was published in Quebec from 1844 to 1849, edited by an unusual clergyman-schoolmaster of German background and wide missionary experience, Charles L. F. Haensel. In the pages of this newspaper a step-by-step account of the Church's ministrations to the typhus sufferers may be discerned. Haensel himself did not serve on Grosse Isle in 1837 but he laboured manfully at the Marine and Emigrant Hospital in Quebec City. He wrote in the August 12 issue of his paper, in comment on the Grand Jury's favourable report on the state of this hospital:

If the noses of the Grand Jurors had to come as close to the sheds and to the beds of patients as those of the clergy who visit them—if like these they had to squeeze their way to the bedsides of individuals, converse with the sufferers, and afterwards to pick from their garments the crawling things brushed on by that operation, they would hesitate how they call those places either "clean" or "adequately spacious."

From *The Berean* and other sources we learn that of the fifteen Anglican chaplains who served at Grosse Isle and whose names appear above, seven took the fever, and two died immediately after returning to Quebec, Charles Forest and Richard Anderson. Of the Quebec City clergy, William Chader-ton died. Of forty-four Roman Catholic chaplains who attended the sick, nineteen contracted the fever and five died.

In Montreal the coming of the fever brought about a repetition of the story already told about Quebec. The City's hospitals were quickly filled with patients. Emigrant sheds proved inadequate; hence new ones were built and a hospital establishment was set up at Point St. Charles. Here five Montreal clergy served in turn. The chief loss of the summer in the Anglican group was Mark Willoughby, Rector of Trinity Church.<sup>24</sup> Among Roman Catholics, eight priests and seventeen sisters died, out of a large group who contracted the disease. Many sick emigrants made their way to St. John's, south of Montreal, hoping to enter the United States by the Lake Champlain route. Immigration laws prevented their entry, and their presence

23. *Journals and Reminiscences of James Douglas, M.D.*, edited by his son (privately printed), p. 230.

24. Sermons on the death of Mark Willoughby were preached in Trinity Church, Montreal, July 18 and 25, by William Bond and Charles Bancroft.

in the immigrant sheds endangered the health of the community. One who died in caring for the sick was William Dawes, Anglican Rector of the parish, thus making a total of five Anglican priests who succumbed in the way of duty in 1847. The disease passed on to Bytown, now Ottawa, where it caused much sickness but took no Anglican or Roman Catholic clerical lives. Here died the Reverend William Durie, pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. At Kingston died one recently ordained priest, Father Neelan, and one sister. At Toronto the chief casualty was the young Roman Catholic Bishop, Michael Power.

Protected by its geographical position from the initial force of the immigration, Toronto took measures which held down the death rate to a remarkable degree. Institutions were set up both to treat patients suffering from fever and to give them care during convalescence. The immigrant hospital, opened in June, 1847, was able within a month's time to boast that it had clean beds filled with straw, and two sheets for each bed. Pillows were very scarce. Chloride of lime was used on the floors, but principal reliance was placed on boiling water and soap as a preventive to further infection. Some 40,000 emigrants touched the Toronto wharves or landed on them during the summer. In the hospitals and in the city 1,100 persons died. As at Grosse Isle, a stated time for burials was set in August, 6 p.m. except on Sundays. One of the clergy, Henry Scadding, caught the fever but recovered. He and four others attended the emigrant hospital regularly, where one of the first deaths was that of the superintendent, Dr. Grasett, brother of the Dean of St. James Cathedral, Henry Grasett. *The Church*, an excellent source of information about the progress of the typhus epidemic in Toronto, refers also to the faithful labours of Fathers Reilly and Kerwan and of the Sisters of Charity, of Messrs. Jennings, Barclay, and Fyfe of other communions, of Father Schneider of Galt, of the Reverend J. C. Usher and Father Quinlan of Brantford, and of doctors and Christian laymen who served, and some of whom died, as they cared for the sick throughout Canada West, now Ontario.

In May, 1848, Bishop Mountain issued a circular to the clergy pointing out that although he believed that recent legislative enactments would reduce immigration, yet there would be sick and dying to care for at Grosse Isle and he had no means of providing a chaplain. "I can therefore only hope to meet the exigency," he wrote, "by the voluntary attendance of such of my brethren in succession, as shall be enabled for a short time, to leave their own cures for that purpose."<sup>25</sup> Undeterred by the losses of 1847, some half-dozen men answered the call and served throughout the summer from May to October. Of this company the first volunteer, William Thompson of Christieville, took ill at Grosse Isle and died after returning to his parish.

In 1849 one young man, just ordained priest, Thomas S. Chapman, held the post throughout the summer. In the pages of his diary, parts of which were published some years ago, the reader may get a vivid picture of the

25. *The Church*, May 19, 1848.

enlarged quarantine station and of the risks of an immigrant chaplain's life. Thomas Chapman was taken ill in June but Dr. Douglas managed to break the fever and to bring him back to health. Part of the chaplain's time was spent in cleaning and repairing the church, which had not been properly restored since its use as a hospital in 1847. On August 27 he made the following grim entry in his journal: "Cholera broke out. Employed a part of the day at measuring and marking out the graveyard in a regular manner. Selected my own resting place in a quiet corner underneath a beautiful spreading elm." Then day after day he lists the burials which he conducted, entering on September 2:

Buried eight persons and Thomas McBrien, one of the hospital orderlies. This man had been on the station for five years, had passed through the terrors of the fatal '47 unscathed, notwithstanding it was his duty to coffin all the dead. He told me he had frequently lifted up 100 corpses in one morning, put them in their coffins and nailed them up. . . . He continued almost to the last administering to the wants of the sick and dying. The soldier gains renown, the statesman applause, and the philosopher admiration, but surely such as he our love and esteem.<sup>26</sup>

It is pleasant to record that Thomas Chapman did not need the elm tree site for his grave at Grosse Isle, but died full of days in his Quebec parish of Marbleton as recently as 1912.

According to official returns the number of emigrants who set out from Europe for Quebec and Montreal in 1847 was 98,106. Of these 5,293 died at sea and another 3,452 died at the quarantine station.<sup>27</sup> A monument erected at Grosse Isle in 1847 in memory of six medical officers who died of fever has this inscription: "In this secluded spot lie the mortal remains of 5,424 persons who flying from pestilence and famine in Ireland in the year 1847 found in America but a grave." In Quebec and Montreal 4,620 died. A large boulder near Victoria Bridge, Montreal, has this inscription: "To preserve from desecration the remains of 6,000 emigrants who died of ship fever A.D. 1847-1848 this stone is erected by the workmen of Messrs. Peto, Brassey and Betts, employed in the construction of the Victoria Bridge, 1859." The figures on both monuments are only rough estimates but they are probably accurate enough when in the first instance the burials of those who died on shipboard while waiting quarantine are added in, and in the other instance the burials of 1848 are included with those of 1847.

Our task has been to take a brief look at the clergy, particularly those of the United Church of England and Ireland, meeting the emergency, as it

26. *The Grand Old Man of Dudswell, being the Memoirs of the Rev. Thomas Shaw Chapman, M.A. . . .*, by May Harvey Drummond (Quebec, 1916), p. 88.

27. *The Church*, November 26, 1847. Deaths at the Marine and Emigrant Hospital in Quebec to October 9 were 1,041. Deaths in Montreal to November 1 were 3,579. The mortality roll at sea, and in the Canadas alone, must have numbered 15,000.

Executive Council Minutes, in State Books F, G, and H, are preserved in the Public Archives of Canada. They contain synopses of communications from Dr. Douglas and others on the subject of the typhus epidemic, and tell what action the council took in reply.

were in their stride. An equally inspiring record of courage could be constructed by concentrating on the doctors, a professional class that had more heavy losses than any other. Hospital stewards, orderlies, cooks, policemen, carters, clerks, customs and immigration men, all endured gaps in their ranks at Grosse Isle.

Quarantine activities ceased on the Island as late as 1937, and up to that time chaplains were present each season as required. The successor of the original mission house was burned years ago but the second church, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, still looks out from a rocky promontory over the five miles of water between Grosse Isle and the south shore of the St. Lawrence. The island itself, devoted to research in animal diseases under the federal Department of Agriculture, may be visited under official permission. A number of buildings erected in the present century house the small research staff. One or two "sheds" remain from the past century. Only two conspicuous memorials may be seen, a great celtic cross of granite erected by the Ancient Order of Hibernians in 1909, and the other, mentioned above, set up as a memorial of the medical officers. Inside St. John's Church are two tablets. One, made of soapstone from the washing tubs, has this inscription: "In memory of the thousands of persons of many races and creeds who, victims of pestilence, lie buried in nameless graves on this island." The inscription on the other reads: "In Memoriam, Rev. Richard Anderson, Rev. Charles Morris, who in 1847, while serving the stricken on this island, contracted typhus fever and died." The rough, unkempt cemetery lies peacefully between a rocky ridge and an inlet known to the few inhabitants of the island as "Cholera Bay," and has no individual memorials to the thousands who are buried there.

If one is inclined to ask what effect this tragic incident had on interchurch relationships no direct answer can be given. It might be suggested that the pressing and dangerous tasks undertaken with equal devotion by the clergy of two great Churches led at the time to an increased mutual respect both in Canada East and in Canada West, helped to unify Canadian life in the past century, and contributed, particularly in Quebec, to that *entente cordiale* which continues to the present day. In any case it is still good for those who admire courage and devotion to recall a heroic episode in the annals of the Canadian Church Militant, and to retell the story of the men of more than a century ago who resolutely and without thought of self withstood the pestilence that walked in darkness and the destruction that wasted at the noon day.