HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

VOLUME 2

by

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THE FOLLOWERS OF
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
IN THE SOCIETY OF THE 18TH CENTURY

1719 – 1789

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[Edited by Br. Gerard Rummery, FSC]

PREFACE

The original translation of this work from French to English was done by Brother Edmund Dolan of the San Francisco District, long time professor of philosophy at Saint Mary's College, Moraga, California. His intention was to make it possible for English-readers to be able to appreciate the extraordinary richness of the ten-volume work of Monsieur Georges Rigault, fellow of the French Historical Academy, whose prize-winning research from 1932-1954 was honoured by the French Historical Academy.

Brother Edmund's wish to make the work more easily read in English led him to translate all proper names into English. Unfortunately, this has meant that his work is almost impossible to research by cross-reference, for although **Frère Barthèlemy = Brother Bartholomew** are somewhat similar, the same cannot be said for **Frère Guillaume and Brother William,** for personal names, place names and for most proper nouns.

In his work over three years Brother Edmund suffered a number of slight strokes and inadvertently omitted some of the text. In this translation omitted sections of the original text have been inserted. Some occasional errors in translation have been corrected.

As corrections in the text were not possible in the now-dated computer language used in the original, the text has had to be re-formatted for changes to be made. Footnotes have had to be copied separately and re-inserted but the page references necessarily continue to refer to the original French edition.

The sentence-structure of the French text, especially in the use of the semi-colon in what would not usually be usual practice in English and the introduction of a new paragraph with the word "and" have both been retained as done by the original translator.

It has not been possible to maintain the page references to other volumes as was possible in the original French text. Until all the remaining volumes have been re-presented in English, cross-referencing will have to be done from the original French text.

Despite these limitations, readers will discover in these volumes in English an enthralling story of the Institute launched by that great servant of God, Saint John Baptist de La Salle and by those who followed him over the past 300 years and more.

Brother Gerard Rummery, October 2012

Volume Two

Part I

The Right to Life

Chapter 1. Brother Barthélemy pp.1-23

Chapter 2. Brother Timothy's Election and the Institute Before 1725 pp.24-39

Chapter 3. Letters Patent and Bull pp.40-56

Chapter 4. The Assembly of 1725, the Institute and the Body of the Founder at Saint Yon pp.57-71

Part II

Growth: the Spread of the Institute under Brother Timothy

Chapter 1. The Conditions of Growth: Institutions and Men pp.72-88

Chapter 2. The Schools in the South of France pp. 89-114

Chapter 3. Schools in the Paris Region and in the Western Provinces pp.115-135

Chapter 4. The Schools in the East pp.136-148

Part III

Difficult Times

Chapter 1. The Defense of Spiritual and Temporal Freedoms: Rouen and Rheims (1745-46) pp.149-176

Chapter 2. Brothers Claude and Florence at Saint Yon pp.177-191

Chapter 3. The Problem of Headquarters pp.192-205

Chapter 4. The Christian Brothers Schools in the Era of Brothers Claude and Florence pp.206-217

Chapter 5. Hostile Doctrines and Forces pp.218-235

Part IV

The Institute Comes of Age

Chapter 1. De La Salle's Heritage in the Hands of Brother Agathon pp.236-255

Chapter 2. The Administrative Task pp.256-273

Chapter 3. The Educational Work: Elementary and Residence Schools pp.274-305

Chapter 4. Brother Agathon and Education in the 18th Century pp.306-337

Epilogue pp.330-336

The Christian Brothers of the Eve of the Revolution

FIRST PART

THE RIGHT TO LIFE

THE BROTHERS' INSTITUTE RECOGNISED BY CHURCH AND STATE

CHAPTER ONE

Brother Barthélemy

On Good Friday evening in 1719 De La Salle's disciples felt very much alone. The man who had just died had held their lives and their souls in the palm of his hand. In the midst of their vexations, the light of his countenance and the gentleness of his words had brought them a perpetual calm; his lofty mind, his experience and his holiness governed their consciences and dictated their behavior; the respect he inspired, even in his enemies, maintained the Brothers in a sort of permanent security. Naturally, he had long since wanted to prepare them for his inevitable departure. In delicate situations he had seemed to abandon them to their own devices. Carefully, patiently and thoroughly he had trained his successor. And two years later, in May of 1717, the principal Brothers, assembled at St.Yon [1] to elect one of their number as Superior general had, indeed, only to ratify his choice. Of set purpose, tenaciously declining to accept any gesture of obedience, shunning the trappings of distinction, he had ceased to be their leader. But he remained the "venerable Founder", the "very dear Father". His sons, whatever the cost to him, continued to seek his advice. And, unhappy at seeing him for nearly five months in retirement at the Seminary of St. Nicolas de Chardonnet, they insisted that he return to them. Beginning in March, 1718 De La Salle did not leave St.Yon, which had finally become the administrative center of the tiny Religious Society of school teachers.

Alive, he gave himself wholly to his work. The Canon, the doctor of theology and the priest had placed his humanity, his knowledge and his priesthood at the disposal of the schools of the new "Institute" . And now the Brothers were unable to keep his mortal remains at St.Yon. The buildings as yet included only a very modest chapel. The enclosure was not yet consecrated ground in which it would have been alone permissible to inter a body. And, in the end, nothing there guaranteed the future, since the Society, without juridical existence, could not legally own property. It was necessary, then, on the 8th of April, 1719, to allow Father Jarrier -Bresnard, pastor of St.Sever, to escort the body into a vault that he had opened in his parish church. It was a triumphal escort, as when, in the Middle Ages, cities and monasteries took possession of long-coveted relics.

There was hardly a great and holy man more loved or more lamented than the "Founder of the Brothers". His Rule was rigorous, his virtue austere; neither in his speech nor in his writings do we find either the fetching charm of a St. Francis of Assisi, or the irresistible graciousness of a St. Francis de Sales, nor the fire of his contemporary, Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort. But everything yielded to his goodness. It was a prudent goodness, serious, constant, indefatigable and remarkably devoid of self-love; it lead him to sacrifice his comfort and independence with the founding of his first schools in Champagne; it brought him to absolute renunciation for the good of his followers, for the education and eternal salvation of the children of the common people; it was exhibited in an exquisite politeness, in a balanced temperament, in a resourceful and multisided charity, and in the superabundance of his forgiveness toward those who offended him or were unjust or ungrateful in his regard. The spirit of De La Salle was deeply paternal and familial: that was how he was in his home in Rheims, on Rue Sainte Marguerite when as the young head of a household, he administered his inheritance and maintained the traditions of his good French stock; and that is what he continued to be in his religious community and in his "tuition-free Christian Schools". He had overcome his aristocratic repugnance in order to take his place squarely with the lowly. He had sought after poverty, to be equal to the poor with whom he consorted. He bequeathed to the Brothers that serene simplicity, solid "integrity" and affectionate solicitude which would bind them so closely to the hearts of their pupils.

Blain describes how lively and genuinely filial was the sorrow in the houses the Founder had planted throughout France. He depicts the Brothers writing to Brother Barthèlemy, their Superior, that after such a loss, their soul was inaccessible to consolation;...that life had become burdensome to them, and that, in their desire to be reunited with their Father, death had become attractive.On this occasion we have no reason to mistrust the pompous eloquence of the biographer. He was quoting one of the Superior-general's letters, a clear and moving echo of the heart-felt sentiments conveyed to him by the Brothers:

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[1] We have decided to use the term "Motherhouse to refer to the residence of the "Regime", i.e., where the Superior General lives with his Assistants. We do so only for the convenience of the expression, which is met with in none of the 18th Century documents.

“My very dear Brothers (the name of the addressee is unknown) the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus be with us. It was not without great cause that you wept upon learning of the death of our dear Father; I do not think that any of our Brothers could keep from doing so, since that is so natural”.

We sense the spontaneity of feeling in the language where nothing seems affected. "Nature" has rights which, being neither Stoic nor Jansenistic, the good Brother does not hesitate to acknowledge. However, what is wanted is to transcend earthly things to the point of view of faith:“All things considered, we must confess that it has been the holy will of God, Who having given him to us for as long as it pleased Him, has taken him from us in order to reward his labors and his holy life: we must submit and conform ourselves to His divine will. Our Lord's holy apostles were greatly saddened to be deprived of the sensible presence of their divine master, who for their consolation told them: It is well for you that I go, since, if I do not go, the Holy Spirit will not come upon you. Our very dear Father is not lost; according to every appearance he is with the saints in Heaven; he is powerful before God, since he has obtained such great graces for himself and for so many souls he has helped to convert and turn them to God”.[2]

While this may be the first testimony in favor of canonization, it has nothing to do with those decorous eulogies that are so open-handedly bestowed upon the dead. It is especially convincing, since the one who wrote it lived on intimate terms with the man and followed him faithfully in all his ways. Brother Barthèlemy could speaking knowingly of "the great" and "the heroic virtue" of his master, of his "angelic purity, patience, obedience and abandonment to Providence..." And he notes painstakingly, as a very significant detail, indeed, as an essential mark of this entirely priestly holiness, "a great neatness in church utensils and (liturgical) vestments, to procure which (the Founder) spared nothing".

Contemplating the happiness of the Father, the son's eyes filled with a heavenly light. But turning once again to the colleague he must comfort, he wrote: “No, my dear Brother, I shall not pray that God will take you from this world; but I shall pray with all my heart that He will continue to keep you here for as long as He pleases, for His glory, the salvation of souls and your own greater good. I forbid you to die --except to yourself”.

This was the language habitually employed by the Founder, and the doctrine was his as well. And from him also came the example: one of Brother Barthélemy's sentences, proposing to his humble correspondent such a perfect model takes an odd turn, at once naive and subtle: “Our Father did not die without permission; I think he would have died long ago had he had permission to do so. Let the Brother live, then, in and through obedience. Let him "cease being unseasonably sad; he whom he mourns as dead lives in a peace that no one can ever take away". Hence, the final command: “Be at peace with yourself, keep yourself in the intimate union he recommended to you, and in the practice of the other virtues; do not sadden the spirit of Our Lord, which is in you, by an immoderate sadness on our dear Father 's account”.

The letter ended (at least in the version transmitted by Blain) on some lines that are quite unexpected, but surprisingly charming. Suddenly, as though thrilling in sympathy with the feelings of his Brother, the Superior intoned something like a brief canticle in which mourning faded away into thanksgiving: “I do not know how I feel: I am at once sad and glad; the sense that I have of his holy life together with the memory of several extraordinary things that happened at the time of, and related to, his death console me. Be more cheerful, then, since the sadness which does not come from the Holy Spirit is dangerous and has grievous consequences...”[3]

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This letter reveals the heart and mind of Brother Barthélemy. Although he was not quite forty-two years of age when he was elected Superior General, he belonged to another generation from the Founder. De La Salle had retained in his speech and writing a certain archaism, a sort of severity inherited from the magistrates who were the contemporaries of Louis XIII. He muffled his emotions and, like one of Corneille's heroes, he translated his faith and his most burning convictions into thoroughly "reasonable" language. His successor came after Racine, after Fenelon, and, consciously or not, he fell under their influence. He discloses more of himself: when he shudders or sympathizes, we feel it. He wrote in a rather lively style, supple, and judicious by dint of long sentences. He was a well-educated man, a former pupil of the Jesuits in

[2] Blain, Vol, II, in Abrégé de la vie du Frère Barthélemy, pg. 22.

[3] Blain, Vol. I, pg. 180.

Douai and a student of Latin, philosophy and theology. By vocation, he transformed himself into a teacher of reading, writing and arithmetic and "the small" catechism. But the knowledge, the use of which he forbade himself in the primary schools, never left him. It was a cultivation that proved valuable in the direction of men. Nor should we imagine that De La Salle failed to recognize its importance. For himself and his Brothers he wished to fulfill a very modest role in Christian society: he chose as his lot the poorest and the most ignorant of pupils; and, so that there might be the least possible distance between pupil and teacher, he directed the daily efforts of the Brothers toward the most elementary truths of religion and human knowledge. However, when selecting his principal collaborators, he considered that a broad knowledge would do no harm, provided that it was combined with the most exalted virtue and, through obligatory renunciation and silence, pride did not destroy it. He had exerted great pressure in favor of the theological studies of HenrI L'Heureux, his favorite disciple. Gabriel Drolin, who was one of his two associates in the heroic vow ceremony of 1691 and his ambassador to the Holy See, was at first destined for the priesthood. And Joseph Truffet (Brother Barthélemy) became the heir presumptive in 1712, less than ten years after he had been admitted to the Institute, and in preference to many workers of longer standing.

Surely, none was more qualified to continue the work along the lines that had been mapped out. Since 1705, both in Paris and at St.Yon, he had been educating young Brothers. During the absence of the Founder, from 1712 to 1714, shouldering the heaviest responsibilities, he had to guide the communities of northern France through the worst sort of difficulties. Even prior to his election in 1717, he was St. John Baptist de La Salle's "stand-in", his "shadow", the extension of his person. Physically, there was no resemblance: the Founder, worn out by mortifications, attacks of rheumatism and the inroads of age, preserved a noble, smiling and gracious countenance, to go with his ruddy complexion and thinning grey hair. Brother Barthélemy, on a tall, bony frame displayed a sort of anxiety and uneasiness; he was a man of exceedingly poor health, and (in 1710) was afflicted with scrofula; he was, besides, wrinkled and prematurely aged. A sort of sad benevolence of facial features softened the rather bitter cast of his mouth. His thick hair (cut six times a year, according to the prescriptions of the Ms. Rule of the Brother Director)[4] tumbled over his ears and neck. "He was not handsome", reports Michel Tilladet, Bishop of Macon. But this merciless observer also agreed that goodness of soul made one forget physical disfavor. One of the Brother's letters had so moved him that he thought it should have "been published".[5]

What has been preserved of the correspondence of the first Brother Superior -general (whether by Blain or in the Institute Archives) illuminates and justifies the portrait that Blain, a personal friend of Brother Barthélemy, introduced into his "abridged" biography. Like the Founder, the new head of the Institute regarded the spiritual direction of the Brothers as one of his greatest duties. Bringing to it the restraint required by his situation as a religious who was not a priest, without presuming to resolve cases of conscience, but sharing the results of his own experience, he recalled points of Rule, exhorted, counselled, consoled, informed and offered examples. The usual themes of his letters were the desire for perfection, the horror of a life of tepidity, perfect regularity, zeal for the salvation of souls, the love of union and fraternal charity.[6] He did not hesitate publicly to denounce desertions, the sorry consequences of which were such as to confirm the Brothers in a fidelity to their commitments. This was the theme of his "Circular", dated the 11th of September, 1719. In singularly vivid language he declared: "I say to you that one of our Brothers who left the Institute a year ago has lost his wits, even though while he was with us he had a good mind and good judgment. He became relaxed in the practice of regularity, and, little by little, he lost the spirit of his vocation and the love of virtue. Without saying anything to anybody, he returned home, where he hoped to prosper. There, however, he is thoroughly despised, and he no longer assists at Holy Mass nor at the divine Office. Pray for him and offer him as a piece of advice to our dear Brothers, so that they might fear to imitate him."[7]

As we shall see presently, in the face of Jansenism the Superior could be unshakable, irreconcilable. To him fell the task of maintaining the principles upon which De La Salle had founded the Institute and of proving by word and action that, in spite of the Founder 's death, such an inimitable undertaking as the

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[4] Manuscript copy of the Rule, in the Motherhouse Archives. See Vol. I of the present work. pp. 451-455.

[5] See Vol. I of the present work, 249.

[6] Idem., Ibid., pg. 45

[7] Idem p.54

Christian Brothers could survive integrally, with its teams of lay-religious, strictly orthodox and faithful to the Holy See, loyal (within the Church and the State) to all legitimate authority and tightly organized under the leadership of one of their number. He certainly cooperated in drawing upon the Common Rule, which he had signed with a flourish and sent personally to the Directors of communities at the end of 1718. [8] Together with Brother Timothy, he prepared the *Conduct of Schools* for publication. [9] The theory of Lasallian education, the practice of Lasallian asceticism and the setting into motion of the machinery of government built according to the Founder's specifications, taken together, in 1720, they constituted a highly integrated system.

In imitation of "his very dear Father", Brother Barthélemy could be counted upon to be a model for his confreres. The Founder had commanded that nothing external distinguish the Superior from the rest of the Brothers. And so it continued to be. The tradition, established from the outset, prevailed to its fullest extent and in full force immediately. Much later circumstances might bring about changes of detail, but the principle of uniformity would remain untouchable. Blain, writing about the way Brother Barthélemy lived, says: In his lodging, his dress, his food, as well as in everything else, completely similar to his Brothers, he wished to put no difference between himself and them, except a more scrupulous fidelity to the Rule...A private room, a bed outside the dormitory were for him matter for mortification; and, while he accepted them, he did so only in the course of his visitations, when necessity demanded it...There was a single exception, for reasons that outstripped the person of the Superior: "He had...an office, which the Rule permitted, for writing and for keeping sensitive papers under lock and key". [10]

Elected in the lifetime of the Founder, Brother Barthélemy considered himself De La Salle 's substitute, his *locum tenens*, and even after the 7th of April, 1719 he did not alter that point of view. He had, as Blain puts it, "a hatred" for the top position:[11] naturally timid and supernaturally humble, it was only out of duty that he undertook initiatives and made command decisions. His manner of managing people conformed to his character: it resembled that "of a brother -protector and guardian of the younger members of his family or of an affectionate father at the head of his family", or of a man selected by the king to guide the young princes. "He treated the least Brother with reverence and respect".[12]

In brief (and here again it was the spirit of St.John Baptist de La Salle inspiring his successor), Brother Barthélemy's actions were infused and enveloped with gentleness. For human weakness, the Rule is a yoke and a burden. It requires a manly determination, a concerted energy and a constant effort. A Superior who, as a youth, wished to be a Trappist, and who, later on, was accepted into a community of Canons Regular, was incapable of tolerating laxity; a hero of mortification who, at the cost of a difficult victory over himself, had chosen to enter the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools because it was obscure, rejected by the world, badly clothed and badly fed, and founded upon perpetual obedience and the most complete forgetfulness of self, such a leader was not among those who were likely to close their eyes to transgressions. He observed the 'jot' and the 'tittle' of the Law. But he commented upon it in a language that was both pleasant and engaging. He did not drop it in a heap on the shoulders of his colleagues: his hands charitably stayed and judiciously apportioned its weight.

Hence, he entreated the Brothers Director for compassion, patience, gentleness and kindness: "long harangues", he thought, were of less consequence for conversion than a simple, courteous "word" of encouragement. The "direction of souls" cannot be forced or constrained. Total obedience exists only where the heart is trusting; and the heart is mistrustful until it is loved. [13]

The same principles inspired Brother Barthélemy in his relations with his Assistants. At his request, the Assembly of 1717 elected two Brothers "to aid him in the direction of the Institute", [14] and Brothers Jean and Joseph were thus selected. One of them, Jean Jacquot, was among the earliest of De La Salle's disciples, one of those who had pronounced vows with the Founder at Vaugirard on the 6th of June, 1694. The other, Jean Le Roux, had entered the Institute in 1697, six years before Joseph Truffet, and, beginning in 1708, served as Visitor, in which capacity he fully justified the Founder's confidence in him. The experience of these two men would be very useful to the Superior. But they did not reside in the same place with him. In 1719 the Assistant's function was rather ill-defined. Brothers Jean and Joseph formed the Superior 's Council;

[8] Cf. Histoire générale Vol.1, pp.508-509
[9] Idem ibid pp.567-568
[10] Blain Abrégé p.52
[11] Idem p.24
[12] Idem p.24
[13] Blain Abrégé p.59
[14] Cf. Vol.1 p.411

but they did not have, at least in any regular or permanent fashion, his delegated power over a fixed number of houses or Brothers. Brother Jean was the Director of the community in Paris, while Brother Joseph directed the community in Rheims. Brother Barthélemy could consult with them only intermittently -- whether by writing or by calling them together or by visiting them. And it was this latter means that Brother Barthélemy seems to have preferred: thinking that the exchange of ideas is best done orally, and concerned to spare time and the hardships of travel for men who were his seniors in the Institute and who were bearing the burden of huge institutions, the Superior inflicted wearisome journeys on his frail health (on several occasions he made a full day's journey on foot), horseback rides (nearly as painful), slow river boats, and more or less comfortable lodgings. "He often went to Paris and to Rheims", Canon Blain assures us.[15] He was the man who, on De La Salle's orders, in 1716 -1717, crisscrossed the whole of France gathering Brothers' proxies for the up-coming Chapter. His humility, his diffidence respecting his own ideas, his immense kindness and affection for his entire religious family found their proper level in the Institute.

We have two authentic reports of visits he made to Paris -- both of them, however, are prior to the period of which we are speaking. In November, 1717, he personally installed Brother Jean (as Director) in the house in the Faubourg St. Germain. He returned there in 1718 and the document that testifies to his visit is signed, the 21st of July, by Brothers Jean, Anastasius, Jean Chrysostom, Jerome, Victorian, Maurice, Denis, Severin, Ignatius, Alexis, Ildefonsus, Victor, Germain and Leonard, the fourteen Brothers who made up the community.[16]

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The first of these two visits coincided with the opening of a new school "near Les Invalides", for which Brother Barthélemy supplied two Brothers from St.Yon. There had been no new foundations since the one in Vans in 1711. Would the Institute, its growth slowed by a dearth of vocations,[17] regain momentum without official recognition from Church and State? The Superior was firmly confident of the future: De La Salle's work could only grow and spread. It had survived too many obstacles, performed too many miracles in the hearts of both Brothers and children for it to be forsaken by God. Besides, the Founder had predicted a rapid prosperity for St.Yon. Something that gives signs and proofs of robust vitality cannot be refused the right to live. In a collective statement issued on the 3rd of June, 1718, regarding the ownership of an estate recently acquired (and signed by the Brothers dwelling there), it was anticipated that Brothers leaving the novitiate would be sent from Normandy into cities that would be seeking their assistance.[18]

The tiny Society which was opened to young men of good will, trained its recruits and perfected its teaching methods, and with that its initiatives ceased. This was the way in which the Founder had operated. School teachers, consecrated by vow to education and particularly dedicated to the instruction of the poor, were at the disposal of the public. The modest income that the Institute realized from the residence school and the reformatory at St.Yon was used exclusively for the support of the novices, the teachers in the residence school, aged and infirm Brothers, the Superior-general and the Motherhouse personnel (quite limited), and, finally, for the operations of the tuition-free school of St. Sever. It was for Bishops, pastors, cities or benefactors acting as individuals and spontaneously, to supply the necessary funds in order to found new schools.

Thus, in 1719 the opening of a school in St.Omer was decided upon. The Bishop, François Valbelle, was following the example of his uncle and predecessor, Louis Alphonse, who, at the end of the 17th century founded a general hospital to shelter abandoned children and beggars, to instruct them and help them learn a trade. The municipal officials had lent their cooperation to this project. It had become necessary to extend the same benefits to other categories of children in the region -- the sons of workers and craftsmen, the usual clientele of "charity schools". The city had only a single school, situated in the cemetery of the parish of St. John the Baptist and totally inadequate for the needs of the population. True, from time immemorial, the Canons of Notre Dame had received school children, whom they entrusted to a teacher whose salary was paid by the Chapter, and who were taught in classes conducted within the canonical cloister, in a room situated underneath the Canons' library.[19]

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[15] Blain Abrégé p.22

[16] Archives of the Mother House, BE dossier Frère Barthélemy

[17] According to the Catalogue of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Ms. 11122 in the Bibliotheque Nationale, French Sources, New Acquisitions) there had been at St. Yon five admissions in 1717 and nine in each of the years 1718, 1719 and 1720.

[18] Cf. Volume p.418

[19] Chanoine Bled, Les Frères des écoles chrétiennes à st Omer pp.2-6

But only altar boys and choir boys, along with a few tuition -paying pupils, were admitted.

The success of De La Salle's Brothers in Calais and Boulogne had not been lost on François Valbelle. As early as 1716 he seems to have wanted the Brothers in his episcopal city. The negotiations were completed three years later. On the 2nd of July, 1719 members of the municipality, "Magistracy" of St. Omer, listened to a speech by the Superintendent, M. Chauvelin, in the course of which he said: The opening of a school for the instruction and the good education of youth would be very advantageous for the City of St. Omer...The Bishop, wishing to be able to benefit the people with whose care God had entrusted him was intensely interested(in this project). He invited four persons from a community in Paris, whose vows, profession and entire concern were for nothing other than to instruct youth, not only in reading and writing but also in the Christian and moral virtues. He would supply the sum of six thousand livres, which the Gentlemen of the Magistracy would be able to expend...(And) he would furnish a house at his own expense.

The 'city fathers' thanked "the Bishop of St. Omer for his kindness, his zeal and for his concern for the good education of the youth" of the city. To the "Magistracy" and the "ten select - men of the Community" who presided with the municipal officials the duty fell to guarantee the financial support of the school and the teachers' salaries. To this end they undertook "for them and for their successors" to budget "the sum of eight hundred livres a year".[20]

The notarized document of the following July 19th shows that the affair was concluded by Brother Barthélemy in person. When Superintendent Chauvelin had mentioned a religious community "in Paris", he was thinking of the Brothers who were established in the parish of St.Sulpice, and who, earlier, had revealed their existence to M. Ponthon, the nephew of the pastor of Calais. Bishop Valbelle duly applied to the house in St.Yon, and the Brother Superior-general was pleased to reply personally to his appeal: “In the presence of the royal notaries of Artois residing in St.Omer appeared the most illustrious and Most Reverend Lord Francis de Valbelle of Tourves, the Vicomtes of Marseille, Counsellor to the King, Master of the Oratory and Bishop of St. Omer (and) Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, ordinarily dwelling in Rouen”.The Bishop declared that he "placed in the hands of this Brother" a copy of the Magistracy 's resolutions, dated the 2nd of July. He committed himself "out of the zeal he had for the education of youth" to give six thousand livres to the city and furnishings to the Brothers "for their needs".[21]

Brother Barthélemy, accepting the offers made by the Bishop and the city, committed himself in his own name and in the names of those who would succeed him at the head of the Society, "to send gratis to St. Omer to instruct the youth of this city four school Brothers". These would be distributed over two institutions -- those who would teach "in a school near the Cathedral" (it is quite likely that these were the ones who would replace the teacher who was being paid by the Chapter) and the others who were destined for a new schools that "the City would build in St. Margaret's cemetery" .

In case, over the course of time, "some Brothers" did not suit the Lord Bishop or his successors, the Brother Superior promised "to provide and send others".[22]

The City had just acquired the needed land behind the choir of St. Margaret 's Church. The plans for the buildings were immediately drawn up by M. Biaucolly, the City 's chief engineer, and were certainly submitted to Brother Superior. The work had begun.[23]

But Brother Barthélemy was not to see its completion. His death preceded the arrival at St. Omer of Brother Bernardine, the excellent religious who had proved his worth at Marseille, Mende and Alès and whom the Superior himself had designated to organize the new school. Brothers Clement, Hyacinth and Zozimus accompanied the Director on the 16th of October, 1720.

The opening of classes, announced in a proclamation by Bishop Valbelle, occurred on the 11th of November. The principal register of St. Bertin's Abbey records that "it was with the greatest joy and the universal commendation of the entire city, which wished the Lord Bishop and the Magistracy many blessings for such a salutary institution..."[24]

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For his journey into the North of France the Superior-general had other reasons besides that of signing an agreement with the religious and civil authorities of one of Artois' ancient cities. For several years

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[20] Register of Resolutions of the city of St. Omer, according to Lucard, Annales , Vol. I, pp. 397-398, and Bled, op. cit., pg. 7.

[21] Bled op.cit. pp.8-9

[22] Ibid p.7

[23] Ibid p.10

[24] Ibid p.10

the attitude of Pierre de Langle, Bishop of Boulogne, had occasioned much anxiety on the part of the Brothers working in his diocese. In the beginning the reports had been serene. Certain gestures of paternal and episcopal hospitality had been exchanged when De La Salle's disciples arrived in Calais in 1700 under the protection of the Dean, the Governor, the Duke of Bethune and the devout M. Gense. In 1710 Bishop de Langle had personally guaranteed the foundation of a school in Boulogne and had extended a warm welcome to the first four Brothers. Shortly thereafter, at his urging, two more Brothers were joined to the community, in order that the children in "upper-town" might benefit as well as those in "the port" from a tuition-free Christian education.[25] At the time Rome appreciated his virtue; and the Church was aware of his learning and wisdom when, in 1698, this Doctor from Navarre, a Canon and Vicar-general in Evreux was approved as Bishop of Boulogne; for he was the man whom Bossuet, in 1682, had recommended to Louis XIV's choice as tutor to one of his legitimatized sons, the Count of Toulouse and as assistant tutor to the princes of the French Royal Family.

Pierre de Langle nourished sympathies for the Jansenists, regarded by him and by many other serious persons at that period as the faithful interpreters of Augustinianism and the defenders of an austere morality. But during the first fifteen years of his episcopacy he had no need squarely to take a position. His feelings, as well as the rigidity and the obduracy of his personality came to light after the publication of the Bull *Unigenitus*.The condemnation of the 101 "propositions" taken from Father Quesnel's *Moral Reflections* scandalized him and seemed to him to be a misunderstanding of the Church's ancient faith in matters of Grace and the Sacraments. He refused to "accept" Pope Clement XI's "Constitution" into his diocese. And, then, dissociating himself from the majority of the French Bishops and going beyond the ambiguities and hesitancies of the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Noailles, he joined Pierre La Broue, Bishop of Mirepoix, Charles Joachim Colbert, Bishop of Montpellier and Jean Soanen, Bishop of Senez, to register with the metropolitan ecclesiastical court in Paris a declaration, dated the 1st of March, 1717, in which the four prelates "appealed" the Bull *Unigenitus Dei Filius* to "a future ecumenical council". They dared to say that "the Constitution ...was the subject of joy to the Church's enemies". "Everywhere", they added, "it incites deadly divisions...All classes of the kingdom are disturbed and bitter". But they themselves were the fomenters of troubles and anxieties. Their respective clergies followed their example. In other dioceses-- in greater or less numbers according to the region -- Canons, pastors, Vicars and monks sided with the "Appelants".

On the 16th of February, 1718 a decree of the Roman Inquisition rejected and condemned the Act of Appeal. On the 8th of the following September the Sovereign Pontiff addressed the Brief *Pastoralis officii* "to all the faithful in the Christian world": the names of the four Bishops were passed over in silence; but Clement XI declared "separated from his charity and from that of the Holy Roman Church all those who did not purely and simply accept his Constitution": and he "exhorted" his venerable brothers in the episcopacy "to separate" the adversaries of his authority "from their's as well".[26]

Pierre de Langle and his colleagues persisted in their refusal. Following the Gallican thesis, which claims that a Council is superior to the Pope, they hurled, in a second appeal, the following insolent questions: "Must he (Clement XI) not respect the sovereign Tribunal of the Church, upon which the entire business of his Constitution has now devolved?" Could he "doubt that he himself, although chief minister of the Holy Church, was subject to it like all other Pastors and all other members of the Christian faithful"? Did he not "like them, make an explicit profession of it every day when he recited the following article of the Apostles' Creed: *Credo Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam*"? [27]

In a Report attached to in instruction of 1719, the Bishop of Boulogne charged that everything that orthodox theologians objected to Jansenist positions on Predestination, Grace, Free Will and the use of the Sacrament of Penance were "novel opinions", after which he had no difficulty in proving that the Bull merely gave the force of law to these "innovations". He especially protested against easy absolution and frequent communion, sketching spiritedly but extravagantly, the portrait of those just persons to whom Justice has been granted only for that precise moment at which it is needed in order to participate in the Sacraments and who lose it a moment later..."They are a bunch of voluptuaries, pretentious, slanderous, unjust, plunderers of

[25] Cf. Vol.1 pp.269 & 295

[26] 'Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Boulogne in order to publicize the action by which he, along with the Bishops of Mirepoix, Senez and Montpellier, Appeal to a future ecumenical Council the letters of Our Holy Father Pope Clement XI addressed to all the faithful and published in Rome on September 8, 1718, and renews the Appeal, already introduced, against the Constitution Unigenitus, along with a report of the reasons for them." Paris, Francis Babuty, 1719. The city library in Orleans has a copy of this Pastoral Letter, ex libris, S. Evurtii Aurel. ("From the library of the Abbey of St. Euvertus of Orleans").

[27] Idem p.3

other peoples' property, punctual in fulfilling certain duties and practices without altering their fundamental character and who are nevertheless represented to us as Christ's beloved flock..”[28]

He smarted under the lash of a controversialist who exposed the hideous absurdity of Jansenius' teaching concerning God's relations with His creatures. The author of a book entitled *Theological Defense* wrote: “If God ordered us to believe in Him, to love Him and be converted, to resist powerful temptations and fulfill His law without at the same time giving sufficient Grace to do all of this, He would be a barbarous God, a tyrant, a fraudulent or mad host...a God who would impose unjust commandments and would punish their transgressors with still greater injustice...” Pierre de Langle was unable to brook such forthright language, and he quoted it only to rant against it. Would the "defender" of orthodox theology go so far as to speak of the Jansenists' God in the language of Lactantius who, referring to the pagan divinities said: "(I) would prefer to have no gods at all than to have such as their's?” That, exclaimed the Bishop is an example of "the articles of faith that they want to canonize in the Church...the teaching authorized by the "Constitution".[29]

Perhaps what seemed most hateful to the "Appellants" in the literature in which the partisans of the Holy See defended the Bull of 1713 was the assertion of pontifical primacy and infallibility. Bishop de Langle pretended to wonder: “What, according to the author of the *Theological Defense*, should Father Quesnel say? Only this: he must state that Bishops owe the Pope the sort of obedience that faithful subjects owe to their Prince, religious to their Superiors, domestic servants to the head of the household, women to their husbands, orphans to their protectors and children to their parents...They are placed under authority, tutelage and in service; the only favor accorded them is that, in place of making slaves of them, they are made to do the work of servants. Has the episcopacy ever been treated so outrageously?”

In February, 1717, the professors at the University of Coimbra, in a letter to Clement XI, declared: "When the Teacher of the Universal Church has passed judgment, the Portuguese are agreed that there is nothing to say in reply, except the ancient phrase: “the Master has spoken", and they added "to their decisions": The Roman Pontiff, even outside a Council, above which he stands, teaching Dogma or things concerning faith or morals to the faithful of the universal Church has the infallible assistance of the Holy Spirit and, as a consequence, cannot be deceived, nor deceive.[30]

The Bishop's Memoir concludes:“If we had been frightened by the all too obvious schemes of a power which builds upon the ruins of all the others and that attributes to itself both an authority superior to every Church and a supreme power over every Empire on earth, what must we not fear from this Bull, these Briefs, these Decrees, the Rescripts and from a book published under the authority of that power and in defence of that Bull: and wherein we witness the Power of the Keys snatched from the Body as a whole and given directly to a single individual?”

With his final words revealing his Jansenist preoccupations, Pierre de Langle asserts that at the base "of this system", which, for him, is so dangerous for Religion, at the point where "this collection of novelties" meets, is the entire Doctrine of Grace.[31]

* *

At least a brief analysis of this pamphlet seemed necessary here, not merely because of the personality of the Bishop of Boulogne and of his relations with the Christian Brothers, but also in order to clarify the position taken by the Brothers throughout the 18th century with respect to Jansenism. To their fidelity to the Apostolic See they owed some of the strictures to which their principles and their activities would be subjected. Neither argument nor violence could uproot from their memory that sentence of the spiritual testament that was "done at St. Yon, this 3rd day of April, 1719" : “And I recommend to them that in all things they always have a complete submission to the Church and especially in these troubled times and, in order to provide proof of it, never to dissociate themselves in anything from the Church of Rome...” [32]

This directive found an immediate echo in the loyal heart of Brother Barthélemy. His education with the Jesuits, his theological formation, extensively pursued during the years in which he was considering the priesthood, and his long intimacy with John Baptist de La Salle, placed the Brothers' Superior among the most determined of orthodox Catholics and among French Catholics who dared to declare their attachment of the Holy See. In the Rouen diocese, once rather strongly tinged with Jansenism, his sympathies were manifested in favor of churchmen who were adversaries of the sect and whom Archbishop Claude Maur

[28] Idem art.9
[29] ibid
[30] Mémoire, 2nd. Section art.16
[31] Ibid Conclusion pp.222-223
[32] Cf. Vol.1 p.428

d'Aubigne had positioned to combat it. Canon Blain was one of them. When he came to write the life of the Founder of the Institute, the ardor of his anti-Jansenist convictions ignited many a page of his book. Similarly, in the special chapter in which the life and virtue of Brother Barthélemy were narrated, he did not miss an opportunity to enlarge upon the thoroughly Roman commitments of this excellent religious.

He notes that the Brother had test for detecting the quality of a person's faith: he learned how devoted one was to the Most Blessed Virgin. He refused to trust "priests who showed indifference to the holy Mother of God". "Innovators", pretending to safeguard divine worship by a false zeal which should be enough to alert Christians, were the enemies of that "so very ancient, universal and vigorous devotion."[33]

But Jansenism (with the encouragement and connivance it received in Gallican circles) was a formidable force. Through its demanding moral principles, it seduced noble souls; it appealed to lovers of independence and revolution; while at the same time it strove to assure the faithful by its declarations of obedience to the Church, respect for the Holy See and adherence to every Catholic dogma. The fact that four Bishops lead the "Appellants" and that others were notoriously unsympathetic to the Constitution *Unigenitus* enabled the new heresy to disguise itself. The Pope drove it out of the Church; but, insolently, it was rehabilitated in the sanctuary, under cover of the Declaration of the Four Articles of 1682, by invoking the need for a Council.

We can imagine the difficulties that "an infant Congregation, humble, poor and determined to abide by the strictest orthodoxy, would meet with "in such tempestuous times", as Blain puts it. "Father Quesnel's partisans covered land and sea seeking converts ...Paris and the provinces were inundated with a deluge of seditious writings."[34] Responsible for confirming his Brothers in their faith, the Superior-general had to combine prudence and courage.

He gave wide publicity to the Founder's testament and accompanied it with the most explicit commentary. It was necessary: to remain inviolably attached to the center of unity...to submit wholly and with an obedience that is blind, simple and prompt to the decisions and judgments of the Bishops united to their Head, which makes up the Church-teaching.[35] That was "what (a Brother) must know", whose principal mission was to teach catechism and to teach children Christian doctrine in its purest form. This knowledge of principles was all that was needed; and to go beyond it became perilous presumption.

The Jansenists sought every occasion for controversy. Some Brothers might have been tempted to follow them over a terrain of subtle discussion and be caught in a trap. Brother Barthélemy pleaded with them not to get mixed up in disputes, and "to observe silence with those who itched to speak about Grace and Predestination. Keep to your catechism", he repeated, "...Leave to the doctors and the learned in the Church the responsibility of defending the Faith by their writings and speeches.. Your's is to defend it by a holy life.'" And to spare them all disarray in case of a sudden attack, he pushed precaution to the point of arming the Brothers with a sort of anti-Jansenist *vade-mecum*, a handbook on all the questions that people might put to them, along with the precisely correct answers that they should make, if anybody took it into his head to ask them questions.[36]

On the whole, silence was the rule, except when it was a question of an obligatory witness in favor of the truth; in which case, the Brothers were to refer to the catechism, which they "should know thoroughly", with brief, positive and unambiguous answers; and shunning conversation and, indeed, contact with the "Appellants", but without showing any disrespect for the Church's hierarchy, or providing any ammunition for criticism by provocative postures or by conduct unworthy of the faith of which the Brothers wished to the confessors or of the religious Society of which they were members.

This gentle, unostentatious firmness so well suited to the Superior's temperament, rested upon the logic of the situation. It safeguarded the rights of the truth, while it avoided those pointless explosions that would have compromised the future of the lowly and fragile Institute and its elementary schools. In other respects, it was not something that came easily in the middle of a brawl, amongst violent antagonists and in a climate of denunciation and condemnation. Blain comments on the policy: “This great caution...in dealing with ecclesiastical superiors favorable to the novelties of the day was not pleasing to all good Catholics”. But while he himself was hardly suspected of being "soft" on the "innovators" in the Quesnel party, he frankly

[33] Blain Abrégé p.59

[34] Idem., Ibid., pp. 29-31.

[35] Idem., Ibid., pg. 29.

[36] Blain Abrégé p.23

recognized that the charges endured by Brother Barthélemy were levelled at him by people "whose zeal had more heat than light".[37]

* *

In Calais and Boulogne Pierre de Langle's behavior, we can imagine, made the Brothers' position especially painful. These poor, aggrieved souls looked to their Superior for comfort and with him sought a way of getting out from under the tyranny...[38] The pastor in Calais--the man who, on the 15th of August, 1716, was warned by the Founder and who subsequently, on the 28th of January, 1719 [39]attracted his vehement protest--a Jansenist, continued to model his conduct on the example of his bishop. In Blain's account, the teachers in the Christian Schools enjoyed no freedom of conscience...It was considered a crime for them to go to confession to any but "Appellant" priests or to assist at holy Mass in the church of the Religious clergy who were known for their profession of Catholic doctrine.

Fortunately, the Brothers in this "inquisitorial region" met not only with enemies. The mass of the faithful did not make common cause with the leaders of the clergy. "The magistrates and the civic leaders" whom Brother Barthèlemy visited gave him the assurances of their best wishes and promised him "to serve" and "protect" those who were being persecuted. The people loved their sons' teachers and had no intention of allowing anybody to deprive them of such precious support. Fortified in this way, the Superior visited the Dean who conceded some ground before going on the offensive. The Brothers, he agreed, were deserving of praise. But why does "their talk" fail "to conform with their rules"? He believed he had a right to complain about the way they acted and regretted that they appeared "to have lost their initial trust and former respect". Doubtless, things would go better if the Brother Superior consented to remove the Director of the community in Calais. To which suggestion Brother Barthélemy calmly replied: “I can remove that Brother for you; but if I do that, I cannot replace him-, because there is no one of our Brothers who is willing to risk his faith by entering into contact with innovators.

The word had been blurted out, and the Dean seized upon it to open up a conversation about the "Bull". However, "he quickly learned that he was dealing with a good theologian" and abruptly changed the subject.[40]

Both sides, then, remained in a state of expectation.The Superior-general left for Boulogne, where he did not meet the Bishop. Here, as in Calais, the civil authorities expressed their satisfaction with the Brothers whose educational and catechetical methods, piety, modesty and wisdom trained young generations of workers and sailors in compliance with the intentions of Abot La Cocherie. [41] Several of the clergy congratulated De La Salle's followers for their "inviolable attachment to the faith of the Holy See".[42] Over a period of three days Brother Barthélemy chatted peacefully with the Brothers in their house, which was called "Des Carreaux".

He derived from these visits a sense of distressing uncertainty rather than one of keen anxiety. The storm was in abeyance, and perhaps it would be long in coming; perhaps, too, it might go away. But in the course of 1720, accumulated threats provided a glimpse of the thunderbolt to come. Two important letters of Brother Barthélemy supply the details.

The Motherhouse Archives contains the one authentic and complete letter in the clear, regular handwriting, with broad flourishes, that was characteristic of the first Brother Superior.[43] It is a document of the first importance for the history of the Institute as well as for a knowledge of Brother Barthélemy's character, principles and policies. It is dated from Paris "the 5th of May, 1720", and it is addressed to the Brother Director of the community in Calais and deals with several questions involving that institution. In quoting it here in its entirety we mean to illuminate not only the Jansenist controversy but everything that has to do with the theme of the present chapter. As we see it, it would be unfortunate to divide such a text arbitrarily into separate pieces.[44]

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[37] Ibid p.31

[38] Ibid p.23

[39] Cf. Vol.1 p.272

[40] Blain Abrégé pp.23-24

[41] Cf, Vol.1 p.295

[42] Blain op.cit. p.24

[43] Motherhouse Archives, BE y 1, Brother Barthélemy file.

[44] Brother Lucard and the editor of the 1933 edition of Vie du Frere Barthélemy were familiar with this letter; but they published it only fragments and without regard for the original text. (Lucard, Annales de l'Institut des Freres, Vol. I, pp. 393-394; 417.Vie du Frere Barthélemy, 1933, pg. 161).

The letter-writer's primary purpose was the solution of certain administrative and financial difficulties. Exposed to the hostility of the pastor of Calais and that of other "Appellants", the Brothers in that city believed that they were on the verge of losing their residence; and, as much by Jansenist intrigues as by the negligence of the clerks in the royal treasury, they were being deprived of a part of the subsidy upon which their livelihood depended. The Superior-general had gone to Paris to solicit the good offices of one of the great supporters of the Institute, Duke Bethune-Charost, Governor of Calais and the worthy son of the man who, in 1700, had so kindly received and so profoundly edified John Baptist de La Salle.[45] The letter of May 5th, 1720 informs its recipient of the outcome of that interview.

"My very dear brother,[46] the Grace and Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with us forever. Yesterday I had the honor of visiting the Duke Charost. He promised me that he was going to give the order at once for payments to be made. He must leave presently for the waters, and in about six weeks he hopes to be back and that many important pieces of business will be completed and that a house will be provided for the Brothers. I beg of you to be silent in this matters except for the former and the new mayors and the President, if he is in Calais. I had also the honor of speaking with the Duke concerning the stopping of payments on M. Ponton's subsidy of one-hundred écus: he was kind enough to give me every assurance on all of these matters. I admire the tremendous humility of this great Lord and his great goodness, his charity and his piety, and I confess that I am overwhelmed by his splendid evidence of affection for our Society, etc. I beg you to extend my most humble compliments to the President as well as to the former and the new mayors".

These lines are clear: against the Jansenist clergy (with respect to whom there were reasons for observing secrecy) Brother Barthélemy experienced support from the Governor and the Magistrates. For the immediate future and in possession of the reassurances he needed, he was filled with gratitude for the remarkable Duke, who was both an exemplary Christian and a faithful friend. He then goes into the story of one of the Brothers in Calais, with its numerous savory details, which reveals a fatherly leader in the exercise of his authority, a man thoroughly aware of individual abilities and zealous to turn them to the best account.

"You don't have to listen to Brother Hilarion to attend Mass with one's pupils. If you think that Brother absolutely cannot remain in Calais until the vacation, we shall have to change him with a Brother in Boulogne--apparently, Brother Titus, the most sensible of the youngest ones. He teaches delightfully. It will be disappointing for our Brothers, but what else is there to do under the circumstances? I shall write to our dear Brother Rigobert;[47] if he doesn't run into too much trouble, he will act forthwith; and in that case, I beg you to receive him (Brother Titus) as Brother Hilarion's replacement; and Brother Hilarion, until further notice, will go to Boulogne in place of Brother Titus, with an "obedience" that you will give him on our behalf. This will happen, probably, for the former on Monday and for the latter Thursday of Pentecost, for the greater convenience of the schools. As for Brother Marcel, we shall see from now on to vacation time: he does not like to teach the younger children, and with good reason. You can give him charge of the second class until further notice. In any case, Brother Titus has order, and he is quite humble and very obedient. You can put him anywhere you wish, except in the upper classes; but, there is reason to believe that it would be better for Brother Marcel to teach the second class. We shall see where Brother Hilarion should be placed in Boulogne; we are unable to change Brother Joachim at the present time".

The letter seems to conclude with a closing salutation: "I greet my dear Brothers and I am, with all my heart, my very dear Brother, your very humble and affectionate servant, Brother Barthélemy". But, at the moment he was about to fold and seal the letter, the Superior thought to add a postscript that was intended to be read publicly. He had been informed concerning some goings-on of a certain Brother Romuald-- Jean Le Roux, from Normandy, a twenty nine year old, professed Brother, and one of his own former novices from his days on Rue Barouillère.[48] Brother Romuald, meddlesome, infatuated with the sense of his own importance and of narrow, misguided views, had dared to criticize his former mentor. To his way of thinking, Brother Barthélemy showed such moderation for Jansenists because, deep down in his heart, he shared their errors. This calumny, uttered by a Brother, merited immediate and severe rebuttal. The Superior decided to recall the author of this gossip to St.Yon; he wanted to take the occasion of this incident to emphasize what

[45] Cf. Vol.1 p.269

[46] Without capital letters as was the custom of De La Salle and his first followers

[47] Director of the community at Boulogne

[48] National Library, Ms. 11122, French Sources, New Acquisitions. (Catalogue of the Brothers of the Christian Schools). Brother Romuald is listed in this catalogue on page twenty-five, along with the comment: "Born in Aubeuf, diocese of Rouen, April 8, 1691. Entered on November 9, 1710. Perpetual vows. Withdrew". His family and Christan names "in the world" made him a namesake of Brother Assistant Joseph, Jean Le Roux, of Liesse

had always been his line of conduct. And he related the story of his meeting with the pastor of Calais that dated from the time when the Founder was still alive.

He continued to the Brother Director: “I forgot to tell you in my last letter that the Dean of Calais pleaded with me on one occasion to visit our Brothers and urge them to go to confession in the parish; and I wrote him that I had a great number of concerns that prevented me from so acting, etc.; that, besides, Father De La Salle would serve incomparably better than I; that he would quite politely as the Bishop for permission that he himself might, during his visit, hear the Brothers' confessions; and that as soon as I had his response, I would ask Father De La Salle to kindly make the trip. I have still not received an answer to that letter, and it is now too late to expect one.”

Thus, from the very first moments of his generalate, Brother Barthélemy eluded the blandishments of Jansenist clergy; and he invoked the Founder's authority by showing how the latter was prepared to take the necessary steps to spare his disciples from having recourse to the ministry of the "Appellants'. Rejected, the Dean lapsed into silence.

“Brother Romuald apparently did not know all of these circumstances, nor some others, when he declared that I favor the "Appellants", which is false and unjust; and all the Brothers of our Institute knew it the moment our dear Father died, through what I had written to them. I cannot abide criticism on this score. But I do not believe that I am obliged to speak out, to declaim randomly and create an uproar, as Brother Romuald wishes, by getting up catechism lessons on the issues of the day, which is inappropriate for any Brother of our Society. Rather, we must adopt a strategy of silence than enter into matters that are beyond our competence”.

This modesty, so consistent with the spirit of the Founder, appeared at this point as profound wisdom, as long as the theological ground upon which some Brothers were tempted to venture forth was so slippery. The Superior-general threw up roadblocks in the path of the foolhardy; the courageous lost nothing thereby, since the Leader commanded his troops to stand their ground come-what-may in defense of the main position:

What is appropriate (for the Brothers) is to manifest their attachment and submission to the Holy See and to the Church simply, and to teach the doctrine of the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church and to do so according to the catechetical method.

As for the critic, nothing more by way of conclusion was said in the letter except: “Brother Romuald wanted to be more learned than I and Father De La Salle and Father Leschassier, Superior of the Major Seminary in Paris, etc. and he ignored our advice in this matter.” It was explanation enough of the proud obstinacy that Brother Barthélemy had encountered. There was little to be hoped for from a religious who had violated obedience. Even perpetual profession did not restrain him for long. We are hardly surprised to observe in the 18th century "Register", following the name of Brother Romuald the sad comment, "Withdrew".

But, amazingly, we discover on page thirteen of that Register the termination of Brother Norbert's *curriculum vitae* . He was the Director of Calais. André de Bouves, born in Bresne, in the diocese of Soisson, on the 6th of December, 1676 and entered the Institute in 1700. He had been one of the columns of the new edifice. He was already Director in Calais when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there in March of 1717. During the following May he was seated with the sixteen Directors who elected the new Superior-general.[49] Alone of the sixteen, Brother Norbert was unfaithful to his vocation and his vows. We do not know the causes nor the circumstances of his departure; but they were evidently less than honorable, since the Register notes: "He withdrew, dismissed in 1720". It was the very year during which he received Brother Barthélemy's long letter, in which there is nothing to suggest discord between the two men. There is no reason to believe that Brother Norbert shared the views of, nor defended, Brother Romuald. Still less, could he be suspected of Jansenism: while refusing to sacrifice him to the resentment of the Dean of Calais, Brother Barthèlemy stood guarantor for his orthodoxy.[50]

All that can be suggested without fear of error is that the division introduced into the French Church over the Bull *Unigenitus t*roubled and darkened consciences and increased mistrust, antipathy and injustice among the faithful. For three years in Boulogne there was pitiless hostility, rather than open warfare, against

[49] Cf. Vol.1, pp.408-409

50. According to Blain (Vol. II, pp. 227-228) De La Salle "witnessed only one of his disciples who entertained an inclination for the new opinions". Restored to orthodoxy by the Founder, this Brother relapsed into Jansenism after 1719. He left the Institute and, having taken ship in Marseille, he was lost at sea. "The shipwreck of his faith" — wrote his biographer — "was thus the cause of the shipwreck of his life".

the Brothers of the Christian Schools. After the Superior-general's visit, "the persecution", writes Canon Blain, "became more furious". According to his testimony, the Bishop, "having attempted every imaginable means to win the Brothers over to his views", ceased to place "any limits to his vengeance".[51]

At about the same time he received a letter from Brother Barthélemy, the substance of which has been preserved by Blain. Pierre de Langle refused to forgive those "non-Appellants" who disapproved of his position. That they would go to confession in a neighboring diocese (St. Omer) he considered scandalous. Furthermore, and following well established practice, surrounding the prelate were people prepared to do the work of informers, to report, if only to parody, the views of the "anti-Quesnel party" and peevishly to condemn the behavior of those "rebels" who preferred to obey the Holy See rather than their bishop. Among those so condemned were certainly the Christian Brothers. In spite of their contribution, he agreed to expel them. For rather quickly the embittered spirit of Pierre de Langle would no longer find such a step repugnant. He informed the Superior-general of his decision.

Brother Barthélemy sought to disarm the anger of a person of the Bishop's position and power. But who was he compared to a leader of the French clergy and a man for whom the "liberties of the Gallican Church" and the customs of the kingdom empowered to oppose the Sovereign Pontiff? In the eyes of the faithful (in those uncertain times) and in spite of Clement XI's condemnations (however anonymous), Pierre de Langle was still the Bishop of Boulogne. Full respect was due him, and, apart from the question of "appeal", complete submission. Brother Barthélemy's letter was deferential and humble. But it contained not a word that could be construed as adherence to doctrines condemned by Rome.

He wrote: “My Lord, I have received the letter which Your Highness has done me the honor of sending and which informs me that Your Highness is quite displeased with our Brothers1 in Calais and Boulogne and has given orders that they be forbidden to function in the schools -- a thing that greatly grieves me.”

The Superior protested his good intentions: he had "attempted to satisfy the (Bishop's) demands", "to procure the removal of several Brothers"; and he had forbidden his Brothers "communication with S.N." (i.e., a certain M. N...whose identity Blain does not disclose, but who, perhaps, carried on a campaign of opposition to the Bishop) "or to become in any way involved with the Church's business". For this concerns none "but our Lords the Bishops and ecclesiastical superiors". Such had been the line of conduct handed down to the Brothers by "Father de La Salle, their Founder, of happy memory".

Had the Brothers in Calais and Boulogne violated these guidelines? They had "suggested" to their Superior that they were not guilty of "all the things that biased minds attributed to them". In particular, they insisted on the propriety of their attitude toward Bishop de Langle: the people who had gotten them into trouble with the Vicar-general for a lack of respect "had" (in the view of the Brothers in Calais and Boulogne) "uttered real calumnies".

Brother Barthélemy, however, did not claim to have looked into the matter in depth. A too positive denial would have further prejudiced the prelate and his entourage. Quite simply and respectfully Bishop de Langle was asked to be kind enough once again to be indulgent toward those among the Brothers who may have been somewhat wanting in their duty to him.

The Superior-general concluded: we shall try so to act that henceforth the brothers will make it possible for my highness to be satisfied with their conduct. And, recalling the kindnesses with which the Bishop had overwhelmed the schools when they opened, he had the honor of being "with immense gratitude, the very humble and obedient servant" of Pierre de Langle.[52]

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Actually, Brother Barthélemy's gentleness, for a time, placated the violence of the obstinate "Appellant, " as, in another day, it had succeeded in pacifying another pastor with Jansenist tendencies, the Bishop of Macon. Besides, the quarrel over the Bull was entering into a quieter phase. Father Dubois, became Prince and Archbishop of Cambrai and eager to win the "Cardinal's hat," would, by force of overbearing entreaty and ambiguous subtleties, negotiate and obtain an "accommodation" between the partisans and adversaries of the Constitution *Unigenitus*. To this pontifical document the king's declaration of the 4th of August, 1720, would command obedience. Two days later Cardinal Noailles would lend his adherence to an "explanation" mandate, represented by him "as the work of the Gallican Church, i.e., of that illustrious portion of Christ's flock which had distinguished itself both by the purity of its doctrine and the firmness of its inviolable

[51] Blain Abrégé, p.24

[52] Blain Vol. II, Abrege . ., pg. 33. Cf. Lucard, Annales , Vol. I, pp. 396-397.

attachment to the Holy See.'" Noailles' position was filled with reservations and loopholes that augured ill for the future. It was a "botched" and merely "cosmetic" peace.[53]

Early on Clement XI regarded it as unacceptable. While the Archbishop of Paris was entangling himself in his "distinctions without differences," the intransigence of the Soanens and of the de Langles was becoming increasingly inflexible."

At this point our story has moved beyond the lifetime of Brother Barthélemy. However, it is better to follow the history of the relations between the Brothers and the Bishop of Boulogne to its conclusion. Between 1720 and 1722 the prelate's resentment was roused and he began to growl. His passion, to use Blain's word for it, had become a paroxysm, which he "thrust into whatever" situation would tolerate it.[54] In other words, he made the irrevocable decision to treat the Brothers as enemies. On the 4th of April, 1722, he declared publicly that he was revoking their right to teach; and he sought those who might replace the Brothers in the primary schools.

Since the year 1713, there existed in Paris, in the Faubourg St. Antoine, a Society of Brothers founded by Father Tabourin. At first glance its end seemed identical with that of De la Salle's followers The 'Preamble' to their Rule declared: "The Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools founded by Father Tabourin, is essentially dedicated to the religious education of youth, according to the principles of the Catholic religion. For the success of this work the members who compose this Society must strive to offer themselves as examples of genuine Christian life. Besides this, they have the responsibility to dispense to their pupils (this is the subject of art.1, title I of the Rule, the principles of reading, writing grammar and arithmetic.[55]

Instruction was tuition-free (art. 1, title 1), following the example of the teachers founded in Rheims thirty years earlier. And in prescriptions of Article 4 we find the very words that De La Salle used most often: (The Brothers will have in view...their sanctification, which will induce them to be guided by faith... (and) the sanctification of the children entrusted to them, for which they must have a great zeal, as well for instructing them in their duties toward God and their neighbor, as for preserving them, as far as possible, in innocence by inspiring them with a lively horror for sin and a great respect for virtue.

Blain was sure that this was a counterfeit imitation. In the following passage from the second volume of his Life of M. John Baptist de La Salle, Blain is alluding to the Brothers of the Faubourg St. Antoine, or something very much like them: "These Gentlemen (the Jansenists), despairing of winning the Holy Founder over or of having entered his Society, found another way to attain their goal: they themselves founded a seminary for schoolteachers on De La Salle's model...The work was immediately begun in Paris..."

At that time Father Tabourin's Brothers were incorporated into "the royal French University." It was noted in the Preface that these Rules "had been reformed and legislated by the Superiors and Brothers." We judge that they must be, overall, (attention being paid to what Scotti reports concerning these teachers in his Histoire de Pierre de Langle) a codification of the primitive rules.

Blain adds that "the way of life" of the new group of teachers was very different from what was seen at Vaugirard and St. Sulpice. We know that the Canon had no love for the "Appellants"; and he insists with a certain amount of self-gratification on the role that "money" and "other creature comforts" played in the foundation; since he assures us that "they were never lacking in such a rich and powerful faction". According to Scotti, Pierre de Langle's biographer, Tambonneau, President of the Court of Accounts, financed the enterprise, and it became so completely identified with him that the public nicknamed the teachers the "Tambonneau Brothers" .[56] There is some irony in Blain's remark that "everything seemed...to augur a happy outcome and, for France, promised schoolteachers of the highest quality". And he is, of course, exaggerating when he concludes that "there is no great difference between success and disaster". Father Tabourin's work hardly prospered but it did endure for more than a century.

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[53] See Leon Cahen, lesQuerelles religieuses etparlementaires sousLouisXV Paris, 1913, pg. 33-37.

[54] Georges Goyau, Histoirereligieuse delaNation francaise, Paris, 1922, pg. 477

[55] The "Extract from Rules and Regulations for the Society of Christian Schools in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, founded in 1713" had been published as a pamphlet, by J.M. Eberthart, Paris, 12 Foin Rue St. Jacques, in 1821

[56] Page 219.

The teachers "were dedicated to education freely and without vows" .[57] Their "normal" garb was a coat, a vest, and black breeches made of common cloth, black woolen or cotton stockings and necktie cloth that was also black. A "short mantle" was also added as "extraordinary garb". The hats, of which all that we know is that they were "of the usual shape", must not have been different from those worn by the middle - class in the 18th century. The breeches had buckles and the shoes were tied with strings. [58]

The Superiors might send the Brothers "into the cities as well as into the countryside", as needed, but "numbering at least two", saving exceptional cases. "If a single Brother were obliged to teach school in the countryside" , and he was unable each day to return to the community house, a novice would be assigned to him "whom he would have to instruct and train" .[59]

The Brothers of the Faubourg St. Antoine preserved traces of their early Jansenism. Their 1821 Rule continued to prescribe, "daily and by heart" (and at the same time as several verses of the New Testament) some pages from the "large Montpellier Catechism" published by Charles Joachim Colbert .[60]

These were the men whom the Bishop of Boulogne thought to substitute for the somewhat less than Gallican disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle. But it was nothing more than a clumsy gesture. The people in Boulogne refused to respond to Peter de Langle 's ardent appeals in favor of the new teachers. The two "Tambonneau Brothers" who arrived on the 23rd of April, 1722, appeared to be nothing more than fashionable representatives of the middle class. Their school remained largely uninhabited.

Meanwhile, the Christian Brothers fully intended to have their rights respected. In Boulogne they were in possession of a contract which specified the payment of subsidies and the conditions under which the school was to be operated. They were certain that they had fulfilled all of their obligations. And they did not hesitate to appeal to the royal government -- in this case, the Marquis Vrilliere, Minister of State. Pierre de Langle was too heavily involved in the *Unigenitus* affair to have the court's ear. During the preceding year Father Dubois had arranged his condemnation by the king's Council, along with the other three "Appellant" Bishops. Phelypeaux Vrilliere was no friend of the Jansenists. --This is why Saint Simon deals with him so unsparingly in his Memoirs.[61] He gave order to the Marquis Colembert, the king's Lieutenant in Boulogne, to see to it that the legal beneficiaries of the foundation were not evicted. On the 17th of May, the Brothers schools were reopened by the civil authority. The "Tambonneau Brothers", confiding in episcopal support, may have made something of a scene. In any case, their residence in the city was hardly a lengthy one. The Governor, the Duke Aumont, induced them to make for Paris, under the surveillance of the mounted police.[62]

Both at Boulogne and Calais the Bishop was obliged to accommodate himself to the situation. However, he did so, but not without protest. A detailed description of his state of mind is contained in a letter he wrote on the 12th of September, 1722 to Father Baudouin, a Canon in Rheims. A copy of this curious document (discovered a dozen years ago at the Hague in the State Archives of the Netherlands) was made for the Motherhouse Archives.[63]

Pierre de Langle attempted to justify his action in the eyes of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Rheims, whose members were ever solicitous for the disciples of their late, illustrious and saintly confrere. In point of fact, what emerges from his letter is his haughty intransigence, his domineering spirit and his persistence in rebellion. In the eyes of posterity his victims derive merit from his accusations.

“As to what you say is being spread throughout Rheims concerning the Brother schoolteachers of the Institution of the late Father De La Salle and concerning whom the people wish to be informed, you should know that it is not true that I forbad the confessors of Calais to hear these Brothers' confessions. On the contrary: I complained because they refused to go to confession to approved confessors, not only of Calais, but of all the other neighboring places, and even of the entire diocese, and because they also refused to receive communion, including the Easter communion, from the hands of the pastor of the parish, and from other priests appointed for the purpose in the parish. It has been two Easters in a row now that they have fulfilled their Easter Duty in the diocese of St. Omer, and that they go to confession there to Religious

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[57] Lucard, Annales t.II, p.425

[58] Rules, Title One, Art. One

[59] Title 2

[60] Title VIII

[61] Louis Phelypeaux de la Vrillière, after his father Balthazar, became the protector of the Penitent, the mysterious person who by his virtuous life, for thirty-two years, edified the small city on the banks of the Loire and who was buried in 1707 in the parish church at the foot of the tombstone of the Minister's grandfather

[62] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 426

[63] Cf. Bulletin of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, January 1925

(priests) who are not approved for my diocese, and whom the Bishop of St. Omer has even forbidden to hear the confessions of the faithful of my diocese, and then they receive communion from the hands of these unapproved priests.

It is true, nevertheless, that prior to this time, they went to confession to a parish priest whom I learned heard the confessions of the greater part of Calais without having renewed his 'faculties' after the period for which they had been granted; so informed, I had an order sent to this churchman to present his 'faculties' to me, and since then he has abstained from hearing confessions. Meanwhile, he has not visited me and he has not heard confessions; but he has no special reason for hearing the confessions of these Brothers; who are now like some wild things, for whom the abuse that they made of the Sacrament has turned their heads, and they are now nearly the only ones, along with the teaching Sisters, who rise up against episcopal authority and the obedience that is due to legitimate pastors."

Thus, a Jansenist Bishop shows us the Brothers faithful to the teaching of their Founder regarding frequent communion.[64] And in Calais, among those who bowed to him in welcome (whose sincerity, to tell the truth, appeared somewhat questionable, even to him) he noticed that two humble Congregations -- Father Barre's Sisters [65] and De La Salle's Brothers - - remained standing.

"In my visit to Calais, everybody bowed to this authority; I found no resistance in any part of the city; all paid their customary duties to me and were obedient without any opposition to anything I wanted done for the spiritual and temporal good of the Church. The chief officers and the officers of the general-staff, the city corporation with the mayor at its head, all the officers of justice, from the President to the clerk of the court, came to pay their respects with the best grace in the world and appeared precisely when I called them together to deal with the affairs of the Church, the workhouse and the hospital; there wasn't the least protest and we parted evidently the best friends in the world. Most of those who had abandoned the parish, through stubbornness or fanaticism promised me that they would return to it regularly, and there is some evidence that they are doing so. I found resistance only among the men and women who teach school, who maintained to my face that they could not receive the Sacraments from people who oppose the Pope - - such as the "Appellants" who were excommunicated by the letter *pastoralis officii* , and that they will not attend the parish until I grant them as their confessor the one to whom they went to confession before I lifted his "faculties"; they told me that they are pursuing their conscience and their eternal salvation...that in obeying me they would be lost and that in being united to the Pope, they would be in a condition to be saved; whatever I might say to them, they will not abandon this principle".

Basically, the letter attests to the Brothers' influence on their pupils and the influence of the latter on the families of the common people. This influence worried Pierre de Langle, because it seemed to him to be directed against him personally. Obviously, such a complaint could not be taken lightly: yet the reason he gave for it was hardly serious; since it was immediately refuted by the facts which the prelate himself had reported.

"What is worst in all of this is that through their schools they carry along and educate their children in these alien principles, and, through the children, they involve the fathers and mothers of the common people; that is what today creates the greatest evil. They have prevented the children as much as they could from going to the catechism class taught in the parish to prepare them to receive Confirmation; they have threatened to expel them from school if they are confirmed by me, however they deny it, but the Commandant has maintained against them that this was true and that the children and their parents came to complain to him. What is constant in all of this is that, although many more come than we had hoped, there have been two or three less than there might have been".(The alleged threats of the Brothers had only insignificant results!).

The final lines reveal an attitude toward the venerable Chapter of Rheims, which had been quite curious concerning what was happening in the diocese of Boulogne and they give notice of a new offensive against the recalcitrant teachers:

"You may, Sir, report all of this to your Canons who are concerned for the Brothers. Let them think of it what they please, but I am getting ready to issue a visitation order in which these Brothers and Sisters will get what is coming to them".

But while there was censure, there was no sanction. When, twenty months later, Pierre de Langle died, the schools had not changed teachers, and the teachers had not changed their principles; and peace had returned to Calais and Boulogne.

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[64] Cf. vol. 1, pp.503-505

[65] Cf. Vol.1, p.270 deals with the installation of the Sisters of Providence at Calais

Brother Barthélemy had long since entered into his eternal reward. He had been granted only a year and two months in which to fulfill the tasks left him by John Baptist de La Salle. Not an instant of this very brief period was wasted, but it was through expending energy in this way that the excellent servant worked himself to death. Blain writes: "Completely taken up with giving oral and written counsel to his confreres", he was forced "into a schedule of late retiring and early rising". Naturally of a "very delicate constitution", these arrangements ruined his health. He refused to delay a reply that was expected from him, and until death snatched the pen from his hand, he was faithful to this resolution: letters ready to be mailed ("the outpourings of his heart" respecting the virtues of the religious life) were found "in his office".

After a visit to Laon where the Brothers had just moved into a new house acquired by Father Gudvert, the pastor of Old Saint Pierre, the Superior stopped in Paris. His letter of May 5th, 1720 to the Director of Calais assures us of his presence in the capitol on that date. Embracing the Brothers in the St. Sulpice community on the day of his departure, he is said to have told some of them that this would be the last time.[66] En route, he visited the Brothers in Chartres and got back to St. Yon, no doubt weary with the long journey, but, as always, ready for work.

Indeed, he had squandered what had remained of his strength. Forced to take to his bed, he was soon at death's door. He asked Canon Blain to come and hear his confession. On the 6th of June he alerted the Assistants to assemble in Rouen as quickly as possible. On the 7th the pastor of St. Sever brought him Viaticum and administered Extreme Unction. On the 8th, at dawn, Brother Barthélemy died as he yielded his gentle and obedient soul to God.

His body was interred in the St. Susanna chapel in the church of St. Sever, near the body of his mentor, John Baptist de La Salle. Brothers Bernardine, Bruno, Étienne and Pierre, along with Pastor Jarrier-Bresnard and the vestrymen, Dau and Grenier, signed the interment papers which were dated the 9th of June, 1720. The deceased was only forty -two years of age.

Brothers Assistants Jean and Joseph, in spite of the haste they made, were unable to be at St. Yon in time for the funeral. The government of the Institute fell to them until the election of a new Superior. On the 16th of June, in a "Circular letter" addressed to "all (their) dear Brothers in Our Lord Jesus Christ", they informed them of their loss and anticipated the coming convocation of electors.

The "Circular" has been preserved, at least in part, by Blain: “The precious death in God of our very dear and very honored Brother Barthélemy, Superior General of our Society, deceased the 8th of June at four o'clock in the morning, provided with all the Sacraments which he received with holy dispositions and in complete consciousness, obliges us to write you the present (letter) in order to express the acutely felt grief we experience in such a serious loss, which is, so to speak, irreparable, unless God should intervene by enabling us to feel the effects of His divine mercy and give us a successor who can walk in the footsteps of the deceased”.

Thus began the Assistant with a long and weighty sentence which summarized the entire theme of the letter. We should note, incidentally, the title, "very honored Brother", borrowed from Sulpician nomenclature, which would gradually become the title under which Superiors -general would be referred to in the Institute.

There then follows the eulogy of the fallen Leader, as well as an account of his last hours as related to the authors by eyewitnesses - - in all simplicity, without passing over in silence the most painful moments, without surprise for the anxieties of a scrupulous man who had constantly to triumph over temptation at the cost of the most violent struggles, and without disguising the supernatural, either, whose rays had suddenly dissipated the shadows and the specters of the night.

“We can say with truth that the hand of the Lord has struck us in a measurable way by depriving us of such a worthy leader whose life and death have been nothing but themes of edification for u.....Constantly throughout his illness he was in complete and perfect submission to the will of God, absolutely abandoning himself to Him for time and for eternity. Nevertheless, the night before his death, after having received the Sacraments, he had grievous temptations to despair, which troubled him greatly, but through God's mercy, he came out of it completely five or six hours before his death, gave assurances that he had no part in anything he said in those grievous moments during which he was not master of himself and gave quite visible and genuine signs of a complete conformity to God's good pleasure and a great confidence in His goodness and mercy. A few hours before his death, he even said, in the presence of four of our death Brothers, that he had seen the Most Blessed Virgin with our very dear Father de La Salle, and that they spoke to him; he could say no more about it, having entered into a sort of lethargic sleep that endured until his final breath, which he

[66] This is how Blain records it

emitted with such great calmness that we have reason to believe that his soul was enjoying interiorly a peaceful repose..."

To his soul were due pious suffrages (and the austere religion of our ancestors was less prodigal in these prescriptions than our own is with its "canonizations" on the day after death). For the Brothers who would continue his tasks here below divine assistance was needed to choose an able guide:

"Now, then, very dear Brothers, as God has taken him to Himself, nothing remains for us to do but to offer our wishes and prayers to the Lord for the repose of his soul, so that He might be pleased to show him mercy and deliver him from the fires of Purgatory, if, indeed, he is still detained there; and to be all united in heart and spirit, although separated from one another, like the Christians of the early Church, to ask of the Lord, day and night with tears and groanings, as did the holy Apostles regarding the election of St. Matthias, that He (Who knows the depths of hearts) might reveal to us the one He has selected and destined to succeed him. Let us not, then, very dear Brothers, tarry over those vain titles of distinction, seniority, age and condition, but let us attempt to discover, with the help of the light of the Holy Spirit, the one whom He has chosen to lead us during this mortal life in the justice and holiness by which we merit to obtain immortal glory".

CHAPTER TWO

Brother Timothy's Election and the Institute before 1725

At the beginning of August in 1720 seventeen Brothers gathered at St. You to elect a Superior-general. This was the third Chapter of the Society founded by De La Salle, the first one, according to tradition, being the one held at Vaugirard in 1694,[1] while the second was the one held in 1717. Only one of these capitulants, Brother Jean Jacquot, was an associate of the Holy Founder during the heroic days of the "Little La Trappe".[2] But thirteen other capitulants shared with him in the deliberations that concluded with the election of Brother Bartholomew and the revision of the "Common Rule". The "Records of General Chapters" preserves their names: Brothers Timothy, Joseph, Jean Francis, Hubert, Dositheus, Bernardine, Jacques, Cosmos, Charles, Bruno, Louis, André and Fiacre. They made up a genuine council of wise men. Most of them performed their educational functions in cities north of Lyons. Brother Jacques, however, was the Director of the school in Grenoble. Brothers Timothy and Bernardine had been the tireless aides to St. John Baptist de La Salle in the South of France in the most difficult moments of his apostolic career. Brother Timothy, for many years responsible for the community in Avignon (after having served in Mende and Marseille) as well as Visitor of the houses in Languedoc and Provence, was able single-handedly and with an authority universally acknowledged, to represent that important segment of the new Society.

The three new members of the Chapter were Brothers Irenée, Anastasius and Rigobert. Irenée's reputation was widely recognized: the Brothers were aware of the confidence that both De La Salle and Brother Barthélemy had placed in him. In piety, the spirit of renunciation, humility and mortification, in knowledge of divine things, he walked in their footsteps, and, as Director of novices at St. Yon, on their model, he educated the communities of the future. Something of a mystery hovered over his early days: the Founder had received him into the Institute under rather special circumstances. The place had been Grenoble, where this former officer in the royal army turned up looking something like a hobo. "You were nothing but a tramp; you didn't have a shirt on your back," said the Brother whose job it was, at the time, to be both his barber and his tailor.[3] From the way he looked and acted it was clear that he did not belong to the same social class as most of his colleagues; but Brother Irenée wanted nothing but the name, the habit, the virtues and the obscure life of a Christian Brother. Meanwhile, he inspired respect without disclosing anything whatsoever to over-curious minds.

In 1720 he added the responsibility of the direction of St. Yon to that of Master of novices; and it was as the head of one of the houses of the Institute that he took his place as a member of the Chapter. As we said above, Brother Rigobert was the Director of the community in Boulogne, having succeeded Brother Fiacre who had become Visitor "of the houses of the Society".[4] As for Brother Anastasius, very likely he was appointed to Calais after Brother Norbert was expelled from the Institute.

Blain recounts some of the preliminaries to the Chapter of 1720 in language in which inaccuracies, however racy, are easily detected. Under a transparent anonymity he places himself on the scene:
The Brothers Director of each of the houses, to the number of eighteen(?) faithfully complied with the orders given to them. A Canon, a friend of the Institute, who had Brother Barthélemy's confidence and to whom he had made his final confession when he realized that he was in danger of death, took the trouble to find out from him which of the Brothers he thought most fit to replace him. The dying man suggested that it was Brother Timothy, at the time the Superior in the community in Avignon, and Brother Barthélemy added that he was the one, also, who, in the judgment of De La Salle, deserved to be chosen and that the holy man, while still alive, would have selected him to take his place, if Brother Timothy had been a little longer in the Institute. Indeed, at the time, he was nothing but a neophyte in the community. But his discretion, his balanced temperament, his good spirit, his gentleness and his gracious and polite manner

[1] Cf. Vol.1, pp.202-208

[2] Two other "1694 associates", Brother Gabriel Drolin and Brother Antony (Jean Partois) still belonged to the Institute. But they did not take part in either the second or the third General Chapters

[3] La Tour, Vie du Frere Irenée, 1774, p. 87.

[4] Cf. Vol.1, p.419

had attracted the Founder's attention...This was the testimony borne by the Canon, on the deposition of the late Brother Barthélemy, in the presence of some of the principal Brothers assembled for the election.[5]

We have no difficulty either with the deathbed conversation between Brother Barthélemy and Jean-Baptist Blain, nor the biographer's report to the principal Brothers. We would merely note that the term "neophyte" can hardly be applied to Brother Timothy in 1717 when the Founder resigned, since he had entered the Society on the 14th of January, 1700, three years prior to Brother Barthélemy. Their ages scarcely differed: Guillaume Samson Bazin, born on the 14th of January, 1682, was hardly four years younger than Joseph Truffet.[6] We here observe in a rather striking way the contempt for detail that renders suspect much of what John Baptist de La Salle's biographer has written. And on this fact it is possible to build a decisive argument against the view that Brother Barthélemy exercised a control over Blain's manuscript prior to its publication.

Since the election's outcome seems to have been a foregone conclusion, the Chapter itself was quite brief. Its entire task seems to have been completed in the course of a single day, the 7th of August. Agreement having been quickly reached on Brother Timothy, Brothers Jean and Joseph were thereupon confirmed in their positions as Assistants. Finally, there was a work-session involving discussion and voting on several "pieces of legislation". The capitulants decided that only the Brothers Director would make upon the "general assemblies", following the practice established in 1717 on the occasion of the "first assembly". If the numbers in the communities should greatly increase, this arrangement would be reconsidered. Replacing an Assistant who died in the course of his commission would require the simplest of procedures: the Brothers Director would mail in their ballots.

A touching concern was shown in the following piece of legislation: Considering the great mental and physical labors of the Dear Brother Superior of the Institute, he shall take very special care to conserve his health and follow the advice which will be given him on this subject by the Brothers appointed for this purpose, and this for the greater good of the Society. Ordinarily, he will travel on horseback or by coach.[7] The time was immediately after the premature death of Brother Barthélemy.

These prescriptions found their way into the Rule of Government, which had already been codified, as the reference by the capitulants of 1720 to "general assemblies" clearly attests. But it had to await fifty-seven years to be published.

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At the outset of Brother Timothy's generalate the Institute was enjoying normal growth. Equipped with its essential agencies and inspired by a determination to survive, it was henceforth to expand its powers and arrive at its place in the sun. It had just selected a leader who knew how to direct its energies along the right lines, while supporting them with his own great strength. Guillaume Samson-Bazin, the son of a Parisian tailor,[8] in the parish of St. Severin in the Latin quarter, certainly had the refinement, the tact and the good qualities with which Blain quite correctly credited him (and we can understand how the good Canon, in constant contact with the Brothers at St. Yon and receiving from them the information he needed to write the life of their Founder had especially prized the pleasant and conciliating character of the Superior-general). But what appeared even more attractive in the qualities of the man,[9] with his broad brow, clear-sighted gaze, and, what is repeatedly found in his activity, was his shrewd judgment, deliberate decision, composure and confidence, and all faculties in equilibrium.

Deep down in his soul there glowed, like a sanctuary lamp, the "spirit of faith and zeal", that John Baptist de La Salle communicated to those who were his true sons. And Brother Timothy fostered it and united to it a burning gratitude to, and an affection (ever preserved in its primitive ardor) for the Founder. It was he who, after securing the publication of the *Conduct of Schools* in 1720, had the Founder's religious writings published, as well as the *Meditations for Times of Retreat*, *Meditations for the Sundays of the Year* , a new edition of the *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, and the oldest known edition of the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer.*[10] He delivered to Canon Blain the documents assembled for

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[5] Cf. Blain Vol.2, pp.183-184

[6] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 13. Register of Entrants. (See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 172) and National Library, Ms. 11122.

[7] Chapitres generaux de l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes, Historique et decisions, Paris, 1902

[8] As they wrote, "According to the Rule of Government".

[9] This was the profession that the Nouvelles ecclesiastiques for February 6, 1744 ascribed to Brother Timothy's father. As a Jansenistic source, it was certainly suspect, but we do not think that there is reason to challenge its testimony

[10] Cf. Vol.1, pp. 479, 480, 491-492, 498-499

De La Salle's biography, the saintly man's papers, the "notes" written by the Brothers, Brother Bernard's manuscript and the original work of Dom Elie Maillefer. And while in the end he decided upon a verbose gentleman as the official historian of the Institute and as the self-appointed herald of the Founder's glorification, the reason was that Maillefer had too many Jansenist ties, and Brother Bernard left the Congregation (in perhaps about 1730).[11] With Blain, friend of Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, and protégé of Bishop d'Aubigne, the Superior-general was sure to find complete orthodoxy; he was aware of the complete dedication Blain had shown during the difficult years at St. Yon, the respect and admiration he had for De La Salle at the moment the Archbishop of Rouen was listening to the tendentious accounts and was contemplating a devastating course of action. He continued to be grateful for a profoundly religious, courageous and disinterested friendship. He would not be responsible for everything the author wrote, nor for the use, whether tactless or inopportune or of questionable sensitivity that would be made of some of the documentation that had been made available to him. The Canon in this connection was alone implicated and he had to bear the Benedictine's charges as well as those of the Brothers who complained about him. The credit he shares with the Superior-general is for having raised an indestructible monument to the sanctity and genius of a great man, and to the goodness of his Christian virtue.

On such an ample foundation, would Brother Timothy ask the Sovereign Pontiff to place the pinnacle? Blain's book seemed to have been the preliminary brief in a process of canonization. In 1735 the account book in the Brothers' residence in Rome indicated that eleven copies of each of Blain's two volumes had been recently bound by Italian craftsmen "at a cost of twenty-five `baioques' a volume". The following year there was mention of another expense for the binding of twenty copies of the same work. Obviously, an effort was being made to put the Life of M.de La Salle into the hands of the officers of the Pontifical Curia. On this subject, however, the most conclusive text in this important book of accounts is found in the entry for the 10th of October 1737: Paid to Jean Francelluci, Procurator for causes of the Saints, twenty-four `écus' for the transcriptions of instructions, articles and examinations that have to be undertaken, under ordinary authority, concerning the holiness of life, the virtues and the miracles of John Baptist de La Salle, our Founder.[12]

Here we have evidence of the early overtures. The Brother Superior -general did not rest satisfied with this beginning: "On the 9th of May, 1714" he presented a copy of Blain's book to Benedict XIV himself.[13] And, then, in order to advance the cause, he contributed his personal testimony. The Motherhouse Archives preserves the following important holograph, bearing the primitive seal of the Lasallian Congregation (i.e., the figure of St. Joseph leading the Child Jesus): I, the undersigned, Superior of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, certify to all concerned that in the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-two a huge tumor appeared on my knee, on which an incision was made, and from which a great quantity of pus issued, which caused me all the more pain in that I was appointed to go from Paris to Chartres to teach class after completing my novitiate and a few months of practice-teaching. In this pain, I was visited by Father De La Salle, whom I besought to give my knee his blessing, which he did with his thumb. I departed, setting out on my journey on foot, with the salves which were useless to me, but I felt no pain in my knee, which was completely healed: -- a thing I attest to be true, and that I have always attributed to the prayers and merits of John Baptist de La Salle, our Founder. In faith whereof I have signed. Done in Rouen, this third day of April, in the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-forty-two. Brother Timothy.[14]

It is a document which, written at the height of the reign of Louis XV, retains some of the charm of the "Lives of the Saints". We can imagine the scene, forty years earlier in the ‘Grande Maison' of Our Lady of the Ten Virtues, shortly before the period in which the Founder was to be subjected to the rude assaults of Father de La Chétardye. He was loved and venerated by his Brothers with a sort of pious

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[11] Page 36 of the Ms. 11122 bears the following: Brother Bernard, John D'Auge, born in Fribourg, Switzerland, on June 24, 1697, entered the Society in March, 1713; withdrew. . .(no date is given). No mention is made here of perpetual vows. But such vows, written out and bearing the Brother's signature, dated June 16, 1726, are to be found in the St. Yon "Vow Book" (Motherhouse Archives, Register no. 23, HA m 11).

[12] References supplied and text provided (in the original Italian) by Brother Paul Joseph in Essai historique sur la Maison Mere de l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de 1682 a 1905, (Paris, 1905), pg. 62, note # 1 and pg. 63, note # 1.

[13] Essai historique , cited, pg. 62, note #1.

[14] Motherhouse Archives, BD p., Founder's beatification and canonization file.

enthusiasm. Guillaume Samson-Bazin, a young Brother of twenty, was among the most affectionate and the most docile to the mind of his mentor, the most concerned to fulfill, exactly and without hesitation, all the details of the Brothers' vocation. Simply, naively, he wished to be healed of his "huge tumor" so as the sooner to be on his way to the schools in Chartres. He revealed his pain and his desire to De La Salle who, standing at the invalid's bed and, doubtless without a smile, bowed in assent. And then with paternal concern and with a gesture he meant to be tactful, almost furtive, he traced out the Sign of the Cross on the ailing knee. With that, the courageous young man arose to begin his twenty league journey on foot. Obediently, he had brought his "salves", even though he believed they were useless. His faith was completely rewarded.

In this way, we come to know the man who, for nearly a third of a century, was to guide, consolidate and expand the Founder's inheritance. The times were not favorable. In 1720 Philip, Duke of Orleans, was Regent. No one more thoroughly and, we dare say, more forcibly and more emphatically, represented that "free-thinking", skeptical, scoffing and ostentatiously irreligious generation described by La Bruyère. With Philip that generation became dominant, and liberated from all constraint by the death of Louis XV, it wallowed in the mud and took its pleasure. Such people shrugged their shoulders at the Brothers. From their contempt or their pity there was nothing of serious assistance to expect, much less of any efficacious or persevering support. An ambitious and greedy minister, sullied with worldly concerns, Guillaume Dubois by name, acknowledged no religious interests until they seemed useful and conformed to his own. With regard to the tiny society of schoolteachers, he had no hostile bias, but neither had he .any obvious sympathy. And yet there were fervent Christians, highly moral and strictly honest, who still controlled many of the levers of power. And the clergy, powerful and wealthy, continued to be the highest class in France. Unfortunately, the question of the Bull, which united the partisans of Jansenism with the Gallicans in the Church and in the Courts, disturbed many consciences, as we have seen, and divided cities, dioceses, parishes, and families, and enfeebled Catholicism in the face of an enemy which every day grew stronger. In the 18th century that enemy was called "Rationalism". Under a new name, it was the old pagan mentality that had denied Revelation and rejected the rule of morality. Even during the Middle Ages it was never more that partially dormant. By the 16th century it had become wide awake. The France of the 17th century, during its years of the greatest religious fervor and discipline could only look upon it with respect. Pierre Bayle, exiled in Holland, hurled firebrands, which he had entitled Thoughts on the Comet and the Historical and Critical Dictionary, "against Peter's barque", of which Louis XIV was the self-proclaimed "captain". In 1730 Voltaire found the same spirit prevailing in England, where "free interpretation" had prepared a vast field for the propagation of Bayle's ideas. And it was the weapons of this destructive genius that Voltaire brought home with his luggage and that he presented, polished, shining and less cumbersome, to the regiments of "free-thinkers", first of all in his Philosophical Letters in 1734 and then in the vast arsenal of his writings, verse, historical works, superficial exegeses, and in his correspondence.

Only gradually was public opinion influenced. Intellectual circles and the aristocracy put up a more feeble resistance. Humanism dissociated from Christianity, Cartesianism pushed to its ultimate limits, in the minds of the educated, turned decisively in favor of absolute rationalism. A too easy life and a taste for pleasure had rendered the upper-classes vulnerable to anti-religious sophistries. A part of the nobility had been won over to English Freemasonry which, in spite of the dogmas defined by Rome, declared for deism, philanthropy and "do-goodism" without any "obsession" with "sin".

For a long time the French people remained faithful. The lower-and middle-bourgeoisie clung to the framework of their faith, to the traditional family, moral austerity and their laborious, well ordered lives. Both in the provinces and in Paris there were many citadels that remained inviolate. Here De La Salle's disciples found their defenders and their recruits. To them Bishops and pastors gladly entrusted the responsibility of catechizing poor children - - those who, according to both the letter and the spirit of the Lasallian Rule should be the first to be served by the Christian Brothers. Further, in certain cities merchants and industrialists were happy with the opening of one of those "residence schools", built on the model of St. Yon, to furnish the Institute with an income and to supply youth with a solid religious formation, an education for a common man, and instruction in the technical arts.

In brief, from 1720 to 1751 the small Congregation developed uniformly. The advent of Fleury to the ministry in 1725 was a promise of peace. After a fashion, Louis XV's old tutor maintained France in relative tranquillity for seventeen years. The Jansenists were restless and "convulsed"; the Parlement in Paris rebelled and went into exile. But these were events that failed to interrupt the humbler tasks. Since the Cardinal-minister was an adversary of the "Appellants" and promoted only orthodox priests to the episcopacy, the Brothers had nothing to fear from the observance and teaching of pure doctrine. As for the

great philosophical conflict, its progress was felt, but it did not really erupt until 1750. Besides, it made its way through the high ranges before unsettling the lower strata of the nation. Christianity must have been very deeply rooted in France, and the Gospel precepts and counsels must have been understood and practiced by a great number of people for so many souls throughout the 18th century to respond to the austere call of John Baptist de La Salle.

* *

After this overview, we return to the lowly and difficult beginnings. The Institute was born (according to tradition) on the Feast of the Most Blessed Trinity, 1684. The sacrifices of its Founder infused it with blood and life and the soul of a saint dwelt in its body. But, humanly speaking, in 1720 its future was far from being certain.

The anonymous author of the *History of Monastic, Religious and Military Orders and Secular Congregations Founded up to the Present Time*,[15] (a history published in eight volumes from 1715 to 1721, of which the British Museum possesses a complete set) in its eighth volume dutifully mentions "the Brothers of the Christian and Charitable Schools". It provides a sketch of their habit as Blain would presently describe it -- the short cassock covering the small of the leg, a mantle hooked under a large rabat and equipped with the famous flying sleeves, and the hat of ample dimensions.[16] There is here no doubt but that it is the disciples of De La Salle that are intended. However, the account goes on to say that these Brothers are the Brothers "of the Child Jesus" founded by Father Barré. Obviously, on this point, the only source must have been John Hermant's *History of Religious Orders and of Secular and Regular Congregations of the Church*, in four volumes, published by J.B. Besongue, in Rouen, in 1710. Hermant himself knew only Nicholas Barré's small society, founded about 1675, which actually appeared to have dissolved, at the very latest during the time De La Salle took charge of the schools in the parish of St. Sulpice.[17] Thus, for Brother Timothy's contemporaries, the origin of the Institute remained obscure. People, in passing, greeted this worthy and useful "Congregation" sympathetically, without being excessively concerned to examine its claims or to study its spirit. It had small importance; it was difficult to identify; in fact and in law it existed only by the Bishops' protection and by the goodwill of the municipalities where it functioned.

In the cities where they taught the Christian Brothers did not possess a legal status noticeably different from that of other teachers. They were paid by the treasurer of the commune or received gifts from their benefactors or they drew on the accumulation of revenues set aside for their support. They disposed of no capital funds. If their income was inadequate, the superintendent of the community could intervene -- this is what happened in the small town of Vans in Languedoc at this period -- in order to compel the councilmen or the supervisors to increase the amount of annual subsidy. Apart from that, it was the pastor who had control of the funds set aside for schools. In 1716 Father Francis Dumangeot, pastor of Guise, received seven-hundred-and-forty livres from a charitable person in his parish, on condition of establishing a fund, the interest on which was to be paid to "the Brothers of the Charitable and Christian Schools of this City" .[18] The pastor remained the trustee of the gift.

In Nantes a magistrate in the Court of Accounts in Brittany, a M. Barbère had, on his own initiative, invited the Brothers in 1721; and he himself housed them without guaranteeing them a living. They had to rely upon voluntary alms. Barbère decided to involve the city in the project, and, on January 1st, 1724, he wrote to M. Mellier, Mayor of Nantes, who was also "in charge" of finances: I take the liberty of pleading with you not to forget our School Brothers, in order to assist in paying for their small house, that we have had to repair. Should the Gentlemen of the Community be kind enough to bring themselves to contribute a sum of four-hundred livres paid all at once, with the approval of the Superintendent, they would bring comfort to many charitable persons who have made these reparations. It is a good which benefits the public, especially the parishes of St. Nicolas and St. Clement, where poor youths are being instructed. After God, I confide totally in your charity and your wisdom.

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[15] To provide the complete title, the following must be added: containing their origin, foundation, progress, the most important events accomplished therein, the decadence of some of them and their suppression, the growth of others by means of various reforms introduced into them; — the lives of their Founders and their Reformers; with sketches of the various Habits of the Orders and Congregations. Paris, published by J. B. Colgnard. (See "Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes", for January, 1911, pp. 56-58.).

[16] Blain, Vol. I, pp. 238 and 241. The engraving in the Histoire des Ordres ...is signed by "de Poilly". (Vol. VIII, pg. 233).

[17] Cf. Vol.1, pp.95-96

[18] Motherhouse Archives HA n 1, Guise file.

On the 6th of January M. Mellier received orders from the Superintendent of Brittony, M. de Brou. "The Community" to which M. Barbère's letter had been read had commissioned its mayor to "draw" the Superintendent's "attention" to the fact that "the ministry of the Brothers" was immensely useful; that they are "under the guidance" of their benefactor "and of several persons of honesty and trust"; that "we risk nothing by granting them this one time" the sum asked for. "In doing so", we would be only "seconding people who, through a principle of religion and charity desire to do well here in paying from their own resources for the upkeep of these Brothers".

On the 15th of January M. de Brou wrote recognizing that such an institution had its value "for the instruction of youth", but he hesitated to commit the future. The schoolteachers may without fail "each year solicit the renewal of the subsidy". However, he authorized the subsidy for 1724. The authorities would draw two hundred livres on "income bearing health bonds" and "leaden trade-marks" and "two-or-three-hundred" more "on textile trademarks".[19]

In the course of the previous year a school had been opened in Auxonne and another in Nogent-le-Rotrou. The former was due principally to the generosity of the Marquis Jacques Thiard,[20] brother of Cardinal Bissy of whose energetic orthodoxy and salutary influence we shall have something to say later on. The other school had as its founder the second Superior of the Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres, a Canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame and Archdeacon of Vendome, Father Charles Truchis, an excellent example of the French clergy in the first half of the 18th century, who, like Belsunce, was of Calvinist origins and who, in his apostolic zeal and charity, resembled the Bishop of Marseille.[21]

The Brothers had only a precarious possession of the properties in which they dwelt and taught their classes. When the Mayor of Laon, M. Martigny, in order to expand the city's college expelled the Brothers from the house that had been loaned to Adrien Nyel, the pastor, who came to their rescue, kept them under the strictest tutelage; and "administered their temporal affairs without giving them any account", reads a 1728 memorandum.[22]

This pastor has a rather special place in the gallery of the Institute's protectors. His name was Jacques Gudvert to who was attributed (with certainty) a book published in 1739 and entitled: "The Constitution *Unigenitus* with Commentary in which Appears the Opposition Between the Jesuits' Doctrine and the Doctrine of the Holy Fathers Concerning Father Quesnel's Propositions".[23] The book concludes with a prayer "in honor of the Blessed Francis of Paris", the celebrated deacon buried in St. Menard's cemetery and on whose tomb there unfolded so many strange and scandalous scenes -- the tremblings and epileptic contortions of "convulsives". All of this is tantamount to saying that Gudvert figured among the more fervent Jansenists. But he valued De La Salle's disciples and "everywhere proclaimed the good things they accomplished in his parish."[24] What is more, two of his nephew, both natives of Luzoir in the diocese of Laon, entered the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: the first, Armand Robert, a postulant on the 16th of October 1709, was sent to the school in Moulins under the name of Brother Roch; the other, Louis Bourgeois, entered at the age "of fifteen years", on the 13th of May, 1711 and received the name of Brother Pascal, and, while still a young man, died in the community of St. Sulpice. In the "Record of Entrants" care was taken to mention the fact that the two men were "nephew of the pastor of St. Peter's in Laon."[25] It is possible that his Jansenism led on to its virulence only late in life. The Brothers, in any case, continued to be grateful to him for services rendered.

On the 24th of October, 1719, "with the view of lodging them", he acquired a house "situated in an alley of St. Peter's", adjoining the cemetery of that church and consisting of two buildings, in one of which... there was a basement, an upper room, an upstairs garret, a small cellar and a wine cellar

[19] In the administrative language of the "Ancien Regime" "Community" meant "Commune" in the current sense of this term.

[20] This entire correspondence is preserved in the Archives of Nantes, Series, GG, 662

[21] Lucard, Annales , Vol. I, pg. 426, following the Motherhouse Archives.

[22] Motherhouse Archives, HA n 1, Laon file.

[23] No mention of the publisher.

[24] Report cited

[25] Regarding Brother Roch the "Register" states expressly, "nephew of Father Gudvert": (Motherhouse Archives, Ha m 13).

downstairs; in the other, a basement, wine room below and an upstairs garret, with a garden running the length of the property.[26]

A statement of the seller, Father Maynon, Canon and Dean of St. Jean in Laon, on the 4th of January, 1730, specifies that the occupants had no title: "I, the undersigned, having been asked by the Brothers of the Christian Schools...to tell them what had been Father Gudvert's intentions...declare...that gentleman gave me to understand that his main intention was, seeing that the Brothers were obliged to give up their residence near the college, to assure them this refuge in his parish and near his church and since they were unable to enter into a contract, he assumed the responsibility and I took part in the charitable work by ceding my right to the house to him, and it was up to him to make his own arrangements with the Brothers...this declaration being given...in the absence of Father Gudvert, to serve (the Brother) for whatever reasonable purpose."[27]

The Brothers were offered a "refuge", but they were not the owners, and the purchaser, preserving all his rights, retained full freedom to come to terms with them as he saw fit. The situation was the same in Rouen where, on the 13th of September, 1720, the pastor and the treasurers of St. Nicasius' parish had decided to buy a house on Rue des Minimes that had been put up for sale for 10,000 livres,[28] and probably in Versailles also, where the pastor, "working", as Canon Blain tells us, "to obtain" for his teachers the use of the property formerly used as a seminary.

In order to avoid the use of a third party, Mlle Marie Poignant, sister of the first benefactress of the St. Denis School, adopted the system that was similar to a trust. In 1710 Charlotte Poignant had bequeathed to the hospital of that city as sum "to be used to feed a schoolteacher".[29]

But, in 1722, Marie wanted the Brothers to be the direct beneficiaries of her generosity. She wished to "assist the poor children of ...St. Denis of France and...through education, to obtain for them the means of earning a livelihood..." To this end, she gave, as a gift to living persons (dated the 9th of January, 1722), to Jean Boucton, a resident of the city of St. Denis, living on Rue Pinpanceaux, in St. Peter Martyr's parish, and to Jean Jacquot, resident of Paris, Rue Barouillère, near "Les Invalides", in St. Sulpice's parish...a house with a coach way and two small entry ways...on Rue Clos Fourret, a house that she had acquired in 1719 from M. Ruelle and associates. The aforementioned donor (declared) that she was having some remodelling done on the house for the convenience of the schools she planned to establish there by these presence, for which reason she was binding herself at her own expense to have this remodelling done in the course of the present month, provided, however, that they did not exceed the sum of three-hundred livres.[30]

Jean Boucton (i.e., Bouqueton, according to the generally accepted spelling) was none other than Brother Jean François, Director of the Community in St. Denis and a member of De La Salle's society since the 14th of May, 1691; he was bound by perpetual vows on the 19th of March, 1696; and he died at St. Denis in January, 1740.2 As for "the resident of Paris", who was at the time still living on Rue Barouillère, it is easy to recognize by the date of his profession, the Dean of the Brothers, the venerable Brother Jean, Assistant to Brother Timothy. The two Brothers took part in the transaction under their family names and as civilians, in the same way and for the same reasons that Joseph Truffet (Brother Barthèlemy) and Charles Frappet (Brother Thomas) did the same thing in the contract for the purchase of the St.Yon estate.[31] Until other arrangements could be made, they would be the legal owners of the property. So it had been in the past with Nicholas Vuyart, M. Lebreton's heir for the property left to the teacher's seminary in the Faubourg St. Marcel. There was no fear that Brothers Jean and Jean Francis would follow the unfortunate example of Nicholas Vuyart. Nevertheless, prudence dictated that, as far as possible, the security of the foundation be guaranteed. Mlle Poignant therefore required that "the prior-general and the monks of the Abbey of St. Denis, as well as the administrators of the hospital, see to it" that the property on Rue Clos Fourre never be diverted from its intended use as a school.[32]

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[26] Motherhouse Archives Han 1, Laon file, (early) copy of the purchase contract. This property, which the Brothers reoccupied after the Revolution, still exists. The alley, which otherwise has little to recommend it, has retained the name of "Rue des Freres"

[27] This copy was made following M. Maynon 's handwritten one

[28] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, Series G, 7283 (copy in the Motherhouse Archives).

[29] Blain, Vol. II, pg.

[30] Motherhouse Archives, Register of Entrants and the book of first perpetual vows

[31] Cf. vol.1, p.416

[32] idem

The energetic "Procurator" of the Institute, Brother Thomas, reappears in a transaction that was much more important than the one involving the house in St. Denis. On this occasion it was a question of the permanent residence for the community in St. Sulpice. The matter has a very special interest, since it shows that the new Superior was attempting to liberate the Institute from the shackles that hindered its growth and that he did not hesitate boldly to mortgage the future. By a contract, witnessed on the 16th of October, 1722 by Batiste and Remy, notaries in Paris, M. Chebarne, Officer of the King's Cup, sold to Charles Frappet, Guillaume-Samson-Bazin and Jean Dayge [33] a house situated on the Rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs, "for the price of 6,100 livres cash and 1,100 livres annually, redeemable by the payment of 20,000 livres". Charles Frappet "offered as security" for the latter sum the estate of St. Yon, which, in the eyes of the law, belonged to him since Joseph Truffet's death. (By July 28th, 1739 he had completely freed St. Yon of this mortgage.) In the language of the transaction, the three men bought Chebarne's house in common, to be passed on to whichever of the three survived, without the first two deceased being able to dispose of it in any way, nor their heirs be able to do anything. They made no secret of the fact that the purchase was "in favor" of the last survivor, i.e., for the Brothers of their Society. But more than two years would pass before they would be able to make a legally valid statement in this matter.[34]

In any case the Brothers in Paris, once they had moved into their new residence, felt at home. They experienced the greatest satisfaction in finding that they were next door to sacred ground: at the corner of the Rue Neuve and Vaugirard stretched the enclosure where the Founder and his disciples lived from 1698 to 1703--the "Grande Maison" which had remained justly celebrated in the history of the Institute. The property acquired in 1722 was certainly part of the original estate: a Mlle Cossart had built it in the 17th century for the Sisters of the Holy Spirit. It does not seem absolutely certain that this community had ceased to exist by the time De La Salle moved in, even though there was a decree of Parlement date the 20th of July, 1673, which declared it illegal. The transaction of 1722 reveals that, even so, it "continued as well after the death of the aforementioned young lady as during her lifetime". And it was only on the 18th of January, 1707 that a new decree of the Court "completely suppressed it". The buildings given to the General Hospital, which was Mlle Cossart's heir, were sold by the administration of that institution to a Counsellor of the Parisian Parlement, Alexander Cadeau, who sold them to Chebarne. The Brothers obtained ownership of the "site" and the "possibilities" of a chapel, which had earlier been "deconsecrated" on the Archbishop's order; and their residence continued to be called "the Holy Spirit House".

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As long as what issued from the Lasallian genius was nothing but a thin stream that flowed close to its spring, it cleared a way for itself through all obstacles. But as its course grew swifter, a lofty and powerful dam rose up, which it was unable to elude or to breech. It crept along the foundations, so to speak, seeking out cracks in the dam. But it could go no further without opening its own way.

There existed an antique legislative structure elaborated in opposition both to the multiplication of monastic communities and to the excessive growth of property exempt from taxation (*mortmain*): -- the edict of December, 1666 "concerning the establishment of religious and similar communities". Louis XIV signed this document at St. Germain-en-Laye, when Seguier was his Chancellor and his Minister of Justice. The king, temporal head of the Church in France, presumed to be at least the earthly judge of the utility of pious foundations and congregations which sought to live autonomously in the shadow of the great Orders that had long since been accepted and protected. The king needed to know whether their establishment genuinely responded to new needs, whether their rules were compatible with the laws of the land, and their resources sufficient for the support of their members, so that his snug cities would not have to assume responsibility for quantities of religious "mendicants". On the other hand, he meant to limit the material expansion of the convents, their growth in landed wealth and the formation (especially within and on the edge of urban centers) of vast estates which would escape commerce and subdivision. In his caution and misgiving, he felt supported and, indeed roused, by the legal authorities of his Parlements, municipal magistracies, citizens groups and by the secular clergy itself.

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[33] Cf. vol.1, p.416

[34] National Archives, S 7046-47, parchment copy of the contract of October 16, 1722; an undated note summarizes the clauses and object of the purchase; quotation of the declaration of the three Brothers, formulated in Rouen in the presence of a notary on August 14, 1725.

Therefore, he decreed: We will and it pleases us for the future that there may not be the establishment of any colleges, monasteries, religious or secular communities, even under the pretext of being a hospice, in any city or locality of our kingdom ...without our expressed permission, through Letters Patent, duly and properly recorded in our Courts of Parlement, and without the aforementioned Letters, together with the aforementioned decrees of registration of them being recorded in the bailiwicks, seneschal courts or royal seats in the jurisdiction of which (the establishment) will be situated...And, in case the aforementioned monasteries, colleges or communities are established in the outskirts, Faubourgs or approaches to any of our cities, we will that our aforementioned Letters be recorded in the common public buildings of the aforementioned cities.

These Letters Patent, which would have the force of law only after they were copied into numerous registers, would, on the other hand, be combined with a broad investigation *de commodo et incommodo*: We will and intend that approval by the archbishop or bishop of the diocese, or of the vicars-general, together with the reports of the judge of the place where the aforementioned establishments are to be made, including the advice of the mayors, supervisors, counsellors, municipal officers, pastors of parishes, and superiors of religious houses...assembled individually in the presence of the representatives of our procurator-general, be attached under the counter-seal of our aforementioned Letters.

The "so-called communities" which would seek no authorization or would consent to exist outside the law would be declared incompetent to bring an action in the courts, to accept "any gifts or bequests of furniture or landed property", to acquire through purchase and, in general, to perform any civil act. Their property would be confiscated for the benefit of the general hospital.

And, finally, an especially draconian enactment sought to nip in the bud any clandestine community: In order that the hope of obtaining our Letters of foundation or of confirmation may cease to serve as a pretext for the beginning of a monastery or community without our authorization, we have by these presence declared and shall declare monasteries and communities which shall be started up without our Letters Patent...unworthy and incompetent to obtain them thereafter. [35]

Excessive rigor impairs the law's effect. In this connection, it would be the same with the edict of 1666 as it had been for so many other measures of "the Ancien Regime": the king did not believe that he was irrevocably bound by his own decisions and that he could always grant exceptions, accord privileges and suspend the application of a rule, while insisting that he was maintaining its principle. Moreover, concerning religious and charitable works, sound considerations favored this paternal indulgence.

But opposition on the part of the higher courts and the municipalities remained formidable. Hostile prejudice and special interests were always in a position to invoke the law of the land. Guns had to be trained on guns and influence employed; and one never knew where the prince's sympathies inclined.

The Christian Brothers had long since been considering the necessity for legal recognition. And it seemed to them that, in spite of the letter of the law, their plan had a good chance to succeed. Indeed, their school in Alès was an "official school", and in Calais they were subsidized by the royal treasury; while in Versailles they were, in a sense, teaching under the very gaze of His Majesty.

The first step in the direction of legal recognition of which there is evidence involved the Brothers and their archbishop. It is documented in a dateless and unsigned report obviously addressed to Archbishop Mailly prior to the end of the reign of Louis XIV.[36]...A few months ago, My Lord, when I had the pleasure of speaking with you concerning our institution in Rheims in relation to the "Patents". In this way, after the usual salutation, the anonymous writer began his letter. He explained to the prelate how the Brothers had first of all "thought of asking for "Patents" for all their schools". But they were unable to justify the expenditure of the necessary funds to obtain such a general authorization. It then became a question of seeking a 'civil existence' "for the school in Rheims only", where "the entire project had its beginnings".

"We would like...this school...to be the mother, as it were, of all the others." It would receive "funds for institutions" that would be requested from wherever throughout the kingdom. A precedent for such a procedure was to be found in "the Sisters of Charity" (founded by St. Vincent de Paul). Their Congregation was "quite widespread", but had no Letters Patent except for the house in Paris, on condition that Sisters be sent to cities and to people who assumed the responsibility of supporting a community.

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[35] Jourdan and Isambert, Recueil general des anciennes lois francaises, pp. 95-98.

[36] We have no knowledge of a school in Sedan established by the Founder. Perhaps the author was confusing Sedan with Bethel

One of the reasons advanced for such a model was that of propriety and courtesy: the Institute would be gratified to place itself under "the obedience and protection" of a "good and ...zealous prelate". But the Brother emphasized, further, that, of the Society's twenty-five schools, seventeen were "in France" and that of these seventeen, six were included under the authority of the Metropolitan of Rheims.[37] Finally, there was the crucial argument on this subject: the community in Rheims was wealthier than any other. And, at this point, the letter enumerates the properties, both liquid and real, held by this community: 10,000 livres invested in the city of Paris ("the income from which we have been receiving for over thirty years").[38] two promissory notes for income on a capitol of 4,000 and 3,000 livres respectively, houses on Rue Neuve, Rue Contray and in Leu Court, evaluated at 13,000 livres.

The author of the letter concludes: I believe, Your Excellency, that it will not be difficult to obtain "Letters Patent" because of the school in Versailles, where we are known and loved by Madame Maintenon and by Father Le Tellier. And even more so because what the honor of being under your protection and of being presented to His Majesty by Your Excellency.

However, when the time for negotiations arrived, they did not revolve around the school in Rheims. No crisis forced a change in the statutes governing either the properties inhabited by the Brothers nor those rented out, the income from which helped to support the community. These properties, like those in Rethel, remained in the hands of a consortium in which the De La Salle family played the preponderant role.

Until 1724 the administrator and legal owner of these properties was (in the beginning, with two associates whom he seems to have survived) Canon Louis De La Salle, the Founder's third brother. He held his authority on the strength of his oldest brother's last will and testament.[39] His violent opposition to the Bull *Unigenitu*s did not prevent him from being a faithful and devoted friend to the Brothers. He recalled having once lived in the family home on Rue Marguerite in the company of John Baptist's first disciples, [40] and -- if we are to believe his epitaph, composed by his nephew, John Baptist Louis De La Salle, Benedictine in the Congregation of St. Maur [41] -- of having been "taken to Sedan by his brother to teach the poor". He had not received these lessons in vain, and, over a period of ten years, had the benefit of the example of the man who stood in the place of a father. Pious, austere, charitable, "living a life of great poverty", he worthily occupied[42]the Choir stall given him in 1694 by Archbishop Charles Maurice Le Tellier "in order to repair his brother's foolishness". His unfortunate "appeal" cast a shadow over his memory. As his nephew, who was no less a Jansenist than his uncle, wrote of him: "He suffered adversity...(and) went into hiding until the stormy crises had passed..." Actually, Louis De La Salle, along with seven of his colleagues, fell under interdiction, was excluded from the Choir of Notre Dame whenever the Archbishop presided and was also shunted to one side on the occasion of Louis XV's coronation in the Cathedral.[43] As far as we know, the Brothers were not compromised by their protector's attitudes and opinions. Their Archbishop, Cardinal Mailly, was aware of their orthodoxy.

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[37] The document, bearing at the top the words "Brothers of the Christian Schools" in a hand differing from that of the rest of the text, is preserved in the Muncipal Archives of Rheims, Series G, Source, the Archbishop's Palace. (Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, R 3.

[38] To arrive at the figure of twenty-five houses, it must be assumed that the author wrote his memorandum when the schools in Macon and Valreas were still in existence; the seventeen houses in the province of France would be Rheims, Rethel, Guise, Laon, Calais, Boulogne (the six founded in the ecclesiastical province of Rheims), Rouen, St. Yon, Darnetal, Chartres, Versailles, Paris, Saint Denis, Troyes, Dijon, Macon and Moulins. The houses in the South of France complete the list (Avignon, Ales, Vans, Mende, Valreas, Marseille, Grenoble and Rome).

[39] Ibid., pg. 148

[40] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 363-364, the last will and testament of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

[41] This long epitaph, in Latin, was found in an 18th century Ms. in the Municipal Library in Rheims. (The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January 1911, pp. 60-61, published a translation of a portion of it. Dom De La Salle (who must not be confused with his cousin Dom Maillefer) was the son of the youngest brother of the Founder, Pierre, Counsellor to the Court of Appeals in Rheims

[42] We have no knowledge of a school in Sedan established by the Founder. Perhaps the author was confusing Sedan with Bethel

[43] On the 8th of the Kalendes of October,' in the 1724th year of the Virgin's giving birth, the setting sun having attained the eighth-and-a-half hour, Louis De La Salle "rendered his soul to God suddenly, while he was at prayer". He was sixty years old.

His brother, Pierre, was his executor, and, in this capacity, made all possible haste to restore the public corporation responsible for supervising the school properties in Rheims and Rethel. The deed of the 2nd of January, 1725 specifies in the clearest way what the situation of these properties was:[44]

"I, the undersigned, Pierre De La Salle, Counsellor to the Court of Appeals in Rheims...desiring to support the good purposes of Jean Louis De La Salle, my brother, in connection with the goods and chattels destined to support the tuition-free schools and to carry them out, point-for-point, as he stated in a projected deed which has remained incomplete, have made, by the present deed, the following declarations and dispositions, as exercising the rights and powers he had in virtue of two documents of private deed, the one dated the 11th of August, 1700, between Father Claude Pepin, Canon of the Church of Rheims, Father Peter Laval, priest, Father John Baptist De La Salle, priest, doctor in theology and founder of the Christian Brothers and the aforementioned Jon Louis de La Salle, my brothers; and the other, on the 16th of June, 1701, between the aforementioned Father Pepin, Jean Baptist and Jean Louis De La Salle, in which documents they[45].explain their intentions concerning the purpose and the use for which they 'had respectively acquired three houses situated in Rheims, namely a large house on Rue Neuve, opposite St. Claire's, wherein dwell those who are ...associated to teach in the tuition-free schools for boys under the name of Brothers of the Christian Schools, and another small house on the same street, adjoining the foregoing... and still another house and garden which are at the far end of the Leu Court, on Rue Contray, in which place there is at present a court and buildings used to teach school and at the far end of the court there is small building rented to an individual...Concerning which the aforementioned gentlemen have declared that the aforementioned houses have been acquired in order to house the Brothers of the Christian Schools as long as they shall continue operating the aforementioned schools in Rheims, and in order to contribute to the support of the aforementioned schools, without their heirs ever being able to claim any part therein, in whatever circumstances or for whatever cause there may be...But upon the death of one or several among the four, the survivors shall choose others in the place of the deceased, so that they might be associated and have, with the others, property rights respecting the aforementioned houses in the way and under the conditions set forth...and, in particular, should the Brothers of the Christian Schools cease to operate Christian and tuition-free schools in Rheims, without hope of ever being reestablished, the price of or the income from the aforementioned houses will be used to support schoolmistresses other than those belonging to the orphanage Community,1 to teach in tuition-free schools for girls in the countryside.

The last of the four associated in 1700 had just died; and "for the good and for the preservation" of the schools in Rheims and Rethel, Pierre De La Salle chose as new members of the association, Matthew Serurier, Jean Herman Weyen, priests and Canon of the Church in Rheims, and Jean Clicquot, Chaplain of the same Church. As a consequence, he ceded to them -- "for these belong to them jointly, without distinction and equally" with him -the houses on Rue Neuve and Rue Contray and the farms in the regions of Acy and of Avaux-le-Chateau and of Wassigny (this last was bequeathed to Louis De La Salle in 1720 by Mlle Frances Audry), and the five houses in Rethel.[46] Such a deed was a "gift" only in appearance, in order to conform to the law and to safeguard the eventual rights of the Institute. The final clauses explain the way in which the associates are to transmit their rights, the use of the income, and, finally, the event in which the association should be dissolved.

It was understood that the properties in question did not form part of the estates of the four participants. "Their heirs were never to be able to claim anything therein": Upon the death of any one of the above owners, the survivors...together with me or one of my family who will succeed me in the aforementioned association, will choose another in the manner prescribed in the documents of the 11th of August and the 16th of June, 1701...At my death there shall be chose from among those closest by family and, as far as possible, name, one who shall be judged best suited by the three survivors to supervise conjointly with them the preservation of the aforementioned properties, (set aside for the support of the Christian Schools) and for the execution of the intentions of the aforementioned Pepin, Laval and the aforementioned De La Salles, my brothers. The Founder's grandnephews -- and, if possible, those of the same name -would thus preside over the future of his work in Rheims.

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45 1 Guibert, Histoire de saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, pg. xlvii . September 24. "Deed of gift of goods and chattels for the support of the Christian Schools..." Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HB t 404, notebook concerning the District of Rheims. The importance of this deed for the history of the relations between the Institute of the Brothers and the Founder's family has induced us to make a complete analysis of the document and quote from it extensively

46 I.e., other than the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, founded by Nicholas Roland. See Vol. I of the present work

The income from the properties, after the cost...of their upkeep and preservation will be wholly devoted to the needs of the tuition-free schools for boys in Rheims and in Rethel, or for the needs of those who are or shall be associated to fulfill them in the name of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. As in 1700 and 1701, the eventuality of "discontinuance and total destruction of the Christian Schools in Rheims", i.e., not necessarily the disappearance of De La Salle's Institute, but the suppression of the establishment that he created in his native city for the children of his poor neighbors, was provided for. In that case, and according to his will, his legal successors "shall make donation to teachers of tuition-free schools for the instruction of girls in the countryside", and in the most distressed places. "If they cannot obtain the permission of the (ecclesiastical) Superiors of the diocese of Rheims", they "shall procure this assistance" for some region in the neighboring diocese. There, always under their control, will be the new use of the properties, "with the exception of the farm in Wassigny" which must, under these circumstances, according to a clause in Mlle Audry's will, be returned to the maternal relatives of the benefactress.

Finally, Pierre De La Salle in no way refused to contemplate the circumstance in which the Brothers might "obtain Letters from His Majesty", with the view of "guaranteeing in perpetuity the establishment of the Christian Schools in Rheims and Rethel". The formation of a public corporation, no matter how solidly it secured the continuation of the schools, was nothing more than a transitional phase, a stage along the way. The holy Founder himself had spoken about this in a passage of his last will and testament which refers to the schools in Rheims: "To provide for them...since as yet there are no 'Letters Patent', I appoint, Father De La Salle, my brother...."'

The document dated the 2nd of January, 1725 declares that if these Letters are granted, "all inheritances...intended and acquired for the support of the schools in Rheims and Rethel would belong as property" and respectively to each community in these cities, "without the need...for those who up to then had been owners to name others to take the place of those who should have died". But that moment was still far in the future.

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Since, until further notice, Rheims was out of contention, the initiative for obtaining the "Letters" (which John Baptist de La Salle thought would come in their own good time without his soliciting them) would begin in Rouen. "St. Yon", the Founder had assured his followers, "will prosper in your hands". For St. Yon "to prosper" it was necessary that the Brothers be certain of retaining that institution. Because it was the Superior's residence, it was the headquarters of the Institute; it housed the novitiate; it provided an asylum for the aged and the infirm Brothers; and by means of the reformatory and residence school, [47] it furnished the Society with the income needed for the functioning of general services. Since legal recognition assumed the possession of landed wealth, and had as its effect to enable a religious association to acquire property, dispose of its capital, and exercise all the rights of a property owner, it went without saying that the estate at St. Yon constituted the object of the request addressed to the royal government.

Now, the situation demanded that people set to work without any further delay. In the purchase made on the 8th of March 1718 the only ones to intervene were Joseph Truffet and Charles Frappet, henceforth legally constituted as the private owners of "the place, estate and inheritance called St. Yon".[48] The declaration of the fourteen Brothers, asserting before a notary on the 3rd of June, 1718 that they had "all a part in the purchase",[49] while it committed the consciences of their representatives, could not be used against and a challenger in the courts. After Brother Barthélemy's death, an exceedingly knotty point of law was raised by Saint Etienne, lord of the Faubourg St. Sever. This Norman and master quibbler claimed that because he had sovereign power over the estate, he was in a position to enter a claim on the portion that belonged to the deceased. [50] He does not seem to have pursued his point very far. But what Canon Blain proposes as certain[51] (and what appears to emerge from the language of the "Letters Patent" of 1724) is that the death of the survivor would according to Norman custom, "have allowed St. Yon to fall into the hands of strangers".

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47 See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 364.

48 Ibid., pp. 339-344.

49 Ibid., pg. 353

50 Ibid., pg. 353

51 ibid

The fate of the institution, then, was bound up with Charles Frappet's (Brother Thomas') state of health. Blain describes the legal owner of St. Yon as an "infirm old man, threatened by approaching death." A few pages further on he provides the following description of him: Tall, striking stature with a venerable and imposing appearance; exteriorly he looked like one of the ancient patriarchs; and his pallor and his thinness gave him (the look) of a desert Father. This was the man whom Blain sends "to plead his cause" at the Court in Fontainebleau. And he adds that Brother Thomas' "candor and simplicity were no less prepossessing".

But upon consulting the "Register of Entrants" we observe that Brother Thomas, born on the 18th of December, 1670, was not yet fifty years old when Brother Barthélemy died. All that we know of him fails to match either the appearance or the character that Blain ascribes to him. Charles Frappet at all times was the most active man in the entourage of the Founder and of the first two Brothers Superior. We see him successively as a serving Brother, procurator, school Brother and Director of community. He was in Calais in 1717, Rouen in 1718, Troyes in 1719, Paris in 1722, Marseille in 1725, and in Rome in 1727. The agility and competence that at one time won him the favor of Father de La Chétardye , he used to negotiate the lease of the property on Rue Barouillère, and then the purchase of the St. Yon estate. He it was who, along with Brother Timothy, signed the contract of purchase of the Holy Spirit House on Rue Neuve on the 16th of October, 1722. If, at that time, he seemed feeble, the Brothers would not have placed a new and important property in his name. Two years later he was sent to Rheims, to Dom Maillefer, to obtain information about a biography of the Founder; and when, later, the Benedictine author of the biography, in bitter terms, recounted the misadventures of his manuscript, he claimed that it was extorted from him by the "solicitations" and "importunities" of Brother Thomas. This was the astonishing career of a "feeble" and "ingenuous" man, which did not end until the 24th of January, 1742 in the Parisian community "of the Holy Spirit". The Brother died peacefully in his seventy-second year-- nine years after the publication of Blain's book![52]

Sensitive readers might find that the Canon's account has the effect of a romantic novel. But how did a reasonable biographer like Blain come by such a scenario? Apparently, Blain confused the identity of two different people. In the story of the negotiations that were about begin in Paris there appeared a Brother Honoré, whose family name was Nicolas Moutier, a former domestic in the service of Prince Soubise. A man of "extraordinary presence", writes Blain, who spoke well and "was cherished in the distinguished family in which he served". Born in Liesse on the 2nd of January, 1661, Brother Honoré entered the Institute on the 15th of December, 1705, [53]when he was well over forty-four years of age; at the period we have reached he was sixty, and, already a frail, old man, he died in Paris in August of 1721. His bit-part (to which we shall return) with Cardinal Rohan, the son of his former employer, had placed him for a moment in the spotlight. And doubtless this is why his name and his face ended up taking the place of Brother Thomas in the recollections of events at St. Yon, in which Brother Honoré was accidentally entangled. An 18th century manuscript provides a curious confirmation of this confusion:.[54] The anonymous author represents his book as an abridgment of Blain's. Misled by the reading of the "very diffuse" volumes he has been digesting (It is worthy noting, however, that the Canon correctly suggests the date of Brother Honoré's death, but he resurrects the ancient and enfeebled "patriarch" in 1723) or lending credence to local stories, the Rouen author assumes that the Brother who, "before entering the Institute, had done service in the home of M. Soubise", is the same man who, with Brother Barthélemy, "had lent his name" to the purchase of St. Yon in 1718.

Out of all these attractive embellishments emerges a single, "brutal" fact: Brother Thomas, St. Yon's sole and authentic proprietor was subject to humanity's common lot. Whether he aged prematurely or was a robust man of fifty-years, he had no guarantee that he would live during his next quarter-of-an-hour. The individual subject to death had to be replaced by the 'corporate person' who might well live for centuries.

This was Brother Superior Timothy's position as it was also the opinion of Nicholas Pierre Poncarré,[55] the principal patron, the judicious and very influential counsellor of the young Institute. The

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[52] Cf. Vol.1 of the present work

[53] For the first part of Brother Thomas' career, consult his name in the Index to the first volume of the present work. And not 1707, as Blain has it, cf. Vol. II, pg. 189. Brother Honore is mentioned on page 19 of Ms. 11122

[54] An Historical Eulogy of Father De La Salle, listed as #1242 in the Bourbon Palace Library, which mentions Rouen as its place of origin and dated 1740

[55] For the First President of the Norman Parlement, see the Index to Vol. I of the present work, under "Pontcarre".

First President thought it was time to have recourse to His Majesty in order to secure this house (St. Yon) through Letters Patent, to which task he was kind enough to apply his reputation and power. The Mayor and the city Supervisors of Rouen, ever attentive to the public good, wanted to do their part and welcome the Brothers of the Christian Schools with an official resolution; Bishop Luxembourg, Governor, M.Gasville, Superintendent, M.Paviot, Procurator-General and finally all of the city's influential people favored this excellent project ...In these words Dom Farin summarizes the first phase in second volume of his History of Rouen, [56]the third edition of which appeared in 1731.[57]

Apart from President Pontcarré, the most active intermediary was Duke Charost, whom Brother Barthélemy held in such high esteem and who, as we have seen, sought the payment of the royal subsidy granted to the Brothers in Calais. He himself sought the approval of the Duke of Luxembourg...and brought it in writing and signed to those who were assigned to pursue the matter.[58]

Brother Timothy wrote a report on the situation, which he submitted to the President, who approved it and then asked Archbishop Bezin Bezons of Rouen (in possession of that See since January of 1720) to join his recommendation to his own. In this way the Brothers were encouraged to publish an epitome of their Rule that had been voted on by the Chapter of 1717. On the 19th of April, 1721 Archbishop Bezons "praised and approved" these "statutes as conformed to good order and useful for the instruction of youth.[59]

The Archbishop and the President had already made Chancellor Aguesseau familiar with the petition. He was a man who was able to understand the good that could be realized by a religious society of schoolteachers. And while he had a bias against those who defended *Unigenitus*, he nonetheless looked into the matter conscientiously and impartially. Very quickly he invited Superintendent Gasville to join with the First President and to take counsel with the mayor and the supervisors. His letter was dated the 6th of February, 1721. On the 8th Archbishop Bezons, in a letter addressed to Jacques Mourchard, Mayor of Rouen, revealed that with his authority, he supported the petition of the Brothers in Rouen. On the 19th of the same month, the Council reassembled; and "twenty-four Gentlemen", personally well-disposed toward the Institute and reinforced in their goodwill by the connection of so many people who favored the project, made the following declaration:...The Institute of the Brothers or the community of the.. house of St. Yon, in the Faubourg St. Sever of this city, is useful and advantageous to this city.[60]

The first step had been taken. It was now necessary to get to the Regent. In February 1718, when the plan to send Brothers to Canada was being discussed, Philip of Orleans had promised financial assistance.[61] Would he as easily agree to grant the humble religious a definitive footing in France? Perhaps, his indifference itself would win them a curt, conceited approval. But someone in Henri François Aguesseau's entourage put him on his guard. According to Blain, it was the Chancellor's secretary, a magistrate who was responsible as the "First President of the Chamber of the Treasurer". He was probably a Gallican and a Jansenist and naturally mistrustful of a new society that may well have been represented to him as promoted by the Jesuits and extremely docile to Roman directives. Blain calls him a "formidable adversary". The pretext invoked "in order strongly to oppose the petition for Letters Patent was that they were not needed to teach school". Of course, if the Brothers were to be teachers only, living separately one from the other and salaried with the view of teaching poor children in tuition-free schools, they would need only to be approved by the bishop in each diocese. But such a conception of the Brothers' vocation, which resembled Father Chétardye's, was unworkable. The future lay open only to a "corporate community", an autonomous Congregation capable of extensive recruitment, which was what De La Salle's enemies and those of his Institute would never allow. And yet on many future occasions it would be the diametrically opposite arrangement that they would attempt to make prevail.

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[56] Op.cit.

[57] Farin, History of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, pp.150-152

[58] Blain Vol.1, p.386

[59] This approval appeared in the old editions of the Rule . Brother Lucard gives it the principal place among the supporting documents in Vol. I of his Annales, pg. 467. It does not form part of the Sacred Congregation of the Counsel's file documents supplied for the purpose of obtaining the Bull of 1725.

[60] Blain Vol. II, pp. 185-6; and Lucard, pp. 431-433, following the Register of Resolutions of the Twenty-four members of the Council. (Municipal Archives, Rouen).

[61] Cf. Vol.1, p.419

Blain adds that "Aguesseau had not appeared convinced" of his secretary's arguments, and, promising "to think it over", he revealed his thoughts to the Regent, who, however, had already made up his mind: he quite flatly rejected the Brothers' petition.

In a letter addressed to Father Jean Vivant, whom Cardinal Rohan had brought with him to the conclave following upon the death of Pope Clement XI, Brother Timothy asserted that the matter of the Letters Patent was in Limbo:

"...You had the kindness, Sir, before you left, to have an appeal made to the Chancellor in order to obtain Letters Patent for the principal one of our houses, St. Yon in the city of Rouen, which is, as it were, the seminary or novitiate where candidates for all of our houses are trained. The Chancellor has greatly appreciated this proposal as a very useful work. He has even written to the Superintendent in Rouen, with an order to confer with the First President and to call an assembly in the city. It was discussed and concluded in our favor, in a declaration which was sent to the Chancellor, along with thoroughly authentic testimonials from the First President and with the approval of the Archbishop of the aforementioned city, who has approved and confirmed our Rule by a quite official approbation, which is in the hands of the Chancellor, so that he may, at an appropriate time and place, mention the matter to His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, whom he finds quite opposed to the Letters Patent. The former bishop of Troyes, the Marquis La Vrilliere and the Chancellor are going to meet; and for that reason, we patiently await the successful outcome of this affair. That, Sir, is where matters stand. Father Coette [62] has done, and continues to do, all that he can, with a great deal of kindness, to bring this matter to a successful issue.." [63]

But from now on negotiations concerning the legal recognition of the Institute in France was to be pursued as the same time that Rome would be examining the "petition" addressed to the Sovereign Pontiff by the Brothers with the view of being admitted to the list of the Church's "Congregations". The relation between the two questions was not a matter of mere parallelism: rather, they were closely interrelated, and the Superior-general so informed Father Vivant: any people, including the First President of Rouen, believe that we must have the "Bulls" in order to force the Regent to give his consent to the Letters Patent.

We shall have reason to recall this letter, as an essential text, which will enable us to unravel the tangle of the following events.

[62] Vicar general of Rouen

[63] There is a copy of this letter in the Motherhouse Archives, R 3. The copy seems to have been made in 1725. The letter itself cannot have been written after 1721, since during the second sojourn of Father Vivant in Rome, the Duke Philip of Orleans, the former Regent, was dead. (Cf. Lucard, Vol. I, pg. 435).

CHAPTER THREE

Letters Patent (1724) and the Bull (1725)

To obtain "Letters" from the king was, for men called upon to mesh their action with the machinery of State, to live on the level of an earthly society and to make one's peace with the world. It was still much more desirable for a Religious "Community" to have its Rule approved by the Holy See, its direction guaranteed by the sovereign authority of the Pope, and its future bound to the future of the Church. St. John Baptist de La Salle had pointed out and prepared the way for his Brothers by commissioning Gabriel Drolin to publicize the Institute in Rome and by wishing with all that was in him for the moment when he himself might kneel at the tomb of the Apostle. His successor, Brother Timothy, went directly for the goal.

He did not allow the first favorable opportunity to slip through his fingers. At the beginning of 1721, "public rumour,"wrote Blain, "informed the Brothers that Cardinal Rohan, named ambassador extraordinary to the Roman Curia, was about to make his departure". His goodwill had to be set in motion and he himself had to be reminded of his promises.[1]

On two earlier occasions the Cardinal had given audience to the Christian Brothers. The previous year he had graciously welcomed Brothers Barthélemy and Honoré and expressed his joy at finding that the latter was the Nicolas Moutier who had been an old family servant. And then, after the election in August of 1720, the good Brother accompanied the new Superior on a second visit. Armand Gaston, Prince Rohan was the most charming of prelates. The Duke Saint-Simon has painted a portrait of him in which the brush-strokes end in claw-marks, even though the light and the color it throws remain delightful.

"He was born with a natural wit, which seemed to be tripled by the grace of his person, of his expression and of the most select society whose influences formed him through the intrigues and liaisons in which Madame de Soubise (his mother -- 'the beautiful Soubise') had introduced him. He was naturally good, gentle, compliant and without ambition and the demands it imposes; he was born an honest and honorable man; besides, he was of a delightful accessibility, kind, thoroughly and totally civil, but with measure and discernment, with an easy, gentle and pleasing conversation. He was rather tall, and somewhat too fat; his face was like that of a cherub, and apart from its singular beauty, it had all the possible graces, especially the most natural ones, along with something prepossessing and still more interesting, a wonderful facility in speaking and a marvelous ease in retaining all the advantages he could draw from his princely position and his purple, without showing either affectation or pride and without embarrassing himself or others; especially attentive to put himself right with the bishops, to attract them and to retain the adherence of the entire doctrinal tribe..."[2]

The claw-marks are understandable: in 1713 Rohan finally accepted the Bull *Unigenitus*. And he placed at the service of the Pope not only his abilities as a diplomat, but also his powerful connections, his entire prestige as a member of the nobility and his science as a Doctor of the Sorbonne. Honors (the See of Strasbourg, Grand Almoner of France, the Cardinal's hat) doubtless came his way as family inheritances: his personal merit, his success as a negotiator justified him in accepting them; he had no questionable ambitions; and if he was appreciated by "the doctrinal tribe", it was because he had defended sound doctrine. If he was loved by the king, the Pope and the Bishops, it was because his character (and even a minor Duke, peevish and suspicious, had to concur) corresponded with the harmonious beauty of his physical presence and the engaging gentleness of his manner.

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[1] Blain, Vol. I, pg. 189. Armand Gaston Rohan, born in 1674 to Francis and Anne Rohan-Chabot, was appointed coadjutor in Strasbourg in 1701. He succeeded to this See left vacant by William-Egon Furstenberg in 1704. As early as 1706 Louis XIV proposed him for the cardinalate, but Clement XI did not give him the "red hat" until 1712. Cardinal Rohan took part in the election of three Popes (1721, 1724 and 1730). He blessed the marriage of Louis XV to Marie Leczinska on the 15th of August, 1725. (Gallia Christiana, Vol. V, cols. 821-2).

[2] Saint Simon's Memoires, ed. Boislisle, Vol. I, pg. 180; Vol. III, pg. 226; Vol. IV, pg. 146 (following Father Sicard's *Ancien clerge de France*, his *Évêques avant la Revolution*, 5th edition, 1912).

We can imagine how Brother Barthélemy and Brother Timothy were won over. Every time he had the opportunity, Armand Gaston tried to be useful to De La Salle's disciples. And, as he was going to Rome on an official visit, he would certainly consent to lay before Clement XI the Brothers' wish to obtain the full and total approbation of their Society. Brother Honoré, bearing a "petition",[3] was once again sent to the Cardinal. When he arrived at the palace, he was unable to see the beloved prelate, who was occupied with the preparations for his embassy. The residence, however, was thrown open to the Brother and he found pleasant audience with Father Vivant.

In the past the Brothers had been befriended by Father François Vivant, an official and later the Vicar-general in the Archdiocese of Paris, who, in 1708 had aided in the founding of a seminary for teachers outside Paris;[4]and in 1713, by calculated inactivity, he preserved the Institute's independence and De La Salle's rights over his foundation by thwarting a dangerous project that was being promoted by Father Chétardye and Father de Brou. François' brother, Jean Vivant, had the confidence of Cardinal Rohan, whose coadjutor he had become in Strasbourg in 1730. That he, too, should become the friend and protector of the humble schoolteachers opened up to them the brightest of prospects.

Father Vivant was as good as his word. He arrived in Rome in company with Cardinal Rohan at the beginning of the spring in the year 1721. Clement XI had only just died -- on March 19th. Rohan entered the conclave and Father Vivant along with him. On the 8th of May the Cardinals elected Michael Angelo Conti, who took the name of Innocent XIII. Shortly thereafter, very likely, Brother Timothy's letter, from which we have quoted in the previous chapter, reached its destination. It was enough to set Father Vivant into action.

Brother Timothy wrote: “Sir, in complete confidence we take the liberty of addressing this letter to your piety; all the more so in that whenever we have had the honor of speaking with you in Paris, your goodness has always shown an inclination to obtain for us the protection of His Holiness in Rome and for strengthening our small community.”

At this point the matter of the "Letters Patent" was explained, with an allusion to the "written agreement" given by the Archbishop of Rouen on the 19th of April. Father Vivant had Chancellor Aguesseau "sounded out" and he would be no less zealous in pleading the Brothers' cause in Rome. We may well believe that, having made inquiries, he indicated to the petitioners what documents needed to be provided. These were sent him by Brother Timothy, along with comments, corrections and declarations of absolute trust and lively gratitude.

“We beseech you, Sir, for the greater glory of God, to be pleased at the right time and place, to use your good offices with his Most Eminent Highness, Cardinal Rohan and with the Holy Father, to obtain the confirmation of our Institute, if it is the will of God and the good pleasure of His Holiness. You know, Sir, the great good it procures in God's Church. We are sending you...1) our Rule, as De La Salle wrote it; 2) an abridgment of our Rule, so that you can show one, or both, according as you will judge appropriate; and 3), finally, seven testimonials of Our Lords the Bishops and of certain individuals, along with the certificate of election of the Superior. If there is something, your goodness has given us good hope of supplying for it.

We are also including a copy of our Founder's (De La Salle's) will, along with a copy of a letter that he wrote to one of our Brothers who had informed him that the Dean of Calais had described himself as an "Appellant", so that you might be good enough, Sir, to make known the sentiments of this servant of God, in which he died.”

(Thus, Brother Timothy clearly dispelled any suspicion of Jansenism and asserted his Society's complete adherence to *Unigenitus*.)

The essential points of the petition were recalled: “Our intentions are that His Holiness agree to grant us Bulls wherein he approves of our Rule in dependence upon the Ordinary; enables us to dismiss members who have fallen into scandalous error; and gives us freedom to bury...Brothers who have died in the novitiate house when this institution serves as a rest home for elderly Brothers who are too old to teach; and in our chapel in that house to perform all the functions pertaining to a house of Rule, without being obliged to parochial duties, so as to be able to train the Novices in greater calm and quiet.”

(The recollection of former difficulties with pastors as St. Sulpice concerning the Rule and the liberty to recruit and expel, [5] the memory of more recent difficulties with the pastor of St. Sever regarding parochial obligations,[6] continued to weigh upon their minds; and to these preoccupations was added the

[3] Blain Vol.2, p.130

[4] Cf. Vol.1, p.249

[5] Cf.Vol.1, pp.197-198; 201; 220-227; 391-393

[6] Idem pp.399-409; 404; in this present volume p.101 seq.

sorrow at not being able to reserve the mortal remains of the Founder at St. Yon. Approved, the Congregation would be master in its own house under the single authority of the Bishop in each diocese. It was assumed that the Superior would insist upon the concrete application of the principles contained in the Bull.)

And he hastened to add: “For the rest, Sir, we leave all to your own wise discretion, since we are convinced that you know better than anyone what we need. Hence, we place it all in your charitable hands. If we have not sent you everything needed in order to obtain the Bull, you will be kind enough to let us know what it is.”

The three sentences quoted above involving the causal connection between the Bull and the "Letters Patent" came as a sort of conclusion. The letter ends in a peroration of appropriate expressions of gratitude:

“We would like to be able...to testify to you our very humble acknowledgement of the ardent zeal you have shown for our Institute. However, we shall not cease to thank the Lord as we see you inspired with such tender sentiments for poor Brothers who have not had, and still do not have, any other support than Divine Providence on which to rely. It is clearly out of your own goodness, Sir, that you wish to assume the responsibility for making us known to the. Roman Curia. More and more we seek, through your mediation, the powerful protection of His Most Eminent Highness Cardinal Rohan, to whom we take the liberty of presenting our most profound respects. What more, Sir, can the Brothers of our Institute desire of your charity, who, in their inability to recognize the care that you mean to take of their interests, are satisfied to offer their prayers to the Lord for your health and prosperity, since all of us are, Sir, with the deepest respect, your very humble and obedient servants.”

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In 1721, Father Vivant had very few days to devote to the Brothers. He had to leave rather quickly for Rome with Cardinal Rohan whom the new Pope had entrusted with the delicate mission to Cardinal Noailles, the Archbishop of Paris, who was still stubbornly entangled in a cunning resistance to the Constitution *Unigenitus.* Before he left, Father Vivant had hurriedly placed the documents given to him by Brother Timothy into the sure hands of one of his friends whom he begged to pursue the Brothers' cause. According to Blain, this friend "was a banker in the Roman Curia";[7] in fact, he was an "apostolic expediter", whose official role consisted in sending, upon payment, authoritative copies of documents, such as dispensations, the acknowledgement of benefices or briefs, etc.[8]

It was probably on the advice of this intermediary that the priest alerted the Superior-general. In order to assure the success of the cause there was an important statement missing from the "abridged" Rule. Since 1694 the Brothers' vows mentioned only "association to teach school", obedience "to the body of the Society as well as to the Superiors" and "stability" in the Institute.[9] The strict observance of poverty and chastity flowed from these primordial obligations. While the Manuscript of 1705, the Collection of 1714 and the revised Rule of 1717-1718 emphasized abundantly the virtues of the three vows that were at the base of the Religious life,[10] perpetual or temporary commitments had to be introduced into the vow-formula.

Of "the testimonials from Our Lords the Bishops" that were sent to Father Vivant, three-- Bishop/Duke Louis Clermont's (Laon), Bishop Charles François Merinville's (Chartres) and Denis François Bouthiller Chavigny's (Troyes)[11] -- went back as far as July, August and September of 1712 and, as consequence, could not have mentioned a Rule which, at that distant period, could not have received its final codification. The more recent testimonials -- François Maurice de Gontherils' (Avignon), Louis François de Valbelle Tourves, (St. Omer), François Cardinal, Mailly (Rheims) -- were all "affidavits" which testified to the utility of the tuition-free Christian Schools and the "piety" and the "modesty", the

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[7] This letter comes completely reprinted, according to the copy of 1725 in the "Circular" published on the 19th of February, 1903 by the M.H. Brother Gabriel of Mary, under the title Historique de la Bulle d'approbalion. (Instructive and Administrative Circular No. 119). In the present chapter we frequently consult this excellent work, which contains important texts and abundant and reliable references.
The text of the letter to Father Vivant is also found in Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pp. 434-7 (but without any guarantee of strict exactitude.

[8] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 191.

[9] Cf.Vol.1, p.203

[10] Idem pp.471-472; 518-519; 530-531

[11] The reference is to Denis Francis II, successor to his uncle.

"edifying" and "unexceptionable" behavior of the Brothers. The seventh and last "testimonial" -- one which has not been found with the rest in the file of the Sacred Congregation of the Council and was, in all probability, Armand Bazin Bezons (Rouen) -- expressly approved the Society's "statutes", but, of course, in their text of 1718.[12]

Brother Timothy had the words, "three vows", inserted into the text of his petition. Blain does not date this "editing", except to say that it occurred "a year before the Bull" [13]i.e., at the beginning of 1724. Brother Lucard accepts this statement and he also believes that the Brothers in Rheims were the authors of an "eighteen-article memorandum containing a summary of the Rule" and that with the Superior-general's authorization, they sent it to Cardinal Rohan through his cousin, Armand Jules Rohan, who was their Archbishop at that time.[14]

An uncomplicated reading of the Roman file reveals the certainty that the abridgment, *Ne varietur*, was written during the course of the year 1722. In fact, it preceded two new sets of episcopal approbations, both of which are perfectly explicit. The first one emanated from Rheims (and, as a consequence, it can support Brother Lucard's hypothesis involving the Rheims' Community). The Archbishop of Rheims wrote on the 11th of October, 1722: "We praise and approve the statutes set forth below, and we declare that they are exactly and scrupulously observed by the Brothers.. in our diocese."

On the 20th, 27th and the 29th of the same month, in the same year, and in the same city where they had assembled for the coronation of Louis XV, Jean Joseph, [15] Bishop of Soisson, Louis Bishop of Nantes, and Charles [16] Bishop of Laon, signed practically identical texts.

The second set groups the approbations of Cardinal Bissy (Meaux), Denis Chavigny (promoted from Bishop of Troyes to Archbishop of Sens), his uncle and predecessor at Troyes, François Bouthillier (member of the Royal Council), Paul Chaulnes (Grenoble) and Léon Belmont (Saintes). These prelates were in Paris in October of 1722, and their signatures date from the 13th to the 16th of that month. Henri de Thiard Bissy attests that the Brothers who took their name from the Christian schools faithfully follow the appended Rule in seventeen dioceses in which they are in charge of the Christian instruction of children.

The Archbishop of Sens and the Bishops of Grenoble and Saintes were content to adopt Bissy's wording. Only Chavigny remained silent about the Rule. On the other hand he was unstinting in his praise for those Brothers who, during the period in which he, "however unworthy", guided the diocese of Troyes, devoted themselves to the instruction of children "with the greatest zeal, remarkable piety, and the best possible results" and who have continued to remain at the height of their task.

Thus, Rome possessed a formal brief, at the very latest, by the end of 1722. But a preliminary dispatch of the abridged Rule, including the reference to the vows of religion, seems to have been made several months before the one containing the copy of the same text along with the Bishops' approbations. The Sacred Congregation of the Council, responsible for examining the grounds for the petition, was to have dealt with the matter in July or at the beginning of August. It must, then, from that moment have been in a position to examine the essential document, i.e., the petition translated into "curial style" by expediters in the Pontifical Diataria. On the 18th of August, the Secretary of the Congregation, Prosper Lambertini (the future Pope Benedict XIV) wrote on the last page of the report: *Transmittantur Constitutiones Fratrum Christianae doctrinae.* Assuming (as it must be) that he was looking at the eighteen-article summary of the Rule that accompanied the petition, Bishop Lambertini, with the view of further information or verification, was probably asking either for the book itself of the Rule or at least the documents that the Dataria had used for its version in the official style.[17]

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[12] It is to be noted that in the affidavits of the Bishops of Laon and Troyes and of the Archbishop of Rheims, the Brothers are called "of Christian Doctrine". The Archbishop of Avignon calls them "Brothers of the (Tuition –Free) Schools". The Bishops of Chartres and St. Omer are alone in giving them their correct name, "Brothers of the Christian Schools

[13] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 191.

[14] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 447.

[15] Vergne Tressan, subsequently Archbishop of Rouen.

[16] Saint Alban, subsequently Archbishop of Cambrai

[17] This is the explanation given in the 1903 "Circular"; it seems quite plausible to us.

The matter might then have had a quick solution. And while it remained for more than two years in suspense, Rome had nothing to do with that situation. Paris had been creating difficulties. The Brothers' Superior had written to Father Vivant that if the Holy See granted the Bull, the royal government could not refuse the "Letters Patent". But Philip of Orleans, who retained his bias against the Brothers, did not want it to appear that the Pope was forcing his hand. Father Tencin, whom Saint-Simon described as "infinitely supple...a master distinguished for stratagems", was the man in whom both the Regent and Father Dubois confided in their relations with Innocent XIII. He had just obtained the Cardinal's red hat for his patron, Dubois -- already, by a rather strange and unedifying stroke of fortune, Archbishop of Cambrai. Clement XI had registered his repugnance. Tencin, a man without scruples, had used intimidation and promises on Innocent XIII. He dwelt on France's role in the election of Michael Angelo Conti. Dubois, on the other hand, promised to wipe out Jansenism. The Pope believed he had to acquiesce; and, with tears in his eyes, he told Rohan during the audience which preceded the extraordinary ambassador's departure: "The Archbishop of Cambrai will be made a Cardinal".

Guillaume Dubois became a Cardinal. But De La Salle's disciples were left with their hopes. And Father Tencin intervened to block every initiative and postpone every decision "until the king granted the Letters Patent" .[18]

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It was important, then, to go back to the king -- or, rather, to those who, *puero regante*, controlled the real power. Since Aguesseau had fallen on evil days for his too partial attitude toward the "Appellants", Fleuriau Armenonville succeeded him as Keeper of the Seal. He was orthodox, and, as such, the friends of the Brothers counted on him. And to him the Superior-general of the Sulpicians, Father Saint-Aubin, recommended the interests of the young Society. It seemed that the former Chancellor's secretary was unable or unwilling to surrender the file assembled at the beginning of 1721 and that it was now necessary to seek new "testimonials" from Bishop Bezons and President Pontcarré and a new approbation from the city of Rouen. In the King's Council the Marquis Vrillière was working in favor of the Brothers' cause. Philip of Orleans, however, declared that "it was necessary to wait".[19]

The future brightened when Dubois, now a Cardinal and Prime Minister and at the peak of his ambitions before a grovelling Court and the major Estates, assumed the role of a generous benefactor and declared his desire to please the Bishops and the honest folk who defended the Institute. In order to influence the wills of princes, people were insisting that De La Salle's work conformed to Louis XIV's edicts and the policies of the new reign; through the Brothers would be multiplied schools that were intended to preserve or restore the Catholic religion among the children of the people, especially among those whose fathers had belonged, or still remained sympathetic, to the "so-called reformed religion".

For the third time Philip's obstinacy (for although he was no longer Regent, Philip remained, along with Cardinal Dubois, the real head of the State) proved insurmountable. Archbishop Bezons of Rouen had just died in his castle of "Gaillon" on the 8th of October, 1721. The vacancy of the See upon which St. Yon depended was "the specious pretext that His Royal Highness used in order to dismiss the petition of his entire council". [20]According to the Duke, there was nothing to do but to defer the matter: it was inappropriate and imprudent not to await the approval of the future Archbishop who "unfortunately, had not been nominated" (and would not be for the entire year of 1723). Vrillière objected that the consent of the late Archbishop Bezons was a sufficient guarantee, but he drew and quick and dry rebuttal.[21]

An impasse ensued. In fact, the barriers thrown up in Paris closed off access to Rome. Understandably anxious, Brother Timothy and his Assistants sought the special help of Heaven. In perpetuity the Brothers would fast on the 7th of December, the vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and they would take the occasion of that solemn observance to consecrate the Institute to the Most Blessed Virgin, if, all opposition crumbling, the "Letters Patent" were finally granted.

On the 2nd of December, 1723, the former Regent died of a fit of apoplexy. Four months earlier Cardinal Dubois had met a scarcely less distressful end. The new Archbishop was Louis La Vergne Tressan, Bishop of Nantes. It was from him that Dubois, in order to qualify to occupy the See of Cambrai, had received minor orders, the sub-deaconate, the deaconate in February, 1720 and the priesthood on the

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[18] Blain, Vol. I, pg. 191.

[19] Idem pp.186-187

[20] Blain Vol.2, p.187

[21] Ibid

3rd of the following March. And on the 9th of June Archbishop Tressan (along with Massillon) had served as assistant prelate at the episcopal consecration that Cardinal Rohan himself had conferred upon Father Dubois. Times and customs explain such accommodations. La Vergne Tressan was, for all that, no less a simple man, a cleric without reproach and a shepherd dedicated to his flock.

He was listed among the prelates who had granted the Brothers letters praise and approval. He had viewed favorably the opening of their school in Nantes. After his appointment to Rouen, he "promised them that as soon as he took possession of the Archbishop's palace he would bring their project to a successful conclusion".[22] A delay of several months, however, was still a possibility to be feared. It was under these circumstances, and in order to avoid such a delay, that the Superior-general sent Brother Thomas to Fontainebleau, where the Court was in residence.[23]

The new Archbishop took his seat on the royal council. From there it was easy for him to take the initiative in favor of St. Yon. He had finally made up his mind. The matter of the "Letters Patent" no longer had any adversaries. Fleury, the former Bishop of Frejus, the former tutor to Louis XV and the future Prime Minister, "explained" to the young king that the Brothers' work "was worthy of his support".[24]

The official document given at Fountainebleau, in September in the year of grace seventeen-hundred-and-twenty -four, and (of the reign) the tenth,[25] contains first of all, the history of the founding of the Brothers in Rouen, as it must have been outlined in Brother Timothy's petition: “Louis, by the Grace of God King of France and of Navarre, to all present and to come, greetings.”[26] The Brothers of the Christian Schools of our city of Rouen have very humbly described to us that our late and loyal friend, counsellor in our Councils, Archbishop Colbert of Rouen, and M. de Pontcarré, also counsellor in our Councils, and First President in our Parlementary Court in that city, desiring to find a remedy for the ignorance that prevails among the poor of that city, whose children cannot go to the usual schools, remain vagrants and vagabonds in the streets, without discipline, in ignorance of their religion, and in order to enter also into the intention of the late King, our most honored Lord and great-grandfather, which had always been that schools should be multiplied throughout the kingdom, who would have believed that there is no better way to apply a remedy to this evil than to call upon; the petitioners,the Institute of the late John Baptist de La Salle, priest, doctor in theology and Canon of the Church of Rheims, to establish a charity school in the said city of Rouen, where the poor might receive a Christian education and, at the same time learn, without having to pay for it, reading, writing and arithmetic tuition-free; that the example of similar schools in several other cities our realm, and especially in our fine city of Paris had inspired the said Archbishop and the said First President not to neglect, for their part, a work so useful to the public and the State; in such wise that this establishment would be begun forthwith, in the year seventeen hundred-and-five, to which God gave such prosperity that, as time went on, it was regarded as a place competent to function not only as a school for learning for poor families as much for the province of Normandy as for the said city, but also to correct the dissolute whose disordered lives were a public scandal, a thing which appeared from the children who were placed there as residents and from the individuals who were sent there by our "Secret Letters" and by the order of our Court of Parlement; so much was this the case that the happy outcome inspired the zeal of certain pious persons who, in order to secure such an advantageous and necessary foundation in our city of Rouen, were moved to guarantee the petitioners the ownership of the house of St. Yon, situated in the Faubourg St. Sever, which they held in the beginning only as renters, and which was acquired and handed over nominally to two Brothers of the Society of the petitioners, one of whom is dead; and that should the second Brother also die, it is to be feared that this house would fall into the hands of strangers, due to the custom in Normandy; the petitioners have very humbly besought us to be pleased to grant them our letters of confirmation of the foundation.”

Here, in official language majestic and billowing like the gown of a magistrate in the "ancien regime", we have only a summary *ad usum regis*, in which, against the rigor, the narrowness and the prohibitions of the Edict of 1666, were concealed the initiatives of Jacques Nicolas Colbert and Nicholas Pierre Camus Pontcarré, in which no clear distinction was made between the charity schools in Rouen and the residents schools (whether for voluntary of committed boarders), and in which the purchase of St. Yon

[22] ibid

[23] ibid

[24] Ibid p.188

[25] It seems quite clear, as Blain says (loc. cit.) that the letters were not sent until after Bishop Tress= had "taken possession of his palace". He dates them the 28th of September, but inadvertently gives the year as 1725.

[26] "All the kings' letters on parchment and sealed with the great seal are called 'Letters Patent'. (Dictionnaire de l'Academie francaise, 1778 ed.) "Letters Patent" are public letters addressed "to all present and to come", as opposed to private letters and "Letters 'de cachet'.

is attributed to "certain pious persons", apparently outside the Institute. But the true facts were public knowledge and the device of the "Letters Patent" would make it all perfectly legal.

Moved by these and other reasons, with the advice of our Council, which has reviewed the contract of purchase of the said St. Yon, dated the 8th of March, 1718, in the names of Joseph Truffet and Charles Frappet, Brothers in the said Society,[27] the receipt for the full payment of the price on the said property, dated the 5th of January, 1720, the approval and consent of our late beloved and faithful counsellor in our council, Armand Bezin Bezons, Archbishop of Rouen, that of our equally beloved and faithful counsellor in our councils, La Vergne Tressan, presently Archbishop of Rouen, and the decision and consent of the Mayor and of the Supervisors of the said city, who all testify to the utility of this foundation and as to how advantageous it will be in the said city; all these documents being herewith attached, under the counter-seal of our Chancellery: we have with our special favor, full power and royal authority, authorized and confirmed, by these presents, signed with our hand, approved, authorized and confirmed the petitioners' foundation in the said house of St. Yon, Faubourg St. Sever, in our city of Rouen, as well as the acquisition they made of the said house referred to in the above-mentioned contract of the 8th of March, 1718, which will have its full and total effect. We wish, and it pleases us, that the said petitioners continue to make their residence in the said house, to educate therein not only candidates to teach in charity schools and to be sent into the different cities of our kingdom, where they will teach the principles of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman faith to the poor children who will be sent to them from the said city, Faubourgs and suburbs of Rouen and show them how to read, write and do arithmetic, and all of this tuition-free; we permit them to receive resident students of good will who shall be brought to them, subjects who shall be sent to them by us and by order of the Court of Parlement of Rouen for correction. And we also grant and concede to the said petitioners the right and the power to be able to own and possess all the resources and inheritances that people might want to leave or give them, or that they might be able to acquire on their own, without prejudice, however, to the rights, duties and indemnities due to other Lords besides ourselves, which, with respect to those belonging to us, we make a gift of them to them and remit them totally, for the present as well as for the future. So much so that we give mandate to our beloved and faithful counsellors, the people who act in our Court of Parlement, our office of accounts, aides and finances in Rouen, Presidents and general treasurers of France in the office of our finances in the said place, and to all others of our officers whom it concerns to register these presents, and that the petitioners enjoy and use their contents fully, peacefully and in perpetuity without suffering any trouble or impediment, regardless of hue and cry, Normand charters, or other letters contrary to this one. For such is our pleasure: and in order that this might be an invariable thing, stable and everlasting, we have fixed our seal to these presents."

"The Great Seal of green wax with red and green silk ribbons" was added to the royal signature. "On the fold" the Minister of State, Phelyeaux, countersigned the document and the Keeper of the Seal wrote his endorsement.[28]

In the language of the document only "the foundation at St. Yon" was authorized. The schools did not have to be, since for opening a school episcopal approval was sufficient. On this point, the secretary to Chancellor Aguesseau was evidently correct. But, henceforth, the Institute, recognized by the State, could acquire movable property and real estate. There was a question as to whether this right was subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts in Normandy, which were to register the "Letters Patent", or whether it extended to the whole of French territory. The broadest interpretation seemed permissible: the king had granted the Brothers the power to "possess all the resources and inheritances" that would be left, given or sold to them. And as long as Religious were educated at St. Yon (with the consent of the king) to teach school in "different cities of the kingdom", it went without saying that, logically and according to common sense, the Superiors of the Society were free to gather funds, whether as payment or donation, which would constitute the collective property of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It was thus that they "would enjoy" legal existence "fully, peacefully and in perpetuity" without "any impediment or trouble". We shall see that it was in this way that Brother Timothy and his legal counsellors understood the matter. But the bias of adversaries and the chicanery of the legal profession would be able sooner or later to find subject

[27] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 352-354.

[28] National Archives L. 963. The document preserved in this file is a copy verified by Mirback, "master of the horse, Counsellor-secretary to the king, the royal house of France and its finances"; Lucard gives the complete text of the "Letters Patent" in the supporting documentation of his Annales, Vol. I, pp. 470-4.

for dispute and for lawsuits in the execution of the "Letters" of 1724. Indeed, nominally and really only the "beloved and faithful counsellors" of the Parlement and the Court of Accounts in Rouen had received orders as well as the functionaries in the Office of Finance "established in that place".

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After the death of the Duke of Orleans the veto which everywhere had paralyzed the best of intentions had lost its power. This was felt in Rome as well as in France. A new Pope was to crown the Brothers' hopes.

Innocent XIII, who had reigned less than three years, died on the 7th of March, 1724. The Cardinals were gathering for the up-coming conclave and among them was Cardinal Rohan who, once again, had selected Father Vivant as his *socius*. Before their departure for Italy, Brother Timothy met with both of them. It is to be assumed that the interviews took place in an atmosphere of confidence. And it is possible that the Archbishop of Rheims, solicited by the De La Salle family, urged their cousin to act energetically and by his mediation to guarantee the success of the cause.[29]

On the 29th of May Pietro Francisco Orsini was elected Sovereign Pontiff and took the name of Benedict XIII. He was a descendant of a great Roman family and an eldest son who had wanted to become a Dominican. At eighteen years of age and in the Dominican habit, he bore the name of Brother Vincent of Mary. But overcoming his resistance, Clement X had made him a Cardinal at the age of twenty-three in 1672. Orsini ruled over the diocese of Siponte, followed by that of Cesena and then Benevento. And dressed in a coarse habit, observing his rule, mortified, charitable, humble, constantly at prayer and preaching, he remained a monk. His face was austere, bony and rugged. His piety and his distaste for intrigue recommended him to the choice of his colleagues, after a conclave that had lasted two months and ten days. He was at the time seventy-five years of age. He reigned until the 21st of February, 1730. Faithful to his Order until death, it was in the Dominican Church of *Santa Maria della Minerva*, next to the tomb of St. Catherine of Siena, that, in a noble and powerful mausoleum, he went to await the Resurrection.[30]

This great Religious, heedful of the Christian education of the people, was the man who was to raise De La Salle's Institute to the ranks of a Congregation approved by the Apostolic See. On the 28th of July, 1724 the file was passed on to Cardinal Corsini (the future Clement XII) who "was quite willing to reveal its contents to the Sacred Congregation of the Council and lead the Congregation to a vote".[31]

The "Most Eminent and Most Reverend Lords" were informed in the following language: “The Brothers of Christian Doctrine, founded first in the city and diocese of Rheims, and thereafter in many other diocese of France, with the permission and under the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries, in order to teach, principally the poor, reading, writing and Christian Doctrine and all other things necessary for their education, having besought His Holiness to confirm their Institute and to return the petition of the *Dateria* to this Congregation for a vote, humbly beseech Your Excellencies to grant them a favorable decision, taking into account the approbations supplied by His Eminence Cardinal Mailly and by other Bishops, as to the advantage and profit that the said Institute contributes.”[32]

On the 22nd of November Corsini submitted his report: “Our Holy Mother the Church...is concerned to increase the necessary knowledge of the elements of the Faith...In the Fifth Council of the Lateran, (Canon X) the Church made it a strict obligation to instruct children with care -- every Sunday and Feast day - - in the fundamental precepts of Religion and of obedience to God and to parents...St. Pius V, in his Constitution, *Ex debito*, on the 6th of October, 1572, encouraged and demanded of Ordinaries to designate churches where children might be taught Doctrine...and to choose virtuous men to teach them its principles.

Since, then, the principal end of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine is to teach children, and especially poor children, what has to do with a good Christian life, I am of the opinion to grant them

[29] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 445.

[30] The cause of the beatification of Benedict XIII has already been introduced.

[31] Transmission formula, in the handwriting of Prosper Lambertini on the last page of the report

[32] Original in Italian in the file referred to above.

Apostolic confirmation, in the same way that Paul V granted it to other Brothers pursuing the same purpose in the city of Rome, through his Constitution, *Ex credito*, of the 6th of October, 1607...; all the more so since this pious Institute (with Divine blessing) has spread into the various regions of France, to the great profit of souls, without any prejudice to the authority of the Ordinaries under whose obedience the Brothers must live, according to Chapter II of their Rule, nor to the authority of pastors. Those who wish to fulfill this office (of catechist) in conformity with the principles of their Society, cannot do so on their own authority and initiative, but only as pastors' deputies, as Van Espen (Vol. I, Pt. I, Title iii, Chap. VIII) affirms and this Sacred Congregation declared, in opposition to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus on the 8th of May, 1681.

Assuming, then, the approval of the Institute, no difficulty can arise against the confirmation of the Rule, which I found conformed to (Canon) Law, salutary for its members, well-designed for its government, especially as regards the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and perseverance...With respect to this last vow, this Sacred Congregation has thought and declared, on the 7th of December, 1715, that it should be introduced into the statutes of the Society of Christian Doctrine of the city of Rome..."[33]

Everything, the Church's traditions, legal precedents, the interpretations and commentaries of canonists, combined to attest to the merits, timeliness and wisdom of De La Salle's Institute.

The Congregation of "eminent Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Council of Trent", adopted the conclusion of the reporter and, on the 16th of December, Cardinal Origo, its Prefect, signed the long-awaited decision. While presenting the new, completed report for the approval of the Holy Father, Secretary Lambertini was careful to mention that Cardinal Polignac was interested in the success of the cause: *Reccomandata dall' Em. Polignac.*[34]

The French king's celebrated and ostentatious ambassador, the most visible man (at the time) in the Christian world then stepped on the stage to play his role. Melchior Polignac, the man who had negotiated the Treaty of Utrecht, author of the highly thought-of *Anti-Lucrèce*, art collector and one of 'the Forty in the French Academy had, surrounded by his books, his paintings and his ancient sculptures and his medals, thought of the poor, obscure school teachers; and so that he might no longer hesitate to place his prestige at their service, he must have received from Paris very favorable reports indeed concerning them. The "Letters Patent" of September, 1724, made Louis XV the Brothers' protector in relation to the Holy See.

A few words in Benedict XIII's handwriting were sufficient to give a document put together in 1722 by the Dateria the force of a pontifical text in itself intangible but forever conclusive. Until 1897 there were only two copies of the "petition", one preserved in the Motherhouse and the other at the Procurator-general in Rome.The original was found forty years ago in the Archives of the Dateria, in a file marked "the first year of Benedict XIII, 1724-1725". There we read:

"*Beatissime Pater*, Most Blessed Father, we humbly present to Your Holiness on the part of the devout petitioners, the Superior-general and the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the City of Rheims whom in the year of Our Lord 1680, the pious servant of God, John Baptist de La Sale (sic), at the time Canon of the Cathedral Church of Rheims, moved to pity by the consideration of the innumerable disorders arising from ignorance, the source of all evils, especially among those who, weighed down by poverty or preoccupied with manual labor in order to earn a living, remain totally unacquainted with the human sciences for want of an ability to afford them, but (what is very much more deplorable) frequently they do not know the elements of the Christian religion, in the City of Rheims founded for the glory of God and the comfort of the poor, under the auspices of the Apostolic See and the patronage of the Holy Child and St. Joseph, an Institute called "the Brothers of the Christian Schools", with a Rule (hereinafter attached) intended to be approved and confirmed by the Holy See; and that this Institute, blessed by God, has borne fruit in several diocese of the kingdom of France, and especially in those of Rouen, Paris, Avignon, Chartres, Laon, Troyes, St. Omer, Boulogne, Ales, Grenoble, Mende, Marseille, Langres, Uzes and Autun, in which the said Brothers have lived up to now, under the following Rule."[35]

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[33] This seems to be a reference to "The Clerics Regular for the Pious Schools", the "Scolopi" Fathers, founded by St. Joseph Calasanctius.

[34] The first of these copies was made by Marius Tranagli, who declared that he had "received" from the Rev. M. Anacletus, Assistant to the Most Rev. General of the "Institute of the Christian Schools" the sum of "twelve juliuses" for this work which was done in Rome on the 7th of January, 1774.

[35] The Motherhouse Archives possesses a photograph of this document.

At this point are introduced the eighteen articles as read in the Bull. Then, the document emphasizes that the papal approval "will stabilize" and "strengthen" the new Society as well as its legislation.

This is why the petitioners beseech His Holiness to approve, confirm and to endow with apostolic authority...the Institute, Rule and all that is found therein that is just, honorable, and conformed to the sacred Canons, the Constitutions of the Holy See, and to the decrees of the Council of Trent...

It was also asked that the present and future properties of this Institute be guaranteed and that the provisions concerning it remain forever valid.

Here ended the first and most important part of the petition. The Pope sanctioned it with the customary phrase, followed by the initials of his religious name: *Fiat ut petitur*, V.M. (Vincent of Mary).

The second part contains executive stipulations and provisions, including a paragraph that forbids the Brothers to leave the Society without the expressed consent of the Superior-general, "even under the pretext of embracing a more austere Order";[36] and, finally, there is mention of the favorable vote of the Congregation of the Council. The Pope wrote *Fiat*, V.M., in parentheses, to the right of the text. And below is the "formal date" (which was the date of the Bull itself): *Apud S. Petrum septimo Kalendas februarii anno primo.*

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Blain writes that "the Bull was sent at the end of January, 1725, after the ceremony of the opening of the Holy Door for the Great Jubilee".

The text was registered at the *Dateria* in Procurator Costa's book. Each Procurator, at the accession of a Pope, began a series of registers, each of which bore on its spine the name of the reigning Pontiff, the name of the author and the serial number. The register "Benedict XII -- Costa -- number 1" was used[37] as the original for the authorized copy that Joachim Maria Trinagli gave Brother Procurator Anacletus in 1774, as well as for the copy that was delivered in 1869 by the Archivist Andrew Santini, which has since been lost.

But the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools preserves with veneration its fundamental charter on a large sheet of parchment (m 78 + 0m 60), furnished with the leaden seals of the *Dateria* and the signatures of the officers of the Roman Curia who participated in its registration. According to custom, this first copy (which may be called "the original") was made from a rough-draught of the Bull (which the 'secretary' made and added a preamble and a conclusion to the petition approved by the Pope and corrections only as to form).[38]

The text, surrounded by decorations in black ink, is in the "Lombard" style of handwriting, in characters called "bollatici" and decipherable only by specialists. The opening lines include the words *Benedictus Episcopus Servus Servorum Dei*. *Ad perpetuam rei memoriam* in large letters, some of which are embellished. The lines of the document are squeezed together, without paragraphing and without spacing between the sentences, but with abbreviations. The date presents a feature that is calculated to mislead the uninitiated: *Anno Incarnationis Dominicae millesimo septingentesimo vigesimo quarto, septimo Kalendas Februarii*: in other words: "the 26th of January, 1725". The "year of the Incarnation" used to date certain solemn documents of the Roman Chancery, begins with the 25th of March. The days from the 1st of January to the 24th of March inclusive are regarded as belonging to the previous year.[39]

In the understanding of the Dateria the Bull was to have been sent in *forma gratiosa*, i.e., in the form of a letter addressed to those who had solicited approval. But, perhaps on the insistence of their protectors, the Brothers were honored with a more solemn testimonial, introducing them to the Christian world *ad perpetuam reim memoriam*: and the Bull *in forma gatiosa perpetua*. It was necessary that in the document the third person plural be substituted for the second person plural; and the adjustment was made

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[36] At St. Peter's, the seventh day of the Kalends of February, (and) the first year (of the Pontificate). At the bottom of the page, in heavier and more legible handwriting, there is a ten-line summary of the petition intended to remind the Pope of the essentials.

[37] "In other times, the Religious of the major Orders could enter another, more austere Order, without permission of his superiors. Since then, permission has been required; and since a number of years past, a rescript from the Holy See..." (Circular of 1903 by Brother Gabriel of Mary).

[38] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 191.

[39] In any case, when there is difficulty regarding interpretation, recourse is always had to the petition

rather clumsily. Thus, for instance, the sentence beginning *in quibus dicti Fratres sub tenore infrascriptarum Regularum*, in which the "eighteen articles" form a very long segment, closes with *hactenus vixistis et vivitis de praesenti* rather than *hactenus vixerunt et vivunt de praesenti*, which the meaning requires: "where the said Brothers lived up to now and still live under the following Rule".[40]

The preamble, whose initial words, according to custom, gives the title to a pontifical document, shows quite clearly by its stately development that the Holy See wanted its gesture to have a certain spacious significance.

In Apostolicae dignitatis solio ...[41] Established on the throne of the Apostolic dignity, through a disposition of divine clemency, without any merit on our part but only by an ineffable grace of God's goodness, and holding the place, here below, of Him Who reigns gloriously in Heaven, in order to fulfill the obligation that the pastoral charge imposes upon us, we gladly study that by which the pious desires of Christ's faithful may attain their legitimate fulfillment, especially through the foundation of Institutes by means of which the study of letters is diffused and the progress of poor youth is enlarged, and which desire to apply themselves thereto in view of a fruitful cultivation of the field of the Lord, and in view of growth in science and wisdom.

This is why we love to bring the authority of the apostolic confirmation and the efficacity of our office and our action (especially when we are asked to do so) on the Rules and Statutes of these Institutes so that they may continue to exist more securely and be observed in perpetuity, according as we see, in the Lord, that it is good to do so, having maturely and diligently considered the qualities and circumstances with respect to persons, places and times.

At this point the text of the petition, *mutatis mutandis*, is introduced: -- the historical perspective and then the summary of the Rule. It seems absolutely necessary to quote these eighteen articles which, approved by the Pope, became thereafter the constitutional law of one of the Religious Congregations associated with the life and apostolate of the Church: and the Patronage of St. Joseph, (the Brothers) are to be especially careful to teach children, especially the poor, the way of life of good and Christian people. The chief virtue, the spirit, so to speak, of their Institute, is to he zeal for the education of children in accordance with the norm of the Christian Law."

II. They shall obey the Superior-general in office, elected by them, and they shall live in dioceses where they have been accepted with the consent of the Bishops and under the authority of these latter.

III. Their Superior-general shall be "for life"; his election shall take place in secret balloting and voting, in an assembly of the Directors of the principal houses; there shall be elected by the same people, in the same assembly and in the same manner, two Assistants to be counsellors and aides to the Superior-general in office, in what has to do with efficient administration.

IV. The Assistants shall live in the house where the Superior resides and they shall take part in his counsels, and, in case of necessity, they shall lend a hand to reply to the letters he shall receive.

V. The Brothers themselves shall teach children tuition free and they shall receive neither money nor presents offered by the pupils or their parents.

VI. They shall teach school by association, and there shall be at least two (of them) together in each (school).

VII. None of the Brothers shall aspire to the priesthood or to ecclesiastical orders.

VIII. The Brothers shall be admitted into the Institute at their sixteenth or seventeenth year, and they shall bind themselves by vow for three years only, and renew these vows annually until they have reached and completed their twenty-fifth year; they shall then be admitted to pronounce perpetual vows.[42]

IX. Brothers' vows shall be chastity, poverty, obedience, stability in the said Institute, and teaching the poor tuition-free: with the qualification that the reigning Roman Pontiff may dispense them from their simple vows.

[43]I. Dispensation from vows cannot be validly requested nor granted except for grave faults, judged to be such by a plurality of votes of the Brothers' General-chapter.[44]

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[40] The Bull of 1725 is presently preserved at the Motherhouse on Via Aurelia, under glass, in a beautiful oak frame, which was originally a beam in the former Motherhouse at Lembecq-les-Hal.

[41] This is the title for the document that follows but the same words are used for other documents of Benedict XIII

[42] In the petition article 8 is stated somewhat differently: Quo tempore poterunt admitti ad vota perpetua emittenda, "at which time they MAY be admitted to pronounce perpetual vows".

[43] In the petition article 9 does not mention a vow of teaching tuition-free. Neither does Cardinal Corsini, in his report to the Sacred Congregation of the Council speak of it. Regarding the modality of the vows, the statement in the petition is clearer than it is in the Bull. It expressly states that the Brothers' vows were simple vows: "*Eaque crust simplicia a quibus*

XI. The Superior-general may be deposed by the Brothers' General-chapter for the following reasons: heresy, lewdness, homicide, mental debility, senility, squandering the Institute's property or any heinous crime thought deserving of such punishment by a Chapter convoked for the purpose by the Assistants.
XII. The Brothers Director of the individual houses shall govern them for three years only, unless, for good reasons, it appears more suitable to the Superior-general in office and his Assistants to shorten or prolong this period; the Brother Superior-general may transmit his authority to the individual Directors regarding the vow of poverty with respect to temporal goods or permissions granted to each Brother; in such a way, however, that it be not allowed to the Directors, nor to delegated Visitors, to alienate funds, furnishings or real estate without consulting the Superior-general and his Assistants.
XIII. General Chapters, at which shall be assembled thirty Brothers from among the Senior Brothers and the Directors of the principal houses,[45] shall be held every ten years, unless, on occasion, it may be thought opportune to convoke an extraordinary Chapter; and, during this ten year period, the elected Assistants shall exercise their responsibility, unless some serious necessity demands either to depose them before the expiration of their term, or to maintain them in office beyond the ten year period.
XIV. Brothers Visitor, designated by the Superior-general for a three year mission, shall visit the houses once-a-year; they shall require the Directors to show the income and expenses; and at the end of each visit, they shall make a report to the Superior-general concerning what needs reforming in each house.
XV. The General-chapters shall be convoked in the place where the Superior-general has his residence. Provincial chapters shall be convoked as close to the center of the province as possible, so that the Brothers may the easier attend them. The Brother Visitor, delegated by the Superior-general, shall preside at these provincial chapters.
XVI. All the exercises, whether in the house or in school, shall be done in common.
XVII. The Brothers shall not only teach children reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, but especially imbue their souls with the precepts of Christianity and the Gospel: they shall teach catechism for a half-hour every working-day, and an hour-and-a-half every Sunday and Feast of Obligation. On Sundays and Feasts they shall conduct their pupils to the church in order to assist at High Mass and Vespers. They shall teach them how to recite morning and evening prayer; they shall inculcate the Commandments of God, the laws of the Church and what is necessary for salvation.
XVIII. The clothes worn by the Brothers shall conform to evangelical poverty and humility, be made of common cloth, black, descending nearly to the heels, secured by simple iron hooks; with a mantle of the same length. That the hat, shoes and stockings be without affectation and absolutely foreign to worldly vanities.

As the petitioners had wished, all these prescriptions received approval and confirmation from the "apostolic authority". The basic document continued to be visible through the language of the Bull. In order to secure and bind the foundations of the Institute the Roman Chancery massed powerful and definitive utterances, which meant to leave no loopholes and no grounds for misunderstanding.
Let the present arrangements remain in force in perpetuity; let them produce their full and total effect; let them not be compromised by any revocation, limitation, or any other suspension of similar or dissimilar favor...; let them be accepted always...Thus it must be decreed by all judges, whoever they may be, ordinary or delegated, even the Auditor of the causes of the Apostolic Palace, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church (even if they are Legates a latere), Vice-Legates, nuncios of the Holy See. And if it happens that these arrangements, knowingly or unknowingly, have been compromised by whatever authority, we declare such an act null and void, without regard to apostolic constitutions and ordinances to the contrary.

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summus Pontfex absolve." Cardinal Corsini commented on this article as follows: *Reservata facultate summo Pontifici super iisdem cum causa dispensandi, cum agatur de simplicibus votis juxta recentiorem Ecclesiae doctrinarn*. Dispensation from simple vows, which normally is included in the powers of the bishop, is here reserved to the Pope.

[44] It wasn't until the Chapter of 1787 that in a general way the serious faults capable of resulting in the dismissal of a Brother were determined, and, as a consequence,dispensing him from vows. Apart from breaches of chastity, obedience and the rule of poverty, listed among the serious faults was "excessive harshness and the violent treatment of pupils".

[45] Article 3 refers only to the Directors of principal houses as members of assemblies brought together for the election of a Superior-general and Assistants. Article 13 adds "senior Brothers" to General Chapters. Later on these two texts were combined.

These are clearly those very general and very powerful "specifications and qualifications" referred to in the second part of the petition. The final paragraph amplifies them, making them resound to the heavens.

"Therefore no one, absolutely no one, has the right to infringe upon this written law which contains our absolution, our approbation and our confirmation, our decree and our will; no one may, by a rash impudence, place any obstacle to it. But if someone were so presumptuous as to enfeeble it, let him know that he incurs the indignation of Almighty God and his blessed Apostles Peter and Paul."

As Blain notes,[46] Benedict XIII thoroughly understood De La Salle's thought and work. Details concerning the three vows corresponded both to the spirit and to the letter of the "Common Rule". As for the "Rule of Government", by making its essential points for the first time public, the Bull gave it all the stability and authority it needed.

The Brothers remained what they were from the beginning: lay Religious, exclusively dedicated to the education of children, and especially of the poor. And these men, clearly separated[47].from the "world" by a supernatural vocation and by their obligations as "professed persons", although they were deprived of the priesthood, still received from the Church the official mission "to teach the precepts of Christianity and the Gospel". Of course, it was a subordinate mission: the Bishops alone possess the plenitude of the "teaching" ministry; and priests who remain in communion with the bishops are the dispensers of the Word of God. But, in dependence upon the clergy, the Brothers have, by the will of the Holy See, a secondary delegation, an "office", a "deputization" as catechists.[48] In his report, Cardinal Corsini made the point perfectly. And the Bull *In Apostolicae dignitatis solio* is the first up to its time to attribute such a role to any but clerics.

On the other hand, the Bull preserved in its entirety the special character of the Brothers' Rule. According to Blain, De La Salle "feared...additions...restrictions...and changes" [49] Rome might have required that the "community life" of the Institute fit within a ready made model, such, for example, as on of the four principal monastic Rules -- the Basilian, Augustinian, Benedictine or Francisican.[50] The integral originality of the new Religious family was maintained because, evidently (and Benedict XIII understood this immediately), the "Lasallian" work, conceived and constructed with impeccable logic cannot be improved upon without destroying it.

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We, the undersigned, lawyers in Parlement, the king's counsellors, forwarding agents to the Court of Rome, dwelling in Paris, certify, in order to satisfy the law, that the present Bull is original and genuine, and that it has been well an duly forwarded from the Court of Rome. Done in Paris, the 26th of March, 1725. (Signed) Rausnay, Delanoue.

Thus, the precious document, arrived in France, accumulated the required testimonials in order to be accepted into the kingdom.[51] Blain maintains that it appeared to pretty nearly general surprise. Negotiations had been conducted with such secrecy both within and without St. Yon that, with the exception of four or five principal members of the Society...nobody had the slightest suspicion of it. Blain goes so far as to claim (what we find to be the most surprising thing in this whole affair) that President Pontcarré was left in the dark. At the news of it, he was supposed to have said, with no less satisfaction than stupefaction: "The Brothers have come a long way in a short time".[52] The extraordinary prosperity of

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[46] Blain Vol.2

[47] Brother Lucard, in his Annales, Vol. I, pp. 475-81 gives the Latin text of the Bull (faithful, on the whole, except for ad id omitted in article 11 and lacerna (lamp) for lacerna (mantle) in article 18). In the same work, Vol. I, pp. 450-6 there is a French translation of the Bull

[48] We can understand then how the name of the Brothers of "Christian Doctrine" which was given to the Brothers right down to the documents were issued by the Papal Court. It was not the name chosen for them by their Founder. But it does define them in function of their noblest task.

[49] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 191.

[50] Thus, the Rules of the Visitandines, the Ursulines and the Little Sisters of the Poor were "reconciled" under the Rule of St. Augustine. Circular of 1903, pg. 4, note #1.

[51] This testimony was written on the reverse side of the parchment

[52] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 192.

St. Yon, which housed more resident students than ever,[53] easily covered the legal costs both of the "Bull" and the "Letters Patent" without having recourse to financial appeals to former pupils.

According to the religious legislation of the *ancien régime*, a document from Rome (conciliar decree, pontifical message) was not "received" and, as a consequence, did not command obedience nor the cooperation of the civil authority until the magistrates were sure that there was nothing contrary to the sacred decrees and concordats exchanged between the Holy See and the kingdom...to the rights of the king and to the immunities and liberties of the Gallican church. If the inquiry proved positive, the new document had to be registered and it then took on the same authority as royal laws and edicts.

On the 26th of April, 1725, a month after Rausnay and Delanoue's certification of authenticity, Louis XV signed the "Letters Patent", called "accompanying letters" (lettres d'attache) which ordered the Parlement in Rouen to register the Bull, *In Apostolicae dignitatis solio*, under the conditions stated above.[54]

The process ran a rapid course, without any obstacles. The Clerk of the Court wrote on the Brothers' parchment copy: This Bull has been registered in the Court Register, to be followed according to its form and on its terms and so that those who asked for it may be in possession of its effects and contents, according to the Court's decree, given in the Great Assembly Hall, the 12th of May, 1775.

Finally, on the 17th of May, Louis Vergne Tressan, "by the Grace of God and the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Rouen, Primate of Normandy", read the Bull, "approved" its contents and authorized the Brothers, on its terms, to remain in his diocese, in the "assiduous" observance of their Rule.[55]

The last legal formalities regarding the "Letters Patent" of September, 1724 were undertaken at about the same time.

The Archbishop of Rouen, called upon to give his solemn consent to the legal recognition, stated on the 12th of December, 1724, that "in view of the usefulness" of De La Salle's work, he welcomed the decision taken by the king's counsel.[56] On the basis of a favorable report by the Counsellor Baudouin Basset, the Parlement of Normandy registered the "Letters Patent" on the 2nd of March, 1725.

It remained to obtain the same confirmation from the Court of Accounts, Assistance and Finance, since, inevitably, questions of a fiscal nature entered into the legalization of a new Religious Society. Here some difficulties arose. In his rather animated account, Blain practices his verve for exalted language on the individual who orchestrated the complications. Aiming at discretion, he withholds the name of the offender. But even if we were not otherwise informed, there is no difficulty, reading between the lines, to identify the obdurate confrere.

"There was," he tells us, "great objection and opposition on the part of the pastor of……who, concerned for damages to his own interests that the removal of the dry and arid site upon which St. Yon was built might cause him, on this occasion lost all credibility." He imagined that in a short time the estate (if the "Letters Patent" were not registered) would fall once again into the hands of the Lord of the Faubourg and that, in this way, his pastoral jurisdiction would be maintained "in a section of his parish that was mostly productive of sand". Nearly all the gentlemen in the Court of Accounts and Assistance were persuaded by this adversary of the Brothers...One of the chief magistrates promised the pastor to see that the project failed through inertia, by refusing his indispensable cooperation. On the other hand, the petitioners unleashed the influences over which they exercised control. Blain notes that "Riviere-Lesdo, the First President, was visited by M.- , a powerful friend of the Institute" (who was probably Camus Pontcarré).[57]

The pastor who declared war on the Brothers rather than give up an inch of empire was, of course, Father Jarrier-Bresnard. He was the most zealous of pastors, the most attentive to provide spiritual help to his flock, but at the same time the most intransigent, the most uncompromising, the most formidable of men when someone looked like he misunderstood what the pastor thought were his rights. At his hands,

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[53] Idem., Ibid., loc. cit.

[54] National Archives S 7046-47, Latin text and French translation of the Bull of February,1725, followed by the text of the "Letters Patent" which ordered the registration of the former (Published by Claude Simon). Lucard provides these letters as the fifth supporting document in Vol. I of his Annales, pp. 483-4. Inadvertently, his text (pg. 457) states that they "were sent on the 2nd of April".

[55] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 482, fourth supporting document

[56] Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 60, note # 2.

[57] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 188.

John Baptist de La Salle had suffered cruelly. But then it was this persecutor who had administered to him the Last Sacraments, gave an honorable reception to his mortal remains and, having built a tomb for him, dedicated an epitaph to him, on which he proclaimed him the most pious of his parishioners.

"The pastor of St. Sever" made a request of the Chamber of Accounts: he solicited information concerning 'the Letters Patent' in order to be able to oppose their registration (in case he should discover)... something contrary to his interests and to a transaction in which he was a stockholder.[58]It seems that this "transaction" dated from 1721, and if one were to consult the written report of the proceedings, from which we shall quote presently, the matter had to do with certain monetary contributions made to the parish of St. Yon.

M. Baumer set forth the content of the appeal to the Court and concluded that it was allowable: the inquiry into the Brothers case was postponed until all possible objections were heard.[59]

On Monday, the 18th of June, 1725, "the gentlemen treasurers, (former ones as well as those in office) of the parish of St. Sever" were assembled "at the stroke of the clock", in the presence of Father Pasdeloup, Vicar of the said parish". He reminded those present that the "Brothers of the Christian Schools, founded in St. Yon, a district of the parish" had presented "to our Lords of the Chamber of Accounts in Rouen founding 'Letters patent". The Brothers "claimed ratification without consulting the resident treasurers of St. Sever". But the latter "have an important interest in being consulted" in view of the fact that the previous owners of St. Yon an estate including over eight acres in land and buildings) "contributed to the reparations and the renovations both of the church and of the presbytery". If the registration is not opposed, the share that would have been encumbent upon the Brothers "would fall" upon the parishioners and their descendants. Furthermore, the Institute might "increase its land holdings to the detriment of both the residents and the church property".

After deliberation the assembly chose "M. Le Forestier, a former treasurer" to draw up a list of names, appoint a lawyer and undertake all necessary action.

On June the 21st Étienne Le Forestier "petitioned the Lord of the Court of Accounts, Assistance and Finance" not to proceed to the registration in question except "on condition...of contributing (on the part of the beneficiaries of the royal letters) to the reparations and renovations" of the church and presbytery as well as "to other needs and general necessities of the parish". The bailiff, Jean Mace served this document and delivered a copy of it to the Christian Brothers.[60]

The obstruction presumed by Blain does not seem to have materialized or, if it did, it was rather quickly dissolved, since the Court handed down its decision on the 2nd of July. But it is still certain that adversaries of the Institute had the judges' ear. The "Letters patent" were indeed registered, but with restrictive clauses -- "extremely burdensome conditions, harsh and humiliating", wrote the Canon indignantly.[61]

Effectively, the magistrates in Rouen had dealt with the Brothers as though the Pope's Bull had never been issued. Tithes would continue to be paid by the St. Yon community "in the same form and manner that they had been since the purchase" of the property by Brothers Barthélemy and Thomas; blessed bread would be continued to be offered to the parish; and deceased Brothers would, as in the past, be buried in the church of St. Sever or in the parish cemetery. The school would, as always, be administered by a cleric. Finally, the Brothers were to contribute to the expenses of repairing the church.[62]

This was a series of constraints incompatible with the rights and privileges of a regular Congregation, recognized as such by Rome and throughout the kingdom of France. Besides, the questions raised by the pastor of St. Sever and his churchwardens did not belong to the jurisdiction of the Court of Accounts; they should have been submitted to the judgment of the Archbishop. As for the decision regarding the school, it was the real surprise: the Brothers had been instructing the poor children in the

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[58] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 442-3, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, Report of the Court of Accounts of Rouen for 1725 and 1726, folio XLIX, and the Archives of to Court of Appeals of Rouen, minute-book of the Court of Accounts, Thursday, the 12th of June, 1725.

[59] Idem., Ibid.

[60] Quoted from the Register of deliberations of the parish of St.Sever in Rouen. Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine G 7606. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives. R-3

[61] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine G 7607

[62] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 189. Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pp. 443-4, following the Archives of the Court of Accounts, Monday, the 2nd of July (and not June as the author of the Annales inadvertently writes) 1725.

Faubourg St. Sever for twenty years; they had asked only to continue the work, the responsibility for which they had assumed, and, in this way, had "contributed" openhandedly to the operating expenses of the parish. The "Letters patent" of 1724 fully certified them to teach (especially) in charity schools. Since the written report of the proceedings of the deliberations of the parochial treasurers was silent on this point, it is impossible to view the initiative of the Rouen magistrates as anything but a gesture of distrust and a gratuitous irritant.

Some very good reasons determined Brother Timothy to reject the decree. The Court had ignored a plea denying its competence and decided on a matter of principle, in spite of M. Captot's, the attorney general's, conclusion.[63] Appeal to the Privy Council offered every probability of success; and such was the advice of President Pontcarré.[64]

For the end of the story we need only consult the Council's decree.[65] A comprehensive summary precedes the enactment:

"Upon the petition presented to the king, being in Council, by the Brothers of the Christian Schools established in the Faubourg St. Sever in the city of Rouen, declaring that the late Archbishop Colbert of Rouen and M. Pontcarré, First President of the Parlement of the same city, having invited the petitioners in 1705 to teach poor children in the four largest sectors of the city, the petitioners behaved with such zeal that at the present time they have more than eight-hundred children in their schools, who are taught tuition-free and without any fees...

Having been thwarted and grieved several times under various pretexts by Father Jarrier Bresnard, pastor of the parish of St. Sever in which the Brothers are established, they have had recourse to His Majesty's authority, which through his Letters Patent of September, 1724, thought it well, on the testimony of the magistrates of that city to retain them in their establishments. These "Letters patent" were addressed to the Parlement and to the Chamber of Accounts of the said city to be registered. The Pope himself, willing to favor this Institute has granted the petitioners a Bull, dated the 7th of the Kalends of February, 1724 (sic) in which, while giving them a special Rule, he constrained them to make solemn (sic) vows. This Bull, having been authorized by the "Letters Patent" of the 26th of April last, the letters were registered by the Parlement in Rouen with the approval of the Archbishop of the same city on the 12th of May last without any opposition.

It was only when the petitioners presented them to the Chamber of Accounts [66] that the pastor of St. Sever organized an opposition to them, which was followed by a variety of demands which are in no way within the competence of the Court and which can only be judged by the Archbishop of Rouen or by his delegates; such are the requirements (holding) that the petitioners are bound to perform their parochial duties in the church of St. Sever, to pay tithes on the property acquired by them or that they shall acquire in the future within the confines of the parish: since these methods of opposition can never be within the competence of the Chamber of Accounts, the petitioners were satisfied to state by a simple declaration that the agreement of which the pastor presumes to take advantage having been only provisionally executed and until otherwise arranged by the Archbishop, and things having been changed by him since the obtaining of the "Letters patent" and the Bull and that thus the Chamber of Accounts can never have knowledge of a matter which, belonging to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, must be sent to judges to whom such knowledge belongs.

To the detriment of this challenge upon which it was indispensable to establish justice, that Chamber,without instructions and against the conclusions of the attorney-general, ordered, in a decree dated the 2nd of the present month of July that tithes be paid...(and here are listed the articles of the decree which we have already examined).

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63 The mediation of this magistrate is referred to by Blain, Vol. II, pg. 189. We shall see that the decree of the Privy Council mentions the Attorney-general.

64 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 189.

65 National Archives, 1 7046-47. Taken from the Register of the Privy Council, verified against the original in parchment by the king's counsellors, notaries in Paris; "done, effective immediately, 5th of August, 1725.

66 The reference here is certainly to the "Letters Patent" of September, 1724 and not "the accompanying Letters" (Lettres d'attache) authorizing the Bull. The Court of Accounts had not right to examine these.

The arrangements of this decree are so contrary to the arrangements of the law that (the Brothers) have every reason to hope that His Majesty will have no difficulty in annulling it, because it is certain that the matter that it (i.e., the decree) judged is in no way within its competence, but clearly belongs of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Now, there is no more essential way of nullifying a judgment than that (of finding) a want of power on the part of the person of the judge, and still more when it mixes challenge with principle..."

The explanation of the facts was clear and the argument vigorous and irrefutable. The Privy Council subscribed to it unanimously.

Having reviewed the petition, the decree of July 2nd, 1725 and other documents attached thereto, and having heard the report, the king, being in Council, has reversed and annulled the said decree of the Chamber of Accounts in Rouen...in that it admitted the objection of the pastor of St. Sever in spite of the challenge of the petitioners based upon the incompetence of the said Chamber...; and moreover that the said decree would be executed in form and content. Done in the king's Privy Council, His Majesty being present, held at Chantilly on the 28th day of July, 1725. Signed Phelypeaux.

The writ of execution followed, with the "great seal in yellow wax". Such was "the pleasure" of the king that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were, without reservations, the beneficiaries of his "Letters Patent". As for the Bull, it "delivered the Institute", writes Blain, "from dependence" and from "slavery".[67] Only six years after De La Salle's death, the young Society of school teachers, visibly protected by its Holy Founder, anchor raised and wind in its sails, was setting off into the future.

[67] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 189

CHAPTER FOUR

The Assembly of 1725

The Institute and The Body of The Founder at St. Yon

Assembling at St. Yon during the month of August, 1725, thirty-one Brothers solemnly "received" the Bull of Pope Benedict XIII in the name of the entire Institute. This was the fourth General Chapter. The names of the capitulants and their assignments are found in a rather detailed report bearing Brother Timothy's signature.[1] Apart from the Superior and his Assistants, the assembly included nineteen Brothers Director in office and nine other Brothers who qualified as "Seniors". Thus, Article 13 of the Papal act of approval was immediately applied.[2]

The representatives of the new Congregation, having recalled its founding by "John Baptist de La Salle...of happy memory" and its growth "into a, great number of provinces of the kingdom", signed-in in the following order:

"Guillaume Samson-Bazin, called Brother Timothy, Superior-general. Claude François du Lac, called Brother Irenée, Director of Novices, and First Assistant to Brother Superior; Jean Le Roux, called Brother Joseph, Director of St. Yon and Second Assistant Jean Jacot, called Brother Jean, Director of Rouen; Jean Partois, called Brother Antoine, Director of Dijon; Jean Bouqueton, called Brother Jean François, Director of St. Denis of France; Charles Frappet, called Brother Thomas, Director of Marseille; Gilles Gerard, called Brother Hubert, Director of Paris; Michel Crest, called Brother Charles, Director of Guise. Jean Vautier, called Brother Cosmos, Director of Versailles; Jacques Nonex, called Brother Fiacre, Director of Avignon; Charles Bouilly, called Brother Jacques, Director of Alais; Pascal La Truite, called Brother Sixte, Director of Rheims; Jean Robin, called Brother Louis, Director of Rethel; Jacques Canappe, called Brother Quentin, Director of Troyes in Champagne; Louis Le Doux, called Brother Denis, Director of Boulogne; Charles Le Leup, called Brother Rigobert, Director of Calais; Pierre Martin Ronsin, called Brother Bernardine, Director of St. Omer; Michel (Le) Gendre, called Brother Barthélemy, Director of Laon; Jean Perrotin, called Brother Étienne, Director of Chartres; Barthélemy Purgorge, called Brother Bruno, Director of Darnetal; Jacques Gattellet, called Brother Clément, Sub-Director of St. Omer; Claude Longière, called Brother Dositheus, Procurator for Paris; Antoine Paradis, Brother Anastase Sub-Director in Paris; Vincent Floquet, called Brother Michel, Sub -Director in Versailles; Antoine Michael Langlace, called Brother Placide, former Director in Rheims; Jean François Cierge, called Brother Pierre, Director in Grenoble; Claude Fleurotte, called Brother Dominique, teacher of the senior resident students at St. Yon; Loup Bonnot, called Brother André, Director of the senior resident students at St. Yon; Claude Machon, called Brother Maur, drawing teacher at St. Yon; Antoine Dupré, called Brother Edmund, former Director in Troyes.[3]

The names of only three Directors of the earliest communities are missing: -- Moulins, Mende and Vans. The more recent schools in Nantes, Nogent-le-Retrou and Auxonne were not considered sufficiently important for their Directors to be seated at the Chapter. As Director of the House of Saint Yon was Brother Joseph, Assistant. The total number of schools on French soil at this time, comes to twenty-six. Rome continued to be the outpost, with its solitary, Brother Gabriel.

The nine "Seniors" had all entered the Institute during the life-time of the Founder. The eldest of these was Brother Clément, in the Institute since 1700; and the youngest "in Religion" was Antoine Langlace (the second Brother Placide) who entered in 1716, when the Founder was still Superior -- a rank that he gladly relinquished the following year. Overall, the capitulants were men of high quality, thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their Founder -- the columns upon which the edifice rested and upon which its construction would be completed. Most of them had already gained a name that was known to, and venerated by, the younger Brothers. They all persevered to the end. And, of this generation which

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[1] Motherhouse Archives, CG I 1. Reception of the Bull in Apostolicae dignitatis solio and the vow formula of the 15th of August, 1725. (Copies certified to be conformed by M.H. Brother Timothy on the 1st of February, 1726.)

[2] Cf. below

[3] We repeat that the spelling of proper names varies from one ms. to another.

would bear witness to the heroic days and would transmit the Founder's watch-word beyond the first-half of the eighteenth century, one representative would survive until the eve of the Revolution: Brother Sixte, born on the 6th of October, 1695 at Sennecy, in the diocese of Chalon-sur-Saone. After having been admitted into the Christian Brothers on the 2nd of June, 1717, he became Director of Rheims in 1725, and (five times member of General Chapters), he died in his 94th year at Marseille on the 11th of May, 1788.[4]

In order to assemble this "representative body" of the Institute, "following customary practices", it seems that on this occasion the Superior-general took the initiative in defining "the principal houses" and in designating the senior Brothers, for whom there is no evidence of an election having taken place.

According to Article 5 of the Bull, the Assembly took place in the city in which the Superior had his residence. Brother Timothy was free to settle on any community other than St. Yon and then convoke the capitulants to that place. His successors were to consider such a use of that right. But in 1725 Rouen remained without challenge or opposition the center of the Institute. It was there that both Brother Barthélemy and Brother Timothy had been elected; and there also were the remains of the Holy Founder and of the first Brother Superior. The "Letters Patent" of 1724 had, further, granted "a moral personality" only to St. Yon. Soon, it would be by the name of "the St. Yon Brothers" that, in the language of the day, De La Salle's disciples would be known. Supported by the Archbishop of Rouen and residing in the civil jurisdiction of the Parlement of Normandy, over many years the Brothers remained primarily (but not, of course, exclusively) inhabitants of Rouen.

On the 6th of August[5] the Chapter opened under the protection of the Holy Child Jesus and St. Joseph.[6] The first days were taken up with a retreat: it was preached by Father Bodin, Director of the Jesuit Novitiate in Rouen, by Father Malesco, also a Jesuit, and by Directors of the major seminary in the diocese.[7] Both the secular and the regular clergy presided over the beginnings of the new Congregation. The Jesuits, among whom De la Salle found comprehensive mind and strong support, directed the Brothers in their ultimate destination.

Among the retreat exercises, the reading of the Bull was scheduled. It was surrounded "with all possible veneration, respect and submission";[8] and we can imagine the joy and the gratitude. It was important to conform to the Pope's insistence upon pronouncing the three vows of Religion, a ceremony that had been arranged for August 15th. Before the Feast of the Assumption, Guillaume Samson-Bazin, called Brother Timothy who had been elected as General and Superior in perpetuity at the Assembly of the 7th of August, 1720 sought "humbly to resign". There was no reason to accept his resignation, "since he had been canonically elected". Nevertheless, the Assembly proceeded to a vote of confirmation "after much prayer and reflection". All "thirty Brothers" participated in the election-- the "Seniors" as well as the Directors (The written report makes no distinction between them and states simply that the number "thirty" was what was specified by the Bull). The re-election was unanimous.

To Brother Timothy was extended (as was quite proper) every confidence and sign of gratitude. The declaration read: We have once again promised him complete submission in union with Our Lord who obeyed until death, and death on the cross; we renounce everything that might be contrary to such obedience both for the present and the future.

And the Superior added: And I, in order to fulfill the obedience that I profess, accept the confirmation that our dear Brothers have voted me, with complete submission; and I affirm that I have nothing in view except the glory of God and the greater good of the Society.

The Brothers Assistant Jean and Joseph thought that they, too, should resign. It was necessary that the two members of the council be chosen "by the same (electors), in the same Assembly, and in the same way" as the Superior-general (Art. 3 of the Bull). The resignations were accepted. At the end of the vote-count, it was clear that the greatest number of votes had been cast in favor of dear Brothers Claude, François du Lac, called Brother Irenée, Director of Novices and Jean Le Roux, called Brother Joseph.

For this reason, in the list given above, which was drawn up at the close of the Chapter, Brother Irenée is described as "first Assistant". Jean Jacquot, whom he replaced, had certainly not lost the esteem of the Brothers. Indeed, he had acquitted himself honorably of whatever responsibilities the Institute's

[4] Ms. 11122 In the Bibliotheque Nationale, pg. 40

[5] Date given by Blain, Vol. II, pg. 192.

[6] Motherhouse Archives, CG I 1, Reception of the Bull.

[7] Blain, loc. cit.

[8] Reception of the Bull

leaders had imposed upon him over a period of twenty-nine years -- "inspector and teacher of the Brothers at the "Grande Maison" at Vaugirard, teacher in the Faubourg St. Antoine, Director of the community in Paris, and lastly, Director of the community in Rouen. Although (along with Jean Partois -- Brother Antoine -- and Gabriel Drolin), he was the most senior professed Brother, in 1725 he was only fifty-three years of age and lived until the 10th of March, 1759. His former colleague on the Council, Jean Le Roux, was re-elected, was his junior by only five-and-a-half years;[9] Le Roux had taken the habit in 1697 and pronounced perpetual vows on the 6th of May 1700.[10] He died on the 18th of February, 1729, of hardships brought on in the course of negotiations undertaken with Cardinal Bissy and the citizens of Meaux for the opening of a school in that city.[11]

Brother Joseph's advantage over Brother Jean was that he had a broader knowledge of the Institute's affairs, since, in 1708 Brother Joseph had been Visitor of the District of Rheims and, beginning in 1711, Visitor of all the houses situated in the provinces of the East, West, North and Center.[12]It is easy to understand why the capitulants did not want to deprive Brother Timothy of such a valuable aide.

But they were determined to place in the leadership, and immediately after the Superior himself, Brother Irenée (Claude François du Lac Montisambert) who, in so many ways, reminded them of De la Salle. In him they reverenced an austerity, a wisdom, a "sense of the supernatural" as well as a refinement and a distinction similar to the human and superhuman virtues of the Founder. His role as master of novices in a Congregation that was still small[13] did not so completely absorb him as to preclude concern for the spiritual direction and the temporal administration of the communities. On the contrary, it allowed him to retain a great deal of influence over the Brothers, and especially over the Directors of communities who had been his "pupils".

Furthermore, the Bull made it obligatory for the Assistants to "live in the house where the Superior resided" (Art.4). Brother Irenée, dwelling with the novices, and Brother Joseph, henceforth Director of St. Yon, would be in the right location daily to assist Brother Timothy and with him to form the Institute's supreme Council -- the government (formally collegial, although in practice monarchial) that the Brothers called "the Régime".

In the language of the report: “And we, called Brothers Irenée and Joseph humbly and respectfully accept what our Brothers ask of us and promise to give our advice to our dear Brother Timothy, our Superior, without regard to our own particular interests and without having any preference whether for persons, be they Brothers or people outside the Institute, or for individual communities...and to keep in mind, in the counsel we give him, nothing but the greater glory of God and the good of the Society.”

Once the Assistants were elected, the Superior was asked to choose the necessary officers, conformably to the Rule, such as Vicar, Secretary,[14] Procurator-general and others that he might judge appropriate...Full latitude was given him in this matter. Before the great day of the Vows there remained "several important matters to decide... in consequence of the 'Letters Patent' granted by His Majesty." In particular there was the question of placing beyond doubt the rights of the Congregation respecting the properties acquired in the name of several Brothers prior to legal recognition in 1724. Since the latter annulled, so far as needed, the effects of the Edict of 1666, it transferred the St. Yon estate from the hands of Brother Thomas, alias Charles Frappet, into the total and perpetual ownership of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

For "other funds and inheritances" the king's letters did not envisage any restrictions on the power of acquisition granted to the Institute. The Bull was just as broad and it ratified the ownership "of any property whatever that the said Institute already justly and canonically possessed".

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[9] Jean Jacquot was born in Chateau-Porcien on the 18th of October, 1672 and Jean Le Roux in Liesse on the 18th of February, 1678 (Record of Entrants

[10] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 11, vow book. (See Vol. I, of the present work, pp. 173.

[11] Blain, Vol. I, pg. 23. He gives the 21st of February as the date of Brother Joseph's death. The 18th is given in the Register of Entrants as well as by the vow book, which will be discussed late on.

[12] Cf. Vol. I of the present work, pp. 219-220.

[13] In 1721 thirteen were admitted to St. Yon; 12 in 1722; 14 in 1723, 19 in 1724 and 23 in 1725. (Ms.11122

[14] Brother Timothy chose as secretary Brother Antoine (Jean Partois) who had been the founder's secretary. In this capacity Brother Antoine countersigned the certified copy of the written report of the reception of the Bull, on the 14th of February, 1726. (Brothers Jean (the former Assistant) Maur, André, Dominique, Quentin and Placide also added their signatures to the document

Under the protection of these documents notarized deeds were drawn up "at St. Yon in Rouen" on the 14th of August, 1725 concerning real property situated "in St. Denis of France on Rue Clou-Fourre; on Rue Brouettes in the Faubourg St. Sever in Rouen; and on the Rue Neuve in Paris. Jean Boucqueton (called Brother Jean François and Jean Jacquot (called Brother Jean) were made legally responsible for St. Denis; Guillaume Sanson-Bazin (called Brother Timothy), Claude Longière (called Brother Dositheus), François du Lac (called Brother Irenée), Edme Francis Rivois (called Brother Hillary), Charles Haulterive (called Brother Zachary) and Michel Le Gendre (called Brother Barthélemy) for St. Sever; for the institution in Paris it was Brothers Timothy and Thomas and Jean Duyege (called Brother Onesimus). All of them declared that the real estate in question "was to remain in perpetuity attached to their community of St. Yon".

To these deeds of transfer there was attached "a general declaration" that Brothers Timothy, Irenée and Joseph signed in their respective capacities as Superior and first and second Assistants: Everything that shall be acquired and donated in the future shall remain to the advantage of the said community, conformably to the Bull and the "Letters Patent", dated below, and to the Decree of the Privy Council granted in consequence.[15]

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As a consequence of these indispensable deliberations, the "retreat" was extended. The Feast of the Assumption was its tenth and final day. And that day was selected for the Brothers' "consecration" because "of the very special devotion they had for the Most Blessed Virgin, Queen of the Angels, their sovereign Mother and Protectress".[16] On that August 15th the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the chapel where, habitually, the Brothers and their resident pupils attended Mass. The Archbishop had delegated his representative and Vicar-general, Urban Robinet -- whom Archbishop Vintimille du Luc would, in few years time, bring to Paris to be the "scourge" of the Jansenists [17] -- to receive the capitulants' vows. The Brothers meant to honor "the person of Our Holy Father the Pope" in the representatives of religious authority. It was to Rome that they directed their oath of fidelity, as, at the end of Mass and the Vicar -general's homily, they came one-by-one to kneel before the altar and read aloud the formula of their profession.

The formula was included in the written report of the reception of the Bull of 1725. It differs from the 1698 formula only by its reference to the obligations listed in Article 9 of the Bull and by the elimination (which, historically speaking, is quite regrettable) of the very beautiful detail, so characteristic of the style and thought of De La Salle, which he pronounced originally in 1691 and piously repeated three years later: "Even if, in order to do so, I should be obliged to beg and live on bread alone.[18] Certainly, the sons were not rejecting the thought of the father; the alteration, suggested by a prudential scruple, was purely verbal.[19] It was necessary to avoid misleading interpretations. Civil authorities (forever suspicious on this point) could not give grounds to believe that the Institute was a new "mendicant order".

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrated with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable Majesty, I consecrate myself to You, to procure Your glory as far as I am able and as You will require of me. And, for this purpose, I, Brother N , promise and vow to unite myself and to live in society with the Brothers of the Christian Schools who are associated to keep together and by association gratuitous schools, wherever I may be sent whether by the body of this Society or by the Superiors who have or shall have the government thereof. Wherefore, I promise and vow poverty, chastity and obedience and teaching gratuitously, and stability in the said Society, conformably to the Bull of approbation of our Institute granted by Pope Benedict XIII. Which vows of stability and obedience, as well to the body of the Society as to the Superior of the Institute, as of poverty, chastity and of teaching gratuitously, I promise to keep

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[15] National Archives S 7046-47. "Union of all funds at St. Yon". Copy "verified by the counsellors of the king, notaries in Paris, on the original certificate on paper...8th of February, 1727". hi this copy the document is dated the 14th of April, 1725. The month must be, surely, the 14th of August. In April the council had not yet rendered its decree; Brother Irenée was not an assistant, and the brothers were not "holding assembly" -- as the document declares -- for the business of the said community...In pursuance of the Bull of our Holy Father the Pope...And the "letters patent" of the king".

[16] Reception of the Bull

[17] Cf. Farcy, in Manoir de Saint-Yon, pg. 65, note #1.

[18] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 169 and 171-172.

[19] Cf. Vol.1

inviolably all my life. In testimony whereof I have signed. Done in our house of St. Yon in Rouen, this fifteenth day of August, the Feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin, in the one-thousand-seven hundred and twenty-five."

To the signatures of the Brothers whose names made up the list of the capitulants were added the names of Jean Potier, called Brother Victorinus, Urban Robinet, Vicar-general and Nicholas Depuis, Chaplain at St. Yon.

We recall that what we have here is only a copy, certified, however, as faithful by the Brother Superior-general. But the Motherhouse Archives does contains an original text, which is singularly moving and venerable. It is the book in which are written the perpetual vows of the Brothers of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, pronounced for the first time on the Feast of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin as vows of Religion, according to the Bull of our Holy Father Pope Benedict XIII, dated the 7th of the Kalends of February, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-four.

This record opens with Brother Timothy's formula signed in his own handwriting. Brother Assistant Irenée, who, along with his colleague, Brother Joseph, on the first page countersigned the Superior's pledge; the former also filled the second page with his subtle and elegant handwriting, in which the word "Virgin" is written out entirely in capital letters. And from then on, as far as page thirty-one the religious professions of the capitulants follow one after the other.[20]

After these came the Brothers who had been appointed to St. Yon or who belonged to the Motherhouse community when they were committing themselves definitively to the Institute.[21] On the 2nd of September, 1725 there was François Dromart (Brother Joachim); and, then, on the Feast of Mary's Nativity, Charles Haulterive (Brother Zachary), and Jean Duyege (Brother Onesimus); on the 22nd of September, Jean Josquin (Brother Simeon) and Pascal Moncrif (Brother Didacus). On the 16th of June, we hit upon the names of François Blein (Brother Ambrose) and Georges Berin (Brother François), two of the most intellectually gifted and zealous disciples of the Founder, who had been employed by him in the reformatory and resident school, and who were destined to fulfill long and happy careers. There is also the name of Jean d'Auge (Brother Bernard), De La Salle's first biographer.[22]

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For these men of great faith, of austere conscience and of tireless labor who were members of the Chapter of 1725, there remained but a single task. They themselves had defined its guidelines and, so to speak, had manifested the heart of it on the last page of the summary of their deliberations:

"We the undersigned Brothers, elected as well as electing, having drawn up and signed the formula of our perpetual vows, have, in the same assembly proceeded to the verification of our Rule and Constitutions in order to be conformed to the spirit of the Bull which has been granted to us...which Rule and Constitutions we have put in order after serious inquiry and due deliberation throughout thirty-two sessions; and, to this end, we declare that we have observed all the necessary formalities, preceded and followed by much prayer and many Communions, wishing that the spirit of our Institute, its Rule and Constitutions remain in force and vigor in perpetuity. This is what we promise God and our Holy Father the Pope, both for ourselves and for the body of our Institute, as well as a thorough-going obedience and submission to the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church, in accordance with the final wish of our worthy Founder, J.B. de La Salle...Done at St. Yon, in Rouen, the 31st of August, one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-twenty-five."[23]

Before all else, there is the sense of being Catholic. The Founder's testament is the fundamental law: life, faith and action are all established on a fixed and firm plan, which is the plan of the Church itself. There shall be "no separation" from Rome![24] The Rule will have validity only to the extent that it conforms to the decisions of the Holy See; the faith will be secure only in so far as it is the Roman faith. A formal

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[20] It should be noted that the name of Brother Victorinus (Jean Potier) replaced the name of Brother Barthèlemy (Michel Le Gendre) among the thirty-one capitulants. The latter, however, continued on as a Christian Brother. He died in the Mezière Community on the 24th of December, 1742.

[21] The date and place of death of professed Brothers are given in the book, either at the end of their vow formula or on the margin.

[22] The St. Yon vow book, bound in parchment, classified under numbers 11 (old) and 23 (new), has 342 pages, small, in-folio, plus a 14-page index of names. Numbers 170 to 179 are, mistakenly, given twice. The last vows are dated 1767

[23] This document is signed by all the capitulants (including Brother Victorinus), except for Brother Joseph

[24] Cf. De La Salle's last will and testament, Vol. I of the present work, pp. 362.

"promise" was made to God and to the Pope concerning the observance of the Constitutions special to the Institute as well as general obedience to the successor of St. Peter.

After the Bull had been granted, Dom Farin, in his History of Rouen, says that the Brother Superior-general sent two of the Brothers to thank His Holiness..They were presented by His Eminence Cardinal Polignac. His Holiness granted them extraordinary indulgences in a Bull which was sent of the 4th of March, 1727...They also obtained several remarkable relics (among them a small piece of the "True Cross") which were placed in several reliquaries at St. Yon by Father Saint-Jal, now Bishop of Uzes.[25]

The two Brothers are identified through the *Stato delle anime* of the parish of Santa Susanna for the year 1727. They were Brothers Fiacre and Thomas: -- Fiacre (Jacques Nonnez), former Director of Boulogne and later "Visitor of the houses of the Society" and Thomas, the Procurator. They stayed at Via Ferrea, near the Capuchin monastery, with Brother Gabriel,[26] the marvelous solitary, who, through the presence of his confreres and the blessings lavished upon his Institute was finally recompensed for his heroic perseverance. After twenty years, Brother Timothy renewed and fulfilled the gesture of the Founder, who sent two Brothers to Rome to ask of God the grace that the Society would be always totally submissive to the Church.[27]

This seems to have been the will that presided over the "thirty-two sessions" and over "the verification" of the Rule of 1717-1718. Before considering, in a general way, this up-dating process, we should note that in fulfillment of the promise made in order to obtain, in spite of every human obstacle, the "Letters Patent", a fast was henceforth prescribed for the Brothers for the Vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The Rule of Government did not need to be altered. The Bull preserved the heart of it; and it seems to have been thought premature to publish the whole of it integrally. The capitulants were satisfied to order a public reading, twice a year, of the "Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute" and of the articles that had to do with the "visit of Rule" to Communities.[28]

Regarding the Common Rule the capitulants decided upon the publication of a revised text. Their decree was executed in 1726. We shall now inquire into the evidences of their detailed activity in the printed product of that year.

The Motherhouse Archives has two copies of the "Rule and Constitutions of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools approved by Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XIII". They were printed in Rouen at Antoine Le Prevost's, on Rue St. Vivien in 1726, "with the approbation and permission of the Superiors". A copy numbered "4", adds an accompanying note, belonged "to the cause of the canonization of the venerable De La Salle". On one of the covers of the ancient binding there is represented an episcopal coat of arms, and on one of the last pages there is the early seal of the Institute (St. Joseph with the Child Jesus).

Copy number "42" is the product of a special printing; the pagination is not strictly the same as number "4"; and it contains printing errors not found in the other. Apart from the fact that its final chapters of "42" differ in several points of detail from the corresponding chapters of the other volume, for the daily schedule, it contains the regulation for the community of St. Yon. It is easily seen that this copy was intended for the special use of the Motherhouse and, in particular, for the novitiate.

Both copies must have had frontispieces. Copy "4 2" has retained its frontispiece, which is the portrait of the Founder drawn post mortem by Du Phly.[29] In all probability it was also used in copy "4" and was removed from it by a hand, pious, but careless of a book's integrity.

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[25] Op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 151. The text of the indulgences referred to are preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, CG I 1.

[26] See Vol. I of the present work, Part Two, Chap. viii.

[27] De La Salle's will, loc. cit.

[28] Historique et décisions des Chapitres generaux, pp. 16-18; Blain, Vol. Ii, pg. 147; See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 534 et sq.

[29] See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 414. The same portrait is found at the beginning of old editions of Meditations for the Time of Retreat and Meditations for Sundays. Scotin's engraving, reproducing Leger's painting (the frontispiece of our first volume) appears for the first time only with Canon Blain's book in 1733.

2 Ibid., Vol. I of the present work, pp. 428.

In any case, we are here dealing with an instance of two versions of a first edition. In 1718, the Common Rule was still in manuscript: Brother Barthélemy had merely sent a copy to each of the communities.[30]

The Preface emphasizes "the advantage" that had befallen the Brothers of the Christian Schools for having been numbered among "the Religious Orders". It invited them to work courageously for their perfection, through the exact observance of their Rule...if they mean to preserve the primitive spirit that the Venerable Servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle, their Founder, introduced into it, by establishing it in such a wonderful and marvelous way. Indeed, it is asserted that he was the author of the Rule "as it is lived in the Society"; he observed it faithfully and had it observed by the Brothers for the nearly forty years he lived among them, but much more by the example of his holy life than by the oral or written instructions he gave them. In the Bull obtained since his death...are included the principal points of the Rule that this holy priest composed, and from which they were drawn as their source.

The wording of the cover-letter, printed at the end of the volume, once again attests to the authenticity of its origin:

"We, the undersigned, Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send to our dear Brothers of (and here a space is left blank) the Rule printed below, conformed to the Bull of approbation of our Institute granted by our Holy Father Pope Benedict XIII, containing 36 chapters along with the formula of vows; which Rule we declare to be as written by the Servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle and then arranged with the concurrence of the Brothers Director of our Society assembled at St. Yon in the Faubourg St. Sever in Rouen, in May of 1717, and such as it was determined and decreed, both by us and by the Senior Brothers and Directors of the Institute at our General Assembly held also at St. Yon last August, 1725, so as to be henceforth and always observed by our Brothers: in testimony whereof we have signed. Done in Rouen, at St. Yon, this first of April, 1726." Signed. Br. Timothy, Superior of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The 1718 text was divided into thirty-two chapters. We have just noted that the 1726 edition contained thirty-six chapters. Into chapters XVII and XVIII were inserted those pages that had to do with the vows, which were henceforth to be the basis for new legislation.

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools shall make perpetual vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, stability in the Institute, and teaching gratuitously.

The Brothers who shall not have attained the age of twenty-five shall make vows for three years only; they shall renew them every year for the same length of time...until they are admitted to perpetual vows.

The Brothers who shall be twenty-five years of age completed shall not make perpetual vows unless they have had vows for three years.

No Brother shall be permitted to make triennial vows who has not been at least two years in the Institute and who has not been tested for a year in the novitiate and one year in school."

Further, no one would be authorized to pronounce even temporary vows without a previous inquiry bearing upon the sincerity of his vocation and on the regularity of his life. In order to be perpetually professed it will be necessary to have given proof of virtue in conformity with the obligations of the Religious state and supported by a substantial catechetical knowledge.

Prior to profession the Brothers were to repeat the novitiate program for three or six months, "according to their needs" and as "the wisdom of the Brother Superior" shall decide.

The Superior or, in his absence, one of the Brothers Assistants, would preside at the ceremony of perpetual vows. The *Veni Creator* will be sung; and then the candidate, holding a lighted candle, will kneel on the steps of the altar and pronounce his pledge. Thanksgiving will be expressed in the form of the *Te Deum.* Once the prayer shall have been completed, the newly professed will receive the "accolade" from their elders "in Religion".

Blain observes that in (De La Salle's) view all Brothers were not admitted (to perpetual profession), but only those who showed a very strong vocation, the necessary talents, and a will determined to give themselves to God without reserve.[31]

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[30] Cf. Vol.1

[31] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 360. He speaks of "solemn vows". But even the Brothers' perpetual vows are "simple vows" which the pope may dispense totally, and not merely "dispense", as in the case of solemn vows. Such simple vows do not involve "civil death" as in ancient French legislation. The professed preserved the right to inherit and to dispose of property.

The Institute, then, included Brothers who, in good conscience, retained the possibility of "returning to the world". But if they made triennial vows, and if, conformably to one of the paragraphs of Chapter XVII, they renewed them every year "for the same length of time", they would, by such a procedure, find themselves always bound by vow, unless, by a deliberate refusal, they withdrew from the Institute. In these circumstances, was their liberty fully protected? We shall see that this point of Rule became a target for canonists' interpretations.

"Serving Brothers" were admitted to vows in the same way as "School Brothers". They continued to be distinguished by the brown of their robe and mantle; and they could not be promoted to the principal tasks of the Congregation. But it appears that, depending upon aptitudes, the way from their work to that of "the black-robed" remained open.

In his *Geographical Description and History of Northern Normandy*, published in 1740, Dom Toussaint Plessis, after having written about these first "two sorts of candidates", asserts that there existed a third kind at St. Yon: the volunteers, who make no vows and who are employed only in inferior tasks, such as in other Orders are performed by externes or oblates.[32]

This statement is verified by the Motherhouse obituary record:[33] where three "volunteers" are listed, Jean Hue (died in 1749 at the age of 76), Louis Lozerai (died in 1752, at the age of 70) and Louis Lavavasseur (who, at sixty-five years of age, died in 1769).[34] The Brothers then, over a period of time, following the Jesuits' example, at least for their Normand province, accepted assistance from simple people who refused to sell their services, but "volunteered" themselves to a Religious Congregation for the love of God, and, sharing the daily existence of the Community and assuming the responsibility for the heavy manual work, united their humble merits with those of consecrated souls and ended their days in peace.

After this digression we return to the Rule of 1726 and Chapter XVIII of the new edition which, as a whole, defines "the obligation of the vows". In particular, it develops the definition of the "vow of teaching gratuitously" in order to avoid all uncertainty and to close off loopholes. By (this) vow we undertake to bring to bear all our concerns to instruct children well and educate them in a Christian manner; to employ well the entire time intended for this purpose; neither to demand anything nor receive anything from pupils or their parents as remuneration whether as a present or for whatever other reason there may be; and not to use the parents of pupils at some work, in the hope that they will do it without requiring a recompense. In these words, which bear the stamp of De La Salle, a sort of anxious solicitude becomes visible. For the Brothers, founded for the service to the poor, tuition-free teaching is a vital principle. For it their Founder tolerated neither relaxation, reservation nor compromise within limits of the popular school. To maintain it, however, would be troublesome: teachers in pay schools, cities which subsidized Brothers' institutions, people who cherished the thought that, for one reason or another, they controlled public opinion, would discover grounds for criticism in this rigid rule. Superiors-general would have to struggle: armed with the text of the Bull, advised by impartial and competent jurists, they would defend their turf foot-by-foot, and, at least during the 18th century, they would win the day.

These were the most important of the works of the Chapter of 1725. Capitulants who had planned it handled the Rule of 1718 with the greatest respect. The division of the former Chapter XXX (Exercises for Feast Days) into Chapters XXXII, XXXIII, XXXIV, and XXXV, the union of the former Chapters XXXI (Vacation times) and XXXIII (Time of Common Retreats during Vacation) into the single Chapter XXXVI, changes of wording, some supplementary recommendations on the subject of the spiritual life (At their own request or upon the orders of the Superiors Brothers could be "sent back to the novitiate" for religious renewal or for a better knowledge of the Rule) certain details concerning prayers for the deceased and at the funerals of members of the Congregation (the Brothers "may be buried with face uncovered, dressed in their robe, with a rosary and small crucifix in their hands"). These details certainly had their explanation and their value; and they demanded hours of reflection, discussion, writing and patient adaptation. Overall they were grounded upon the changeless foundation whose law had been conceived by St. John Baptist de La Salle.

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Hoping to give his readers an exact idea of "the St. Yon or the Brothers of the Christian Schools", Dom Toussaint Plessis wrote: It is an Order of laymen founded in our own time for the education of youth

[32] Op. cit., Pg. 116. (Text provided by Edward Pelay as an appendix to his reprinting of his account of the Translation.. Du corps de l'abbe de la salle..., Rouen, 1875, pg. 23.

[33] Preserved in the city library of rouen, dept. Of mss. Copy in the motherhouse archives, HA m 13.

[34] The three are listed with the note "volonteer"; and these three are not included in the catalogue

and was only recently acknowledged as participating in the Religious Life. Such were the first monks who edified the Church by the fame of their virtue and sustained it by their prayer and works of penance. As time went on, the early bishops incorporated them, as a band of auxiliaries, into the ecclesiastical state. These (Brothers), without aspiring to such a high rank, nevertheless work in such a way as to make themselves worthy of it; and the Church, since it is above all special rules, perhaps one day will admit them to the functions of the priesthood...[35]

It was a good-natured hope and revealed a kind heart. But the Brothers did not view their future in the same way as the Benedictine did. They were to remain steadfast to the law of their foundation. In 1726, the Superior-general added to the publication of the Rule a second edition of the Collection of Various Short Treatises, Not only would the framework of daily life not vary, but even the prayer-formulas -- what one might call the Congregation's "family liturgy" -- would become, from this time on, appreciably the same as they are at the present time.

In 1906 in Chartres a small manuscript was found bearing on its opening pages the year "1738". Quite probably it was edited before that date which, because of where it is placed, seems to indicate when the initial binding, now gone, was done. It is entitled *Exercises of Piety*, and it contains the traditional community prayers of the Brothers during the generalate of Brother Timothy:[36] Morning Prayer, prayer at the end of Mental Prayer, prayers for different times of the day, the prayer at Particular Examen, and Evening Prayer. They are beautiful texts which John Baptist de La Salle drew from the common sources in the Church or from the Sulpician tradition and grouped, adapted and arranged to serve as a support for the thoughts and resolution of the Brothers. Some of them had dropped out of modern editions. Thus, in the closing lines of Evening Prayer, the following Collect, which is in the grand style: *Deus ineffabilis misericoardiae, qui non solum homo sed filius hominis fieri dignatus es, et mulierem matrem in terris habere voluisti, qui Deum patrem habebas in coelis...*etc. Litanies are fewer today: the Litanies of the Divine Child Jesus, of St. Joseph[37] and the very moving and majestic Litany of Divine Providence are no longer said; in this matter, of course, there was need to conform to new directions in Catholic piety. But with the title "Aspirations to Jesus Suffering and Dying", the "Litany of the Passion" has survived. It used to be said "after dinner as a preparation for recreation", and at present it follows Particular Examen: Jesus poor and abject...Jesus stript with infamy ...Jesus, insulted, spit upon, beaten, outraged and treated as a fool...have pity on us. De La Salle borrowed this harsh and horror-filled language from Jean Bernières whose famous book, *The Interior Christian*, had nourished fervent souls since 1661.[38]

St. Yon offered the most ample and most striking model of this sort of religious life -- "indeed, of monastic life", in many of its features. It is not surprising that Dom Farin (no doubt, a good judge) admired it. Canon Blain speaks of the "edifying" order that reigned there: Everything took place in such a great silence that outsiders frequently did not perceive that (this residence) was occupied. Nevertheless, ordinarily, more than a hundred people of varying ages, temperaments, character, condition and responsibilities lived there under the same roof.[39]

Not without difficulty, the Brothers were finally masters in their own house. The claims of the pastor of St. Sever had been dismissed in civil court. But the Privy Council had not annulled the decree of the Court of Accounts except for the want of form and incompetence. Father Jarrier-Bresnard was still free to bring his complaint into the ecclesiastical court. However, the joint efforts on the part of the Archbishop's office and that of the First President persuaded him to accept a compromise. On the 14th of

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[35] Description ...de la Haute Normandie, Vol. I, pg. 114 (In Petal, pg. 21).

[36] This document, discovered in the Brothers' institution in Chartres, by Brother Adolph of Mary, Visitor of the District of Mans, was given to the Brother Provincial, Sylverus, who deposited it in the Motherhouse Archives, R(3), with an accompanying note, which explained how he had come by it.

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[38] The "Offerings of the Most Holy Infant Jesus" have replaced the former, while the Quicumque (in honor of St. Joseph) has taken the place of the latter.

[39] Copies can be found in the Bulletin des Ecoles Chretiennes, for January, 1926, pp. 54-5.

July, 1727, representatives of the Superior-general, Brothers Joseph and Thomas (the latter had just returned from Italy) met, at M. Pontcarre's residence, an adversary who was prepared to sign a peace treaty. In the presence of the master of the house and the Vicar-general, Father Urban Robinet, and before the notaries Oliver Leviderel and Louis Mauduit, it was agreed that by an annual payment of six livres the Brothers would be dispensed from the tithes which the pastor of the parish had meant to collect from the St. Yon estate. Further, by means of a second payment of ten livres the Brothers obtained the right to open a cemetery on their property, where the members of their Community, their resident pupils and servants could be buried.[40]

The first person to be buried in the St. Yon cemetery was Olivier Le Riche on. the 3rd of July, 1728. He was "a native of [41]Caen, a mathematics teacher and a handwriting inspector", who had retired to the Brothers' on the preceding March 10th; he (according to the internment certificate signed by Brothers Irenée and Maur and by the Chaplain, Father Virenque),...having been brought to us by Madame Graveline, a virtuous lady resident with the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, who out of charity and for friendship's sake paid his room and board...He died...at the age of sixty-six years in the sentiments of a good and perfect Christian. [42]

Three months later, on the 4th of October, a young religious, Brother Chriseuil, died, whose mortal remains would await in blessed ground the other residents of the Motherhouse. Jacques Ramery, born in Comines, in the diocese of Tournai, on the 8th of November, 1700 and entered the Society on the 15th of September, 1726 and pronounced his first vows on the 22nd of September, 1728, the Feast of St. Yon. He lived like a saint and, exactly seven days after making his vows, he returned his soul to God "in the sentiments of a perfect Christian and a true Religious", according to the testimony of Brothers Irenée and Maur and Father Le Chevalier, resident Chaplain. [43]

From 1729 the Blessed Sacrament was reserved continuously in the small chapel, where Mass was said daily, "even during the Easter solemnities"; and the pupils in the resident school made their First Communion there in a solemn ceremony. All of these privileges had been granted by Archbishop Tressan who, further, authorized the Superior-general to select confessors for the institution from among the priests in the diocese approved for this ministry.[44]

Freed from parish obligations and anxious to provide a divine worship suitable in scope and splendor, the Brothers were bound to think of building, at the headquarters of their Institute, a church of vast proportions. According to Blain, the occasion of this undertaking was the unexpected recovery of a rather sizeable debt.[45]

On the 7th of June, 1728 Father Robinet blessed the cornerstones: -the cornerstone, on the "Gospel side", was placed "in the name of the Archbishop", with the following inscription on a plaque made of "Cornwall metal" : Louis de La Vergne de Tressan, Archbishop of Rouen, Primate of Normandy, Counsellor to the King in all his Councils, formerly first Almoner to His Royal Highness the Duke of Orleans, Canon, and Count of Lyons, in the reign of Louis XV, on the 7th of June, 1728.[46]

The plaque for the second stone, on the "Epistle side", contributed to the perpetuation of the Brothers' gratitude for the powerful friend whose initiatives, advice and ever-ready dedication were, for twenty-three years, deployed for the greatest good of the Institute in Normandy. President Pontcarré returned the affection that De La Salle had inspired in him to the spiritual heirs of the saintly priest. He particularly appreciated the wisdom and the graciousness of Brother Assistant Joseph and told him that he came to St. Yon the more willingly when he was sure of meeting him there. He edified the Brothers by his

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[40] St. Yon obituary register.

[41] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 394.
Blain, Vol. II, pg. 34.
Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 35-6, following the register of the parlement of Normandy, in the Archives of the Court of Appeals for Rouen

[42] St. Yon obituary register.

[43] Op. cit., and catalogue of Brothers

[44] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 463, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine

[45] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 193.

[46] Dom Farin, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 151.

faith, which was the faith of a very lofty soul, loyal, poised and fearless.[47] And when he wished to gather his thought in the shelter of the estate, the Brothers saw to it that the President's solitary meditation was respected.

It was only right that the future church be built upon a foundation that would preserve the memory of this man. "This stone", read the inscription, “was placed by M. Pierre Nicolas Camus, Knight, Lord of Pontcarré and other places, Counsellor to the King in all his Councils, Honorary Master of Petitions in the King's Palace, First President of the Parlement of Normandy, in the reign of Louis XV, the 7th of June, 1728.”

The metal plaques bore, besides, the engraved arms of the Archbishop and the magistrate. On the opposite faces there was written: This Church is dedicated to the Divine Infancy of Our Lord, under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph and of St. Yon.[48]The honor of placing the cornerstones was accorded to "the first two functioning city supervisors, named M. Mellon Cecile and M. Louis Judde, because of a change of office that was ocurring at that time" .[49]

Writing the second volume of his *Life of De La Salle*, Blain (probably in 1732) notes that "the work on the building was already pretty far advanced". "At no cost to themselves", the Brothers "had the site of the late President Carel's beautiful mansion". On their own property they had all the sand they needed for the stonework; the architect was one of their own people; and the Motherhouse and the resident school supplied "a part of the workforce".[50]

The personnel at St. Yon, then, (Brothers, "royal" residents and domestic servants) had, single handedly, accomplished the task. Brother Irenée’s' biographer describes him, the former gentleman-officer, as "helping carpenters and masons and carrying the hod", straining with such efforts that "he spit blood", and letting out a groan (which "in his eyes was a sin") when he was injured by a timber that had fallen on his hand. [51] Among the delinquents in the reform school, there were sculptors, painters and ironworkers. With a certain sense of regained freedom, they readily volonteered for work that challenged their talents. And many were the amateurs who, put to work, turned out to be as capable as the professionals.

The St. Yon church, which still exists as a historical witness surrounded by the modern structures of a Normal School, bespeaks the great sadness of all secularized places of worship. The front grating, eaten with rust, still bears the Brothers' *Signum fidei*" and the star. Over the main entrance there is the short, but magnificent inscription *fundavit eum altissimus.* The facade--an amalgam of two styles (the Doric and the Ionic), one superimposed upon the other, its niches devoid of their statues, its frieze with the sober triglyphs, its eight connected columns, its double pilasters, its pediment which rounds off between the upper window, and the cross, flanked by buttresses that terminate at urns -- deserves Dom Farin's praise, who said that it was "in good taste". We may prefer to say, in the words of a fine Rouen architect, M.Chirol, that it is a student's conscientious homework. As a whole, the building, spacious and lightsome, answered to its purpose. The choir was reserved for the Brothers. The arms of the transept, the height of which was the same as the rest of the church were laid out for the residents of the "reform school". The pupils of the "free" resident school occupied a part of the nave. A slender hexagonal steeple (with a "lamp" erected in the middle) lightened the heaviness of the structure.

Nothing in all of this rivaled the splendors of Normandy's capitol. The church of the new Institute was not trying to attract attention. In this construction what was being sought after was simplicity, solidity, convenience, beauty of dimensions and correct design in the style of the times.[52]

Interior decoration was immediately begun and accomplished with care for the glory of God. In 1737, Brother Timothy had the stained glass windows put in place and the walls done. He commissioned Louis Saint-Igny to do two paintings: the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and the *Adoration of the Magi*, for the two altars in the nave. In 1745 Brea-Major completed a painting that represented St. Yon, the patron of

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[47] On the character of President Pontcarré, see Vol. I of the present work, pp. 241.

[48] Dom Farin, Vol. I, pp. 151-2.

[49] Op. cit. Dom FarM means that the Brothers wished to please both the out-going and the in-coming magistrates.

[50] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 193.

[51] La Tour, pg. 95.

[52] For Dom Farin's description of the building and the Mr. Chirol's evaluation, see the book by Canon Farcy, pastor of St. Sever, le Manoir de Saint-Yon , Rouen, Henri Delafontaine, ed., 1936, pp. 56-7.

the Church and the institution, which was placed at the far end of the sanctuary. And in 1746 the younger Deshays assembled a similar composition representing St. Sever, patron of the parish.[53]

In 1738 the Motherhouse received several relics of "Sanctus Ionius", under whose patronage it had been placed. They had come from Arpajon (formerly Chatre) where the cult of the martyr, and disciple of St. Denis, had been perpetuated. Father Villerval, pastor of Arpajon, had diverted them from his reliquary at the repeated insistance of Brother Thomas and on orders from the Archbishop of Paris.[54] The Brothers received the holy relics with a great deal of pomp.

The Brothers gave scope and splendor to religious ceremonies, without, however, being unfaithful to the rubrics of the liturgy. It was a time when the dioceses of France, one after the other, were adopting the Breviary and Missal edited in Paris by Vigier, Mesenguy and Coffin. Right down to "Sequences" and hymns (which, in any case, had indisputable merit) the autonomy of the Gallican church was being affirmed. But the significant detail was that St. Yon adhered to the Roman Rite. In 1737 there was published in Rouen by Claude Jore a collection of "Masses and Benedictions Sung by the Residents of St. Yon". An abridged edition was published in 1740 by Le Prevost.

Concerning these books the Vicar-general Censy wrote to the Brother Superior-general: The Mass and Benediction books that you have had printed to be used in your institution have been examined by the Archbisop's Council, my Very Dear Brother; and we are agreed to allow you to use them, although these services do not conform to the new Breviary; but since they are taken from the Roman (Breviary) and from Holy Scripture, selected tastefully and properly, we find nothing objectionable in their being used henceforth as your usual books for solemn feasts.

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We have pursued our account of the church at the Motherhouse up to about 1747, the year that Brother Timothy received the Archbishop's permission to build vaults in the edifice for the burial of members of "the Régime". We needed this perspective in order to get something more than a fragmentary glimpse of the church, its decoration and the ceremonies celebrated in it. Retracing our steps, we turn to the important scene that occurred there in 1734. We refer to the translation of the mortal remains of J.B. de La Salle. The day that the Brothers recovered the possession of their Founder's body crowned efforts that had been underway since 1721. Having attained full civil rights and, with the approval of Rome and the consent of the king, organized its government, published its Constitutions and, amidst the surrounding churches and monastic buildings, raised its chapel Cross to the top-most point above St. Yon, the Institute could finally lay claim to the precious deposit which had been refused it in 1719. With the "return of the" Holy Founder's "ashes" an era closed, and a new historical record was about to be opened.

To relive that great day is to draw closer, once again, to the Founder, and, for a moment, to bring him back, so to speak, to earthly life, and to renew the experience of his presence and his enduring activity in a world in which the Communion of Saints produces its mysterious but unfailing effects. In order to achieve such a state we have the support of a contemporary account. We refer to the account of the way in which De La Salle's body, buried in the parish of St. Sever, Faubourg of Rouen, was carried on the 16th of July, 1734 to the Residence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, into the newly constructed church, dedicated to the Holy Child Jesus.

Slender (it is only four pages in length), in-quarto, without a date or place of printing, it is frequently bound together with copies of Blain's book.[55] That he is the author of the "Account..." there are several indications, which we shall disclose as we proceed.

The anonymous author begins by describing the sufferings of the Brothers "when they saw De La Salle's body being borne from their house, after his death". And he goes on to summarize the steps that were to lead them to the recovery of their property -- negotiations for the "Letters Patent", for the Bull and for the construction of a chapel on the St. Yon estate that would have the dimensions of a church.

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[53] For the report of the opening of the reliquary of St. Yon at Arpagon on the 7th of July, 1738, see the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, d. 537; Copy in the Motherhouse Archives; and Farcy, op. cit., pg. 65.

[54] Canon Farcy, op. cit., pg. 61. These two paintings were moved into the present church of St. Sever at the time of the deconsecration of the chapel at St. Yon. Father Farcy situated them excellently -- the first in the chapel of his church which is dedicated to St. John Baptist De La Salle, and the other in the chapel in memory of those who died in W.W.I (1914 -1918).

[55] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 103, note #2, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Cf. Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 64.

The undertaking accomplished in a short period of time (with a success that surprised no less the Brothers themselves than the citizens of Rouen), and everything (having been) arranged for the reception of the De La Salle's mortal remains, the Brothers' Superior took the best means to have them transported with dignity from the parochial church of St. Sever to a vault in the Brothers' church, prepared for this purpose.[56]

Father Jarrier-Bresnard was still pastor of St. Sever. Since the compromise of 1727, no cloud arose between him and the Brothers. Better still, he was full of goodwill for St. Yon. Even in troubled times, his veneration for the Founder of the Institute made itself felt. He knew that he couldn't give a more demonstrative witness of his real views than by surpassing the Brothers' expectations. According to a promise which, "on several occasions", he seems to have made, "on his own initiative" to Brother Timothy, he offered to return the body. In this matter, he differed from "the parish treasurers" who, meaning "to put obstacles in the way of any translation", were told by the pastor that the authority to exhume belonged to him alone.

It was also necessary to get the Archbishop's permission, which was obtained. The First President was sounded out as well: he was Geoffroi-Mace Pontcarré, the son of Nicolas Pierre, who had resigned in 1730 and retired to Paris. There was nothing to fear from this sector; since the son sought only to please the father by giving satisfaction to the former President's protégés.

In the Primatial See of Normandy Nicolas de Saulx Tavannes had succeeded Louis Tressan, who had died during the previous year. At first the new Archbishop expressed the determination of himself performing the rites of "the removal and translation of the body" of De La Salle. But, then, he changed his mind: It was decided that Father Bridel, Metropolitan Archdeacon and Vicar-general of the archdiocese would perform the whole ceremony and that the Archbishop would come the next day to bless the church and celebrate Holy Mass.

Assured of the success of the enterprise, the Brother Superior-general wrote to all the Brothers Director of houses with schools throughout France to come to St. Yon as soon as possible...He could not give them a greater consolation, since nearly all of them (the author added, speaking in the present tense) knew De La Salle, were trained at his hands, and several of them were witnesses to the beginnings of the Institute.

On the 16th of July, "between three and four o'clock in the afternoon", the tomb was opened in the presence of the clergy, M. Pontcarré Viarme, Master of Petititons to the king's council, and brother to the First President, Geoffrey Pontcarré. The tombstone, "of an enormous size, took a lot of time and effort to move". And there was no less difficulty in clear out the quite deep gravesite.

The bones were found intact. The flesh, like the clothing, had fallen into dust. Also surviving was the small wooden cross which had been slipped between the fingers of the dead man, the button from the top of his biretta, the fringe of his stole and his shoes.

The translation was made in a new coffin. "The Brothers vied with one another as they seized pieces of the old one." Other witnesses, eager to satisfy some holy avidity, grasped at remnants of the priestly vestments and even at the soles of the dead man's shoes. Meanwhile, a physician and a notary prepared their reports. A catafalque surrounded by lights was set up in the middle of the choir.

The procession was delayed as long as possible, because the First President and other distinguished guests were late...But as they delayed over long, the order was given to begin the singing of the Psalms. Sixteen priests in surplices and stoles bore the precious remains of a man whom they honored as one of the greatest servants of God of the last century.

"Four others" grasped the mortuary covering by the corners. The author names "Father Terisse, Vicar-general, Archdeacon and Canon and Father Dossemont, also an Archdeacon and Canon of the Cathedral church, who walked in the rear in the place of the principal dignitaries. Concerning those who lead the procession, we are told only that they were "Canons of the same church" and that they had "known De La Salle in a special way". This detail, surrounded by discreet silence, betrays Blain's style.

[56] M. Edward Pelay, President of the Rouen society of bibliophils, reprinted this booklet in 1875 in Rouen. Done by Cagniard, it is an excellent reproduction of the typographical and orthographical characters of the original. The copy preserved in the Motherhouse Archives (A B j 5) bears the editor's dedicatory signature to the M.H. Brother Irlide, Superior-general. -Brother Lucard, in the second volume of his Annales, pp.55-65, made a comparison of the account.. With the reports produced from the parish obituaries. The conclusion points explicitly to the presence of Canon Blain at the ceremony. He added nothing important to the account, except Father Jarrier-Bresnard's sermon in the church at St. Yon.

In front of the coffin walked the pastors of St. Sever, St. Maclou, St. Eloi, St. Vivien, St. Godard, St. Savior, St. Martin-of-the-Bridge and St. Vigor, "and others who sent their assistants". The cortege also included seminarians from St. Vivian's and St. Nicacius. Overall, so numerous was the clergy that thronged together that, in spite of the distance between St.Sever and St. Yon, "the first ones were arriving" at the Brothers' church "when the last ones were leaving the parish".

"The city police and an armed guard" formed a wall "to prevent commotion and hold off the people."

The Dean of the Cathedral, Father Chanron, Vicar-general, and other distinguished clergy, in long capes, were followed by an innumerable throng of people of every condition and age.The author refrains from giving exact figures: according to some estimates there were "more than thirty thousand" in assistance or participating -- a third of the population of Rouen. Priests and other clerics, "with candle in hand", formed a "procession" of three hundred lights, and "religious of every Order" were also to be seen.

The Brothers of St. Yon and those who had come from Paris and the provinces walked ahead of the clergy; there were about eighty of them; and they, too, carried torches.

The psalmody and prayers continued inside the church, when, at last there arrived the First President, My Lords Enneval and Courmoulins, presiding judges of the supreme court, along with the Procurator-general, Madame First President, Madame Superintendant and other ladies of high society. Geoffroi-Mace Pontcarré wished "to view the body". The timing was poor and his curiosity might have seemed immoderate. Nevertheless, it was thought necessary "to satisfy" the important and powerful noble.[57]

"Father Bridel blessed the vault", and "at about 9 o'clock in the evening", once the coffin had been soldered, it was lowered into the vault.

The author of the "Account..." concludes: And thus it was that the Brothers of the Christian Schools had the happiness of recovering the precious body of their Founder. And it closes with a sentence whose epigramatic and moralistic quality is too much in Blain style to have been written by anybody else: “Their happiness would be complete if they were forever to preserve his spirit”.

The 1719 tombstone, which bore the Latin inscription composed by Louis Jarrier-Bresnard was not removed from the church of St. Sever. And it survived in the new parish church which, in the 19th century, replaced the old one in which the Founder had been a "parishoner".[58] The brief funeral oration pronounced by the pastor in the ceremony of the 16th of July, 1734, may be regarded as a simple commentary on that beautiful epigraphical monument. Father Jarrier-Bresnard recalled that it was "by his ministration" that the late John Baptist de La Salle "had been provided with the Sacraments of the Church". He praised the eminent qualities of mind and heart, the singular noble "exterior", obliging and venerable, of this very great priest, his charity, his zeal and his humility, which are the "fruitful sources of all Christian and apostolic virtue". He thought it well to speak "of the rather close relations" that he had had with him "during the last two years of his life", without adding, of course, that they cost the saintly man several rather mortifying hours. And, with much charm, he hoped that "the precious deposit" restored to the Brothers would continue to be a pledge of unity between their community and the pastors of the parish.[59]

The stone of black marble which covered the new tomb was inscribed in French. We possess only pieces of it, discovered sixty years ago in the attics of the buildings at St.Yon by an inhabitant of Rouen, M. Baudry. It was probably broken during the Revolution when the tomb was desecrated.[60] It seems that

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[57] It does not seem that Nicholas Peter Camus Pontcarré attended the ceremony. If he had been, as Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pg.68) says, "a witness to the great honors paid to his saintly friend", it must have been by joining and rejoicing in it from afar and in spirit. He died in parish on the 10th of the following December. A solemn service for the repose of his soul was celebrated in Rouen on the 18th of that month in the parish church of St. Lo, which had been his parish. A letter sent into the Mercure de France in January, 1735, recalled "his great charities" as well as his role in the foundation of tuition-free schools. "The Brothers of the Christian Schools", wrote the correspondant of the Mercure, "had special prayers, and had a service celebrated, for his intention"

[58] Cf. Vol.1, p.431

[59] Following the report used by Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 63-4.

[60] The slab had already been used: on its other side could be read the name of Agnes Lopez, wife of Emmanuel Diaz Sanchez, merchant in Rouen, who died in 1637. (Nobles and merchants of Spanish and Portugese origins had their tombs in

the following might very well be a likely reading of it: Here lies John Baptist de La Salle, priest, doctor in theology, former Canon of the Church of Notre Dame in Rheims, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who shone in the practice of all the virtues especially through the charity which inspired him in favor of all his brothers. There could be nothing more in harmony with the simplicity of the Lasallian Institute: the pride of epitaphs in the Roman style were left to the pastor of St. Sever.

In Volume XI of *Gallia Christiana*, in a passage which summarizes the history of the Brothers of the Christian Schools from their origin until the election of Brother Timothy's successor, we read: *Tunc basilicam sibimet ipsi posuere satis elegantem quam Infanti Jesu consecravit, XVI calend. Augusti anno 1734, Nicolaus de Saulx de Tavannes, archiepiscopus Rotomagnensis.*[61] As good as his word, then, the Primate of Normandy came on the 7th of July, the day after the translation of the Founder's body, to honor St. Yon with his presence. It was an epilogue to the solemn ceremonies, the final ratification of all the official acts whereby the Religious Congregation had been approved, recognized and consolidated. "The rather elegant church that the Brothers had built for themselves" was opened for divine worship. Archbishop Tavannes blessed it, notes the editor of the Relation, and celebrated the first Mass in it. Lasallian posterity, already growing (*multiplicata...haec soboles)*, in the words of the historian of the *Gallia*) would take strength and greatness from this holy place, over the tomb of its Founder.

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the Franciscan monastery in Rouen.) The main portion of De La Salle's epitaph exists in the chapel of the St. John Baptist de La Salle Residence School in Rouen, on Rue Saint Gervais. See Farcy, op. cit., pg. 250.

[61] Gallia Christiana, Vol. XI, col. 345.

PART TWO

Growth of the Institute

The extension of the Institute under Brother Timothy

CHAPTER ONE

The Conditions of Growth: Institutions and Men

In reading the "Letters Patent" of 1724, a significant passage may have caught the eye: In order to enter.. into the intentions of the late king, our most honored Lord and great-grandfather, which always had been that schools be multiplied within the kingdom... Quite certainly, *mutatis mutandis*, this point had already been mentioned in the report in which the reasons for the petition were set forth; and the Brothers had slipped it in as a subtle reminder of their "public usefulness" and of the cooperation they were in a position to contribute to the fulfillment of the decrees.

Louis XIV's "educational" policy (closely bounded up with his religious policy) had not been abandoned when he died. On this point the Regency Councils had no intention of taking a backward step, nor of running any risky innovations. Since the principle, "One faith, one king" was being defended, people in government and administration (even those who, like Philip of Orleans, had little or no religion) believed that it was necessary to struggle against Protestantism, a revival of which was in evidence, especially in the provinces of the Southwest. The school always seemed the most effective way of opposing that movement. That is why, in 1716, the Council wrote quite candidly to the Bishops and the superintendents to watch over the implementation of the famous "Declaration of 1698" in so far as it concerned the foundation of new schools and their attendance by the children of "new converts".[1] In that very year, and on several occasions thereafter, local authorities were required to send "lists" of the king's ministers outlining the educational situation within their religious and civil jurisdictions.[2]

Four months before the legal recognition of the Institute, on the 14th of May, a new "declaration" was issued which repeated pretty nearly textually the articles of 1698: Desirous as of establishing, as far as possible, schoolteachers of both sexes in parishes where none exist, to instruct children of both sexes in the principal mysteries and duties of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion...The order was repeated to supplement, by an assessment "on all inhabitants", what was lacking in the income from old and new endowments "for the support of the said schoolteachers", not to exceed 150 livres a year for schoolmasters and 100 livres a year for schoolmistresses.(Art.5)

In 1724, as in 1698, it was enjoined on fathers, mothers and guardians and other persons responsible for the education of children and especially those whose fathers or mothers professed the so-called reformed religion (or, according to the text of 1724, were born of Huguenot parents) to send them to schools and catechism classes until their fourteenth year, unless they are persons of such condition that they can or must have them instructed at home or send them to college. The new announcement also took into account the role of "monastaries and regular communities", to which might be entrusted the guidance and education of small boys and girls.(Art.6)

Article 7 details the way in which official supervision was to be exercised: We desire that our Procurators and Lord High Justices, every month, be given by the pastors, vicars, schoolteachers or others having this responsibility, an exact account of all the children who fail to attend the schools, catechism classes or instructions...in order that the necessary action may then be taken.. .[3]

These coercive procedures were in harmony with ancient Institutions and Men under European law. The Sovereign's first duty was to maintain his subjects in obedience to the State religion. Such a law would be incompatible with freedom of conscience or freedom of the family as we understand them. In "the most Catholic kingdom", once Henry IV's and Louis XIII's policy was abandoned, it could only be obligatorily Catholic.

Also, in the 18th century, as during the Middle Ages, the participation of the clergy in the educational domain was recognized and required by the civil power. The declaration of 1724 stilled depended upon the decree of April, 1695, which subjected "regents, tutors and schoolteachers" to the immediate jurisdiction of pastors and to the higher jurisdiction of bishops.

The episcopacy and the priesthood remained faithful to their ancient mission as founders of schools, which remained for them a badge of honor until the Revolution, as we shall see throughout our

[1] Babeau, la Province sons l'Ancien Regime, Vol. II, pg. 287. Cf. Vol. I, of the present work, pp. 33-35.
[2] Idem. op. cit., pg. 308.
[3] Jourdan and Isambert, Recit general des anciennes lois francaises, Vol. XXI, pp. 263-4.

account. Universities and colleges were the privileged work of the Church, but no less so were tuition-free elementary schools. In the days of Louis XV and Louis XIV the bishops, "great Lords though they were", did not forsake the people. They may not all have been conspicuous for their piety or their virtue, but, with very few exceptions, they were frequently charitable in as many ways as they could be, with lively feelings, sensitivity and, indeed, ingenuity for their duties as shepherds and their responsibilities as leaders. They did not just provide bread for the poor; they were concerned to protect their flock from illnesses, accidents and unemployment, and (apart from manual labor) they dispensed both Christian instruction and elementary knowledge. They struggled against both physical and spiritual distress. And many of their pastors, in city and village, followed their example. "Philanthropy", which emerged as a central notion of the age, stirred something more than echoes in the priestly soul. Rather, it was a genuine enthusiasm, based upon a respect for the human person and inspired by the Gospel's *Misereor super turbam*.[4]

Obstacles to the spread of learning did not come from the Church. In spite of royal declarations, they arose from the State bureaucracy. Neglect, distrust, bad will or simply fear of a lack of funds frustrated the enforcement of the law. No matter how great may have been the authority of the bishop, he had to keep in mind the power of civil administrators, and of "those thirty masters of petitions who", according to Jean Law's expression, "constitute the fortune or the misfortune of the provinces". The administrator was "king" in his constituency, his "region". Usually administering it over many years, he knew it well, and guided it; and many were the regions and cities which owed their cleanliness, beauty and wealth to the generous initiatives of this lofty bureaucrat. If the administrator lent his cooperation to the clergy for the opening of a school, success was immediate. There are many instances of this fruitful alliance. On the contrary, there were postponements, obstacles and reversals of fortune occasioned by unfavorable bias that resulted in frustration.

In the last resort, it was through such policy and financial decisions that the civil administrator exercised his power. When the generosity of private funds alone were involved in a foundation, it was rare to meet with opposition. In such cases, "the consent" and "the authority of our Lords the Bishops", as Brother Timothy wrote to the pastor of St. Malo in 1746 [5]were sufficient and fully satisfied. But it was not always possible (and, indeed, it was imprudent) to ignore "the gentlemen in the municipal government"; and the cities had to have their decisions approved from higher up, since such decisions created, whether directly or indirectly, new burdens for the region. An administrator who had no care for popular education, who thought that it was more harmful than useful (and such sentiments were encountered in the course of the century), would be content to allege that the expenses would unbalance the city budget: in which case the magistrates' best intentions would remain inoperative.

In his *Dictionary or Treatise on the General Policy of Cities, Market-towns and Parishes*[6] the jurist Freminville summarizes as follows the procedures to be followed in order to obtain from the public powers assessments necessary for the support of "tutors": Pastors, officers and leaders of cities and communities must come together as a body, deciding among themselves (as to the reason for their requests) and then go (i.e., have recourse) to the diocesan archbishop or bishop and implore him in a petition, to which they were to join a copy of their own deliberations, to give order that there be a schoolteacher established in their city or parish; and, with regard to the order bearing his opinion, present a petition to the administrator of the community (so that he) might confirm both their decisions and the opinion of their bishop.[7] And the confirmation was not merely formal. The Declarations of 1698 and 1724 included the words "as far as possible", which, on the whole, left full scope to the king's representative and allowed him oddly to delimit the extent of the king's intentions.

The clergy could only solicit voluntary gifts from the faithful by appealing to their consciences. To go beyond that, they would have to have recourse to "the secular arm",[8] -- a thing which inevitably

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[4] See Father Augustine Sicard's book, l'Ancien clerge de France, les eveques avant la Revolution, 5th edition, Paris, Lecoffre, 1912.

[5] Lucard,Annales, Vol. II, pg. 725, according to the Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine.

[6] Published in Paris in 1768

[7] Quoted by Allain, (Instruction primaire en France avant la Revolution, Paris, 1881, pp. 210-1.

[8] Allain, op. cit., pp. 226-7; Des Cilleuls, Histoire de l'enseignement litre dans l'ordre primaire en France, Paris, 1898, pg. 32.

happened, since the ancient French Church depended upon the State, and it entrusted to the latter both the protection of its interests and the responsibility for guaranteeing the total exercise of its ministry. Such an attitude, dictated by the politico-religious system of the `Ancien régime', restricted, or at least slowed down initiative; and it explains to a large extent the bitter deception and the clumsy defeats that Catholicism sustained at a time and in a country in which the king no longer had sufficient moral authority and many of his ministers, and many of their collaborators at every level, did not have enough faith to put a stop to anti-Christian propaganda and, opportunely, to liberate spiritual forces and fresh air to clear the atmosphere.[9]

To the grievances of four consecutive Assemblies of the Clergy, which, in 1750, 1755, 1760 and 1765, insisted that schools be opened in every parish according to the Declaration of 1724, the government at first made dilatory replies: “His Majesty...will take the measures he believes will be most suited;...the king will give...orders that he will judge necessary.”Then, and more clearly, but in conflict with the foregoing, there would come statements of principle with which was associated a[10]sort of listless goodwill, an exhausted courage: I shall approve of public education and I shall make it my duty to confirm useful institutions, which shall be founded by voluntary contributions.[11] Louis XV left to the charity of his subjects the task of spreading and organizing popular education: -- the upshot of all of these vast plans and heavy thinking.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that this "sympathy" promised to schools was not totally a dead letter. Active cooperation was practiced only intermittently and sporadically before faltering altogether. But there remained other and easier ways of showing support for, and sympathy and satisfaction with, the educational pioneers. The granting of "Letters Patent" was one such way. They were accompanied not only with eulogies but also with quite considerable fiscal privileges. While they cost the king nothing, he was putting nothing in the bank.

On the 25th of February, 1710, a royal decree exempted charity schools from the payment of the "mortmain rights".[12] "Letters" dated September, 1724 made "gift and remission" to the Brothers of the Christian Schools "both for the present as for the future" of "rights...and indemnities belonging" to the king as feudal Lord.

Agents of the tax-gatherers, anxious not to diminish the income from taxes and benefits to their employers, claimed on several occasions that such immunities were inapplicable. In spite of a decree of the Privy Council on the 21st of January, 1738[13] reasserting the arrangements of 1710, several of the Brothers' communities were harassed by treasury-agents. In Paris an assistant tax-gatherer, Berbier, demanded the payment of taxes, because a portion of the house on the Rue Neuve was leased out, in order to supplement the Brothers' meagre income. At Vire, Marseille, St. Omer, Auxonne, Carcassonne, St. Denis and Grenoble there were legal notices and suits of the same sort. Interpreting the documents in their own way, treasury-agents maintained that exemption through the "Letters Patent" of 1724 was granted only to St. Yon. As an argument, the conclusion went[14]well beyond the premisses. The zeal of some of the bureaucrats turned into hostility for the schools themselves. The king, they insisted, confirmed the institution in Rouen, but he did not authorized the multiplication of Brothers' schools throughout the kingdom. Thus there was increasing in strength an opinion which, having already won support in the courts of Paris, Brittany and in several other cities, might have become quite dangerous for the future of the Institute.

Brother Timothy averted the peril. At his request, lawyers for the king's council, Bocquet Chanterenne and Combault wrote and signed on the 27th of February,. 1745, a report which, restoring their true meaning to the "Letters Patent" and illuminating them further with a commentary on the decree of 1710, stated the law in the following definitive language:

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[9] Cf. A. De Charmassse, Etat de ('instruction primaire dans l'ancien diocese d'Autun pendant les dix-septieme et dix-huitieme siecles, 2nd edition, pg. 46, Paris, 1878.

[10] Cf. Sicard, op. cit., pg. 587

[11] Allain, op. cit., pp. 226-7; Des Cilleuls, Histoire de l'enseignement litre dans l'ordre primaire en France, Paris, 1898, pg. 32.

[12] Lucard, Annales , Vol. II, pg. 143, according to the Records of the Privy Council

[13] Idem. Ibid., Vol. II, pg. 143, according to the Records of the Privy Council

[14] National Archives S. 7046 -47. Report to the sublessees in Paris region, September 14, 1742.

1) To contest the St. Yon Brothers' right to send subjects into the various cities of the kingdom to teach in charity schools is to run contrary to the will of His Majesty.

2) Tax-collectors and their agents may not...under whatever pretext subject the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the payment of any taxes...imposed by the king either as sovereign or as lord.

The authors of this "opinion" thought it necessary to submit it to the General Assembly of the Clergy, since "the Christian schools, in which were dispensed the first elements of religion, belonged in a special way to (that) Body". Through "Our Lords of the Assembly" the Brothers would obtain from "His Majesty the complete fulfillment of the 'Letters Patent of 1724", the discontinuance of "difficulties" and the reimbursement for taxes already paid.[15]

To appeal thus to the "First Estate" was certainly to adopt the best safeguard. And the "legal assimilation" raised no difficulties for the diocese of Rouen. The lawyer for the clergy in Rouen, Father Terisse, Vicar-general, who certified the arrangement on the 1st of February, 1742, added that the Brothers at St. Yon were not included in assessment of the "free gift" paid to the king in 1732, because, "in consideration of their services",[16] they were exempt by the Chamber of the Clergy. In 1744, the Estates of Languedoc also wondered about the privileged situation of the Brothers in that province. At the request of the Brothers in Alais, the king's commissioners and the Estates declared that there should be no payment of tithes on the "wages" granted to the Brothers for their teaching in the schools.[17]

The Assembly of the Clergy, meeting in 1745, was equally understanding. On the 23rd of June it decided that its agents would intercede with the king in favor of the Brothers.[18] Victory was achieved. A final skirmish, undertaken by the tax-collectors of the royal domains in 1750 against the community of St. Yon itself, ended in still another confirmation of fiscal privilege.[19]

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Both the friends and enemies of the Institute had an image of it as a united family, strong in its resistance to external pressures so as to evade compromise and defend its autonomy. Through fidelity to their Rule and obedience to their Superior the Brothers discovered essential unity of spirit. Scattered throughout France, distracted from the interior life by their duties as teachers, reduced for hours on end to teaching children how to read and write, and (because of their special vocation) insulated from both priests and lay-people, the Brothers simply fulfilled their mission to the hilt and to the fullest extent of the term answered to their definition of being "Religious". In order to help the children of the people they had to remain "in the world"; but in order to dedicate themselves to that task without reservation and without a backward look, they could not be "of this world". Filial obedience, fraternal union, intense piety, a complete break with every exclusively temporal occupation or merely earthly affection -- to these essential qualities the thought of St. John Baptist de La Salle had always returned. They formed the object of his final counsels.

The Fifth General-chapter, held following the translation of the Founder's remains, showed that there existed among the Brothers a unity of vision, a continuity of doctrine and a will to apply the Rule in all its strict and indispensable rigor, apart from which the Institute was not viable. Normally, an Assembly would not have been convoked until 1735, at the expiration of "the ten year period". But an anticipation was thought to be quite timely in order not to impose further travel upon the Brothers whom the recent ceremonies had called to St. Yon. In view of the circumstances, the capitulants were numerous. Forty-seven delegates signed the reports, both Directors and Senior Brothers. Among them, once again, were some of De La Salle's contemporaries -- Brothers Jean, Irenée, Étienne, Dositheus, Jean-François, Philip, Thomas, Charles, Barnabas, Hubert, Bernardine, Bruno, Michel, André, François, Fiacre and Sixte, who,

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[15] Motherhouse Archives, HA n 4, Report to the Christian Brothers at St. Yon, Rouen; Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 145-52.

[16] Archives. Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 537. Copy in the Motherhouse

[17] Lucard, op. cit., pg. 145, according to the Departmental Archives of Herault.

[18] Idem. Ibid., pg. 153, according to the Proces-verbaur des assemblees du clerge de France, Vol. VII, pg. 2042.

[19] Idem., Ibid., Ibid., pg. 155. The lessees demanded a tax of 250 Byres because the Brothers purchased a piece of property at Petit-Couronne-lez-Rouen. (Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine).

along with the Superior-general, were the most qualified representatives of the traditions and ideals that were now half-a-century old.

Among the decisions taken, some seem to be quite modest, but they were inspired by principles, the importance of which could not be overestimated. The "collection of wine", a custom in some of the cities, was to be henceforth forbidden, because, taken together, the dignity becoming teachers, religious solitude, prudence and the fundamental rule of tuition-free teaching suffered from this way of seeking and accepting an alms. "After serious inquiry and mature deliberation", it was decided that "no Brother would be admitted to vows" who had not completely abandoned the use of tobacco, because, among the "bad consequences" of this habit, the "chief" ones seemed to involve nothing less than "the transgression of the vow of poverty" and (here, too) "the vow of teaching gratuitously".

The Chapter, however, did not confine itself to these special prescriptions. Pursuing, under Brother Timothy's impetus, the realization of a program, it decided upon the publication of one of the spiritual writings of the Founder. With the exception of the *Conduct of Schools*, De La Salle had himself published his educational works anonymously. That book, to which the Brothers themselves had contributed and the Superior-general had himself brought up to date, had been in print since 1720. Of the works of spirituality only one had certainly appeared in the lifetime of the Founder: -- *The Collection of Various Short Treatises.* We have seen that Brother Timothy had published a new edition of this book. Between 1726 and 1734, in the interval between the two General Chapters, he had edited the two books of *Meditations* -- "for the time of retreat", and "for the Sundays of the year". The Brothers were pleased to have these works.

One very valuable text remained, an altogether precious source for the life of souls. To know it was genuinely to enter into contact with the holiness of the Founder and, as a consequence, for the Brothers to walk in the way of perfection. We are speaking, of course, of the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer.* Obviously, it had already been circulating in manuscript. Indeed, if we are to believe Blain, an early version had been published by the author for the use of the novices. Copies (which have completely disappeared) were, of course, few in number at this time; and the text was probably incomplete. In any case, the Chapter of 1734 called for new expenditures and insisted upon the republication of this crucial work. In the language of its resolution, the book could only have been "The Explanation of the Third Part of Mental Prayer. In fact, the three parts of La Salle's method are commented upon in the oldest surviving edition, which bears the date 1739.[20]

Arrangements concerning the Rule were by the capitulants and added to those of their predecessors. They planned a printing of the "Rule of the Brother Director", that was intended, like the "Common Rule", to take its place in community libraries. But once again they postponed the publication of the "Rule of Government". It was simply agreed that "several copies" of it, which, after "proofreading",[21] would be initialed and signed by the Superior and the Assistants.

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According to Article 13 of the Bull, the normal term for the two Brothers who assisted and counselled the Superior-general was ten years. Brothers Irenée and Joseph had been elected by the [22]Chapter of 1725. Brother Joseph, who died in 1729, had been replaced by Brother Dositheus in a vote conducted by mail.

Since the Assembly of 1734 anticipated the decennial chapter by a year, it was thought necessary to proceed to a new election. Brother Dositheus earnestly sought to be relieved of his post definitively.

Claude Longière was born on the 5th of September, 1651 in Ronne, Beaujolais. In his youth, he was a rich owner of vineyards. According to Father La Tour, "he possessed considerable wealth, which he had totally dedicated to the foundation of Missions in region of his birth". And the elderly author adds: "Having undertaken extensive classical studies, he was quite learned."[23] Nearly thirty-six years of age, this man, who had carefully administered his inheritance, and observed the commandments, heard the call of the Master. He turned over to God the profits from his business and because he had been "faithful in small things", he was thought to have been a good servant, worthy "to be placed over greater ones" and to use his knowledge and experience for the salvation of souls. In June, 1706, at the novitiate at St. Yon he became

[20] See the entire second chapter of the Third Part of the first volume of this work

[21] One of the decisions of the Chapter with respect to the replacement of Assistants who die in office explicitly referred to the original Rule of Government.

[22] La Tour, Vie du Frere Irenée, pg. 78

[23] La Tour, Vie du Frere Irenée, pg. 78

Brother Dositheus. In 1716, he was Director of the schools in Rouen, and in 1718, "teacher of the senior resident pupils" and sharing the responsibilities in the Faubourg St. Sever with Brothers Irenée and François. He was one of those typical personalities in the Institute, in which, from a very early period there entered representatives of the classical tradition, like Joseph Truffet, Gabriel Drolin and Claude Longière (surely minds educated as these were, at the level of tastes and ideas, a match for De La Salle) and an élite from every social class. Jean François "The First" and Maurice "The First" and Nicholas Bourlette were children from "good Rouen families"; the Selliers brothers were a marvelous pair of farmers from Villiers-le-Bel; Brother Barthélemy was the son of a schoolteacher and Brother Timothy the son of a Parisian craftsman; while Brother Irenée came from authentic nobility, and Brother Dositheus from the solidly established middle-class.

"Weakness of vision" (incipient blindness) prevented him from continuing to provide assistance to the Superior-general, which had been appreciated over the past five years. Actually, he was suffering from a relatively premature old-age. For a while the duties of Procurator were entrusted to the former Assistant. But he soon became totally blind. In his infirmity he experienced the compassionate care of Brother Irenée, who, each day, waited upon him, says La Tour, "like a servant would, but with an ease and a grace and a pleasure" that showed that "the heart moved the hand and opened the mouth". On the 8th of June, 1737, at the age of sixty-five, Brother Dositheus died at St. Yon and was buried in the community cemetery.[24] According to a brief notice (in manuscript), he lived and died "in the perfect love of God and in detachment from things". And it was thus that Blain, between the years 1708 and 1733, had seen reach their end nearly "a hundred Brothers" in a "gentle, quiet and holy death".[25]

As Claude Longiere's successor, the Chapter selected Brother Étienne, previously Director of St. Omer.[26] But the Superior's right-hand man continued to be Brother Irenée, the first Assistant.

Since 1728, Claude Du Lac's "secret" had been an open book. Father La Tour's account of it is as follows. The former pastor of St. Jacques of Montauban, become dean of the Chapter of that city, in about 1773, wrote Brother Irenée' Life, which appeared the following year in Joseph Domergue's bookshop in Avignon. At the time, a rather elderly gentleman who, for a long time, had known the Brothers in Montauban and to whom, in 1768, he had given the sum of 8,000 livres from his own personal fortune.[27] At about the same time he turned over his library to them, which, after his death, and in conformity with his wishes, was to be opened to the public. On the 7th of December, 1779, two months before his death, through his last will and testament, he made the Brothers the heirs to his home, *Soubirous*, his furniture and "everything that remained in the house of his books and writings".[28]

Closely associated with the Brothers, sharing their aversion for Jansenism and cooperating with their work of popular education, Father La Tour collected firsthand evidence and had knowledge of Brother Irenée's correspondence. It is impossible to seek elsewhere for more precise, more plentiful and, on the whole, more trustworthy information and write a story which in his hands is especially vibrant and enjoyable.[29]

"During the fourteen years," (he writes) "that Brother Irenée had been (in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools) he had so carefully taken measures to remain hidden that he was absolutely unknown to everybody. His baptismal certificate had not been required and no inquiry had been made, and the inquiries made by his family had been futile."[30]

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[24] National Library, Ms. 11122; La Tour, Vie du Frere Irenée, pg. 78; Motherhouse Archives H A m 11, The St. Yon Vow Book; HA m 13 St. Yon Obituary Record.

[25] Blain, Vol. II, Abrege, pg. 99.

[26] Brother Étienne (Jean Perotin) of the parish of Termes, in the diocese of Rheims. Born on the 28th of February, 1688. Entered the Society on the 17th of July, 1712. Died at Rheims on the 4th of October, 1752.(Ms. 11122).

[27] Motherhouse Archives H B s 28(7), Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I;
concerning Father La Tour, see the first volume of this work, pg. 421 and the Catalogue of French History in the National Library, Personal Names, Vol. I, pg. 285, col. 1.

[28] Archives of the Mother House Historique cité

[29] However, we shall complete and correct some of the details with the help of the parochial register of Tigy, which, through the kind intervention of Father Vallee, pastor of Tigy, was placed at our disposition at the town hall in that community.

[30] La Tour, pg. 21.

The last letter that the Montisambert family preserved from the fugitive was probably the one which, after having left the army and sought admission to the Capuchins in Grenoble, he sent to his father in 1713, the one in which he declared that "his very great weakness" would prevent him from "saving his soul in the midst of the difficulties" of this world.[31] Claude-François himself was unaware which of his relatives at home were still alive.

That he worried about them, that he wished in some way to learn about what had happened to them was quite natural. But it was a desire that stopped short of revealing his whereabouts -- a wish rather than a fixed determination. There was no longer any fear that he would be snatched from his humble way of life; since he now belonged to a recognized Congregation and in 1725, he had pronounced vows that were authorized by Rome. But after so many years of silence, he was not about, ghostlike, to disturb the family peace. And yet, if, by some stroke of Providence, his secret were to come to light, would it grieve him?

It is this state of mind that we glimpse between the lines of the good priest: (The Brother) had contracted certain debts in his regiment, which he was unable to pay...He fancied that his father, a man of honor and probity, would make satisfaction, and he was not mistaken; but having no contacts with his family, he was not sure. Disquieted by his obligations, he asked Brother Timothy, who was about to make a visitation to the houses of the Order, to turn aside from his journey as he passed through Orleans[32] and pay a visit to the Chateau Montisambert to learn the truth, without, however, discovering his retreat to anybody. Brother Timothy, a prudent man, polite and persuasive, was better suited than anybody else to this sort of task; but the secret was very difficult to hide, especially since the standing of the man who was making the inquiry made people suspicious. It was difficult for the Brother to resist the lively family entreaties...And, no longer fearing to lose (Claude-François du Lac) after final vows, there is every appearance that Timothy made no great scruple of exposing him. Perhaps he was even secretly charged to do just that.[33]

The Superior-general crossed the bridge over the Loire at Orleans, and, travelling eastward, took the road to Tigy, a village, which, through the river valley, is a four or five hours walk. The du Lac family estate, situated outside of town, dominated a quiet farming panorama, unobstructed as far as the spires of Chateauneuf and Jargeau that are joined together by a sparkling flash of water and sand. It is a region that has a spectacular history. On the right bank, at two leagues, is St. Benedict's Basilica; and on the left, at three leagues, is the Chateau Sully. With these wonders the Montisambert "chateau" had nothing in common. At the time, it was nothing more than an ancient countryseat which, on its western side, reflected off the waters of its moats, a building that a new owner would presently rase and replace with a square, sturdy house, pleasant but formless, in the middle of a beautiful garden.

In 1728, however, the house was in deep mourning. Claude-François, the eldest son, had seemed to have forever disappeared. His younger brother, Charles, baptized at Tigy on the 9th of January, 1693, had died at an early age. His sister, Frances Sylvia, according to parochial records, as a young girl of eighteen years, had been buried in St. Martin's church on the 19th of February, 1710. "On Friday the 2nd of October, 1724", the third son, Alphonsus du Lac, Knight, Lord of Montisambert, captain of the Champagne Regiment died, in about his 28th year. (He had been baptized on the 18th of November, 1696 by the pastor, Father Heau.) "On Saturday the 19th of January, 1725", there was a funeral for the grandfather, Francis "d'Amiou" [34]in the parish church; this was Lord Beauvillier,[35] an octogenarian and a

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[31] La Tour, pp. 21-2.

[32] The Brothers did not arrive in Orleans until 1740, but Brother Timothy could have passed through that city on his way to Nantes, probably by the river route.

[33] Idem., pg. 10.

[34] The name is sometimes spelled "d'Arniou", sometimes "d'Argnous", and sometimes "d'Ergnoust". Brother Ireneus' mother signed herself "Suzanne d'Ergnoust" on the Baptismal certificate of Alphonsine La Bigne whose godmother she became at Tigy on the 12th of November, 1717.

[35] Father La Tour suggests this ancestor as Brother Irenée's godfather. On the other hand, he has him still alive in 1728, on the occasion of Brother Timothy's visit. There is a double confusion here. Claude- François du Lac's godfather was "François Bernard", who in that capacity signed the Baptismal certificate in 1691. (The godmother was Frances du Lac, of whom we have written in our first volume, pp. 357-358) After reading the parish register of Tigy, there can be no doubt concerning the date of the death of M. d'Ergnoust Beauvil

descendant of an ancient family of Chartres,[36] which had been made illustrious by Duke Paul Beauvillier, who had been a friend of Fenelon.

We know neither the time nor the circumstances of the death of Claude du Lac, Squire, Lord Montisambert, the father of the family. The parochial records (which show that he was confirmed by Cardinal Coislin on the 30th of April, 1705, at the same time as his sons, Claude and Alphonsus) do not mention his funeral. We know that he met his end elsewhere than at Tigy and prior to 1724. Indeed, as we have seen a moment ago, in his funeral notice, Alphonsus was described as "Lord Montisambert". And, after him, Nicolas assumed the title.

Nicolas Claude was the youngest child of M. Du Lac and Suzanne d'Ergnoust. He was confirmed in Tigy on the 22nd of April, 1714, and was present in 1724, at the funerals of his brother and grandfather. He lived alone with his mother in the manor. As a young Lord of the village, he hunted, exploited his forests, collected his farm-rents and agreed to be godfather to newborn children. In such an existence, which had early experienced trials, there was silence, emptiness and melancholy.

He it was, along with Mme. Montisambert, who received Brother Timothy. "A former servant who had been in (Claude-François) Du Lac's service in the regiment" had been called to the priest's house, where the Superior-general had at first briefly explained the purpose of his visit. The good man, "detecting something of a mystery", ran off to tell the Lady of the Manor, who came into town to meet the stranger and invite him to accompany her to Montisambert. Of course, she questioned him -- so much so that the Brother concealed nothing of the vocation, present residence, employment and the new name of her son.[37]

He promised her a letter from Brother Irenée, who would be required to write out of a sense of monastic obedience as well as of filial piety. But the mother did not wait for the Superior to return to Normandy in order to have news of her newly-found child. Since she knew he was in Rouen, she asked an old friend of the du Lac's, M. Offranville -- a lawyer in Parlement -- to visit Claude-François in his new situation and see what he looked like after twenty years of warfare, wretched vagabondage and harsh penance. The kindly messenger found a gentle and courteous man, who was moved at the thought of his mother and with the news of the great affliction that had overwhelmed his family. He had shunned these emotions because they would have been "insurmountable obstacles" to the divine call and perhaps to his eternal salvation, in such great jeopardy during his military career.[38]

The letter he sent to Tigy "has been lost". But Father La Tour was able to copy the mother's reply: “To leave your family to give yourself to God (she wrote) is a very praiseworthy thing to do; but it did not exempt you from doing everything necessary to put your family at ease. I had you sought everywhere in Christendom. The Duchess of Sully got the Papal Nuncio to ask His Holiness to have you looked for among the Capuchins, since you wrote your father that you wished to join them. This inquiry was made very carefully, but to no purpose: you had embraced another way. Finally, my child, I have found you again: I shall bless God all my life. Goodbye, my dear child, may the Lord strengthen you more and more in the way of your salvation. I await word from you at the earliest possible moment.”

Brother Irenée sent his mother "a formal copy of his profession", which she had asked for in order to settle family succession, and a portrait of De La Salle, perhaps a copy of Pierre Leger's painting.[39] In the sacristy of St. Ythier's church, Sully-sur-Loire, there is a painting representing the bust of a cleric, with a long nose, black eyes and a deeply wrinkled face. It was thought that it represented either De La Salle or Brother Irenée. It can be neither. Apart from the fact that there is no resemblance to known and apparently authentic portraits (we shall presently speak of one of Claude du Lac, originating in Angers), the Sully portrait bears on the back of the canvas the words: Aetaila 62. C. V. Dael pinzit 1703. At that date the future Brother Irenée was twelve years old and De La Salle was 52.

The response was a beautiful thank-you note. God "had dealt mercifully" with the prodigal. And such was her joy that Mme. Montisambert "thought she was going to die". The prayers of Frances du Lac, Claude Francis' aunt and godmother, must have been spent, one may believe, in obtaining her godson's pardon: This young woman, who died in the odor of sanctity, told me as she lay dying that she would ask

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[36] Dictionnaire de la Noblesse, 1771, Vol. II, pg. 226.

[37] La Tour, pg. 22.

[38] Ibid., pg. 23

[39] Idem. Ibid., pp.23-4.

God for you. These were her last words. She took up a work very similar to your own. She taught in the charity schools in Orleans.

Nicolas du Lac sent his brother his fondest regards and "desired to have the pleasure of visiting him". His mother dared not "indulge such hopes". The absentee's letters would be her "compensation".[40]

The Superior-general's kindness arranged an even greater consolation for this very courageous woman. In 1733, Brother Timothy decided to delegate his first Assistant to visit the houses of the Society. One of the stages of this long journey was, by formal command, the "Montisambert chateau".

Brother Irenée renewed acquaintance with his native region. Father La Tour quotes some of the things that Irenée said to a M. Belleve, one of the lawyers in the courts in Orleans. The Brother was insisting on his dedication to his Institute, and said he was prepared, if he had to, to go "barefooted and begging all the way to Rome" as long as he might never "be dispensed from his vows".[41] With mind free of fear and heart detached from material things, but not indifferent to relatives and friends of his youth, he was able to rediscover the Loire Valley.

He remained in Tigy for two weeks, "always the same, living (among his relatives) as he lived at St. Yon". The family listened to him as to an oracle, and thought of him as an angel; the parish marvelled at him, and his mother looked with silent veneration upon this prodigy of virtue...The old servant who had once accompanied the soldier to the wars was close to death; and in his final moments had the consolation of seeing and hearing his former master.

A few years later, the story of Brother Irenée's relations with his family turns painful. Upon Mme. Montisambert's death, her son Nicolas lost his mind. It was believed that the cause of insanity was a fall into a pond nearby the chateau. Claude-François, reassuming the exercise of his rights as the eldest in the family, undertook the responsibility for administering the estate that was in danger of being squandered by third parties. He had his youngest brother brought to St. Yon. This energy surprised people in Orleans, and it set some wicked tongues wagging. The Brother had to explain to Father Martin, the pastor of Neuvy that he had only "satisfied his mother's wishes and provided for his brother's needs "at the cost of his own comfort and his inclination for retirement". He accepted the "humiliations" and "affronts" that his behavior inspired. In the end, people would learn of "his unselfishness and that of his Community". Indeed, once Nicolas was restored to health, he was given a complete account of the management of his estate. And when the unfortunate Lord Montisambert died in 1741 without issue, the entire inheritance went to his cousin.

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There is still more to be said about Brother Irenée. This son of an ancient people, with a character both robust and inimitable and imbued with French tradition, who, through his family background, his conversion and his religious susceptibilities belonged to the Rancés, and the Keriolets and somewhat also to the Rentys and the Bernières, this heir to what was noblest in 17th century France and most heroic in its epical Christianity, so clearly stamped the Brothers of the "second Lasallian generation" that it is well to pause further over him before looking at the regular growth of the Institute.

Father La Tour writes that he contributed greatly to the maintenance of that spirit of simplicity which is so characteristic (of the Institute)... God willed, for its instruction, that the one of all the Brothers who was by birth, fortune and education the most distinguished, who, by his service in the army, his natural inclinations and worldly behavior during his early years had been more given to frivolity...was the most humble and the most mortified.. [42]

Claude-François du Lac had not become at the first stroke a model Brother after the heart of John Baptist de La Salle. His biographer quotes two letters which testify to the struggles that went on inside the young man. One of them he attributes directly to De La Salle himself; and, indeed, the style and the expression are similar to the Founder's correspondence in the Motherhouse Archives.[43] The other seems to have been written by Brother Barthélemy. It is possessed of that animation and eloquence, that poised and cordial elegance of the letters with which Blain has familiarized us in his "Abridged Life" of the first Brother Superior-general. With an exquisite candor Brother Irenée "imparted" these treasures from his

[40] La Tour, pp. 24-5.

[41] Ibid., pp. 34-8.

[42] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[43] See Vol. I of the present work, Part Three, chap. 1.

collection to the novices "for their instruction and consolation and in order to strengthen them by his example" .[44]

The Holy Founder had come to the assistance of his disciple who was distressed by the fantasies of a somewhat disordered past. He encouraged him to dispel them by giving himself quite simply to his daily task: “These thoughts are the subtlest of the temptations of the devil...The idea of returning to the world in order to do good works has mislead many solitaries. Penance is quite useful in correcting these faults and for advancing in virtue. In whatever disposition you may be, try to make acts of resignation to relapses and correction; if you have some difficulty in doing this from the heart, do it verbally. Do not trouble yourself as to the frequency of the acts, that can destroy your health. Simple attention to God from time to time is sufficient. Why do you dread confession days? On the contrary, you should look forward to. them. Avoid speaking in class; get in the habit of using the customary signals: that's our practice. When you feel tempted to impatience, get a hold of yourself and do not act until the feeling has gone. Yours, in Our Lord.”[45]

In these abrupt injunctions that sting the shoulders like the knotted cords of the "discipline", tellingly delivered with the paternal hand that knows how to space and cushion its blows, De La Salle "prepared" the exceptional candidate to whom Jean d'Yse Saleon introduced him on the hillside in Parmenie in 1714.

When, in Paris, during the holy Founder's absence, Brother Barthélemy assumed the leadership of the Institute and the direction of the novitiate, he, too, looked out for Brother Irenée. It is possible that the following letter dates from the time during which, as a new teacher, Irenée tried his hand in the St. Sulpice schools after having failed in Avignon.

“...Remember that the Lord is the great School-master, surrounded by the Holy Guardian Angels who effect through you the great work of the salvation of souls. We must be cautious when we think we have to correct someone and rather postpone the matter than act too hastily...”

Concerning temptations to discouragement, the Brother's advice was inspired by painful personal experience, and he lavished upon his words all the unction of his affection.

“We shall not fail to do what you wish; there is a general obligation to pray for all our Brothers; but we should especially remember you in our poor prayers. You see clearly that the Devil is doing all he can to make you leave your vocation; knowledge of what is going on in you during the temptations and after they cease leaves no room for doubt. Always be faithful to the practice of disclosing your mind to your Superiors and have recourse to Our Lord without whose aid you can do nothing worthwhile; tell Him of your temptations, your difficulties, your weaknesses, indeed, your mistrust of His goodness, if, as a matter of fact, you feel this; speak to Him simply and confidently; ask him for Grace through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin; be convinced that the Devil will never have the sway over you that he thinks he has; mistrust yourself; pray often; and your one and only concern will prosper; ask him for exceptional gentleness, firmness and an ardent charity for your pupils: who welcomes the poor welcomes Jesus Christ Himself.”[46]

This sort of advice would lead the erstwhile vagrant, the late pilgrim to Rome and Loreto, to his goal. The Institute Archives contain loose leaf sheets of paper on which are recorded the promises he made at St. Yon prior to taking his vows in 1725.

"Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert, otherwise known as Brother Irenée" -- with these names he signed a copy of the formula for triennial vows which he had written out in his own hand, "on this 25th day of September seventeen-hundred-and-sixteen", in Rouen, where he had come to take up (or resume) his duties as teaching assistant to Brother André, in the school in Laon.

The following year he ceased teaching and, after Brother Barthélemy's election in May, he became the new Superior's successor as Director of novices. On the 29th of September, "the Feast of St. Michael", without waiting any longer, he exchanged his temporary for perpetual vows. In doing so, he signed his name "Brother Irenée, called in the world Claude François Dulac" (sic), and, on the reverse side of the page, in 34 lines of careful handwriting he outlines "what the vows of obedience, stability, and teaching school gratuitously by association meant".

He was now ready for his mission. He had won complete self-mastery. Of his soldierly, lordly temperament there remained nothing but what was compatible with his religious ideal. He had learned to

[44] Ibid., pp. 16-7.
[45] Ibid., pp. 16-7.
[46] Ibid., pp. 18-9.

obey. Now that he had been withdrawn from the schools where he had been baffled by the impulsiveness of children, he discovered his ability to command. As a matter of taste and of religious principle, he spoke little; and (always) with modesty, gentleness, cordiality...grace simplicity, exactitude, (and in) terms that were suitable and forceful.He was cool, "poised", while "never losing sight either of God or of himself" .[47]

According to "a trustworthy witness", whose testimony Father La Tour recorded, (Irenée's) exceptional modesty, his habitual equanimity, his gentle cheerfulness, the seriousness of his bearing and countenance were admired. Along with his natural good-breeding, he had a sort of majesty; the nobility of his features reflected a greatness of soul in which Grace overflowed and in which a divine guest delighted.[48]

Convinced of his nothingness, his was the total humility of one who had measured the distance between the creature and the Creator. The recollection of his earlier failings inclined him toward this attitude which was neither compulsive nor affected. Furthermore, he did not disguise what his contemporaries, brought up under the influence of a latinized culture, referred to as his "ignorance". The former army Lieutenant, whose father had sent him into the military at the age of fourteen, had received a very brief education. And no matter how lively his mind or extensive his technical knowledge and reading, he continued to be considered "unlettered" in the eyes of "humanists". Father La Tour saw this as "a remarkable arrangement" and quite evidently a Providential disposition: the Brothers were to understand (that) they might very well reach the goal and the perfection of their vocation without going beyond the limits of elementary knowledge or of that "common" learning which was to be the object of their teaching.[49]

Thus, as much by dint of predispositions whose existence had long been unsuspected as by a striking metamorphosis, the soldier became the Christian Brother. One of the strongest qualities of this model personality was his "submission to temporal power" or to established authority. La Tour was right when he observed that here, too, we meet with "the spirit of the Congregation, since the sons of De La Salle "always" made obedience to their prince "their duty and their pride". They were loyal subjects who became good citizens. Whether in the Church or in the State, they were neither "discontents" nor faultfinders, and neither systematic nor capricious adversaries. Since their conscience was clear and their credibility respected, they did not balk at any form of government. They especially strove to come to terms with municipal authorities. Everywhere and without "political" afterthoughts, they taught their pupils fidelity to the law along with love of country. With Brother Irenée, as well as with all Frenchmen of this period, this zeal extended to the person of the king. It took the melancholy old age of Louis XV for such affection, too cruelly betrayed, to sour into discouragement and contempt. In 1774 the king was referred to as "the beloved". When he fell seriously ill at Metz, the Director of Novices at St. Yon "ordered the entire community to pray" and asked for "novenas, communions and extraordinary mortifications...to obtain (the sovereign's) recovery and the preservation of his life.[50]

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"You must regard the direction of the novitiate as your first, principal and only business, not separating it from your salvation, which depends upon it."[51]

Around 1729 Brother Irenée wrote these words to Brother Stanislaus, who, at the time, was in charge of the novitiate recently-opened in Avignon, of which we shall speak in its place. The advice he gave his former pupil enables us easily to glimpse his own methods and the way he exercised his influence on the entire Institute by being primarily (and uninterruptedly for thirty years) a superb master of novices.

In order to attract souls the Director of novices himself must tend toward perfection. This preliminary condition was abundantly impressed upon Brother Stanislaus.

"You must endlessly humble yourself before God, apply yourself fervently to mental prayer...and make yourself an example to your disciples in the practice of virtue, especially of exact regularity by fulfilling all the novitiate exercises, if this is possible...Do not distract yourself by working at external

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[47] Ibid., pg. 17-8.

[48] Ibid., pg. 52.

[49] Ibid., pp. 51.

[50] Ibid., pp. 51.

[51] Ibid., pg. 40-1

tasks. Your great, obligatory effort is to make yourself a holy and spiritual man and help our dear Brother novices become spiritual."

There follow details concerning the special care that the postulants require when they enter the novitiate. "During the first two weeks" they "must be prepared to make a general confession". They will be assisted "by instruction and reading relative to this exercise. Our dear Father has written some things on this subject that are quite useful". They should be given, as well, spiritual books having to do with the last ends and with 'horror for sin', in order to inspire them with the fear of God. (Louis de) Granada's *Guide for Sinners* is quite suited to this purpose; and thereafter Francis de Sales[52]*The Devout Life* and Rodriguez, especially the *Treatise on Mental Prayer*. Such was the first food, the healthy and wholesome sustenance that generations had been assimilating for more than a century.

After this, young men would be in a position to live religiously. Their Director would set them to studying the spiritual doctrine of the Founder, whose successors they were. They must learn the *Method of Mental Prayer*... Our Reverend Father said that when a Brother applied himself to nothing more than the 'first part' for a year or two, even then he would be doing well.

Equipped with the "spirit of mental prayer", the novices would develop the virtues proper to their vocation -- the virtues of the monk, the seed of which opens up in a soil that is deeply tilled and weeded: faith and obedience, love and dedication to holy poverty, humility, mortification, detachment from things...and all of this in practice and not merely in theory.[53] Later on, with young people to teach and to save, these virtues would produce their effects of absolute dedication and supernatural wisdom.

Another text, also quoted by La Tour, supplies certain psychological directives. It has to do with the Director's attitude and language with respect to the novices:

"As our dear Father and Founder told us, we must be inflexible when we speak to the novices as a group, but when we talk to them individually, we must be very gentle and affectionate. Newcomers must not be corrected in public, until we know their dispositions and are sure that they are able to support criticism. We must anticipate their worries and their physical ailments, speak to them often (since usually they do not have the courage to speak to us) like a mother who caresses her child, and attract them by great kindness, affability and openness, and sincerely welcome those who come to talk to us, in order to win their affection and confidence and lead them more easily to God -- which is our sole purpose. Once we have won them over, we may, occasionally, in order to test them, speak to them curtly, but this must be done prudently and without caprice, in freedom."[54]

It is a beautiful passage that comes from the heart. Brother Irenée was not a man who was afraid to love. With all his heart he sought to follow the Gospel to the letter by sacrificing his own life for the people whom God had entrusted to him. At the very least he strove to show them, as far as was in his power, "the strongest proofs of affection", even to the point of shedding his own blood. La Tour quotes the following moving declaration:

"In obedience to our M.H. Brother Superior, for the greater glory of God, in honor of his Holy Mother and for the salvation of souls, under your powerful protection, 0 Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin and that of your worthy spouse, my patron, [55]I renew the vow that I made earlier, to the effect that (for) each novice who receives the habit, with the hope of persevering faithfully and living holily in our[56]Society, I shall take the "discipline", to the extent that obedience will allow. And should that be forbidden, I shall undertake some other mortification, in accordance with holy obedience. I shall say, or cause to be said, three Rosaries before your statue and three Litanies of St. Joseph: I shall receive, or cause to be received, three Communions in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in honor of the Holy Guardian Angels, of the Holy Patrons, and for the souls in Purgatory, in order to obtain the graces necessary for the novices. 0 Mary, Most Immaculate Mother of God and ever Virgin, my Most Honored and Dear Queen and Mother, under whose protection I want to live and die. This 28th day of December, Brother Irenée, the vilest of sinners, most unworthy, most useless and most devoted slave."[57]

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[52] Ibid., 61

[53] Ibid., 61

[54] Ibid.,63

[55] Brother Irenée seems to have placed himself under the special protection of St. Joseph, who was The Patron of his Institute.

[56] Ibid., 63-4

[57] Ibid., 63-4

The text and signature were written in red ink. The former soldier sought in every way to continue to expend the blood he once shed for his country at Malplaquet. His biographer relates the severe penances he inflicted upon himself in order to cooperate with Christ for the redemption of souls. Novices who were wavering or on the point of taking the wrong path, of returning to "the world", were won over or brought round by the sight of a heroism whose object they did not suspect.

The pledge of 1728 (renewed on the 8th of September, 1730, "and each year thereafter until death) was also an intense manifestation of the Brother's "Marian piety". He had borrowed the inspiration of it from conversations with John Baptist de La Salle and his writings. But the form which he gave it very likely belonged to one of the Founder's contemporaries who, like De La Salle himself, was a product of Sulpician education -- the Blessed Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort. *The Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* , in which Grignion explained his teaching, had remained in manuscript. Buried "in the darkness and silence of a metal safe", it wasn't recovered and published until 1842. But throughout his apostolic life, the great Breton preacher revealed what he called "Mary's secret", a system of prayer and penance based upon the belief in "the universal mediation" of the Mother of God. During his time in the seminary he enrolled into his association of "the slaves of Jesus through Mary" several of his classmates and, among them, his fellow-townsman from Rennes and the friend of his youth, Jean Baptist Blain. In 1714, (two years before his death) he came from St. Lo to Rouen to visit Blain. Surely, he spoke to him about his missions and missionaries -- the society he sought to found for the evangelization of the cities and the countryside, under the aegis of the "Mediatrix". It is just barely possible that, upon De La Salle's return to Normandy, Blain gave an account of this visit to the Founder and repeated the conversation he had with a man whose strangeness, enthusiasm and supernatural stature had deeply impressed him.[58]

The Founder was no longer of an age to change either his usual train of thought nor his manner of teaching. His temperament, typical of his native Champagne, probably had some difficulty in appreciating the impetuosity of the extraordinary Breton. Nevertheless, they stood together in their Roman faith and in their love of God and of the poor. Blain had no problem discussing Father de Montfort with the community at St. Yon; and thus we can readily account for the inclination of the young Brother Irenée, with his thoroughly "Lasallian" piety (however modified with colorful outbursts) for the inflamed language of the Virgin's herald.

Irenée always wrote of her as "the Most Blessed Virgin." [59]However, the superlative was common to the Brothers, who have continued to use it.

He was more "Montfortian" when, at the beginning of a prayer to Mary Immaculate, he used Grignion's motto: God alone; and when he added the words "unworthy slave of Jesus and Mary" to his signature.[60]

After all, the entire devotional life of the nation (and more particularly, the teaching of the French school of the 17th century) was at work in this sensitive and chivalrous soul. John Baptist de La Salle and the Blessed Grignion were equally disciples of Bérulle, Condren and Jean-Jacques Olier. It goes without saying that Claude-François du Lac was influenced by both men (just as, as an educator, he was also indebted to the Jesuits) when, in the novitiate and among the resident pupils at St. Yon, he propagated the devotion to Mary Immaculate.

The Feast of December the 8th was celebrated with pomp in the Institute. We have seen that since the granting of the "Letters Patent", the Brothers fasted on the vigil of this feast. In the institution at Hal there is a painting in the style of Pierre Mignard. It represents the Blessed Virgin, with her eyes closed, hands crossed on her bosom, wearing a veil and clothed in material that is arranged in graceful folds. Under a crescent moon which frames the figure's feet there is a scroll with the words: "The St. Yon novitiate is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception". According to a quite authoritative tradition, this is a work that was painted under the direction of Brother Irenée.

Kneeling before it, he repeated the formula of consecration that he composed in 1726: “Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin, all pure and all beautiful in your blessed Conception, great queen of Heaven and

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[58] Concerning Blessed Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort, see especially the two biographies written in the 18th century by Father Grandet, Sulpician (1724) and Father Clorivere, S.J. (1785). We have used these important works (along with others) in our own brief book, Le Bienheureux Louis-Marie Grignion de Monfort, Publiroc editions, Marseille, 1930

[59] La Tour, pg. 72.

[60] Ibid., pg. 76. He signed himself in this way until it came to letters addressed to the communities. (See Bulletin des Ecoles Chretiennes, Sept., 1908, pg. 311, a signed facsimile, at the end of a "Circular" announcing the death of Brother Isadore on the 18th of April, 1734. Here the phrase runs: "Sinner, slave of Jesus and Mary".)

earth...and offered her the keys of the institution as a witness to the "absolute and sovereign power" she had over her "subjects", her "children" and her "slaves".

According to Father La Tour, Brother Irenée organized among the resident pupils a Society or Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception whose members (a sort of knighthood) wore a beribboned medal in their buttonhole, representing the Most Blessed Virgin treading a serpent under foot. The wise rules he gave the organization were approved by the Archbishop of Rouen. Finally, after considerable concern and difficulty he obtained a brief of approval and indulgences for the members from Pope Clement XII on the 24th of May, 1736.[61]

* *

The man's last thoughts were the logical conclusion of his life and the sincere expression of his character. As opposed to Jansenism as were the Founder and the other superiors of the Institute, in his will he declared his determination to die "as a child of...the Holy, Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church" and his complete submission to our Holy Father the Pope". He asked pardon of "his neighbors and individually of all the dear Brothers" for his faults, and the "bad example" he had given. With a liberality, a prodigality, which, on the level of supernatural heroism, recalls the lieutenant of the Royal Champagne regiment, "he offered the souls in Purgatory" his fasts, penances, communions, "all he may have suffered", and the Masses and prayers that would be said for his intentions. This magnificent gesture was made "in honor of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin".

Finally, as always humble to the ultimate degree, retaining, even after his lengthy penances, a kind of horror for his youthful extravagances, and, with the same ardor (one might say, the same stolidity) the gratitude of the poor and the "outcast", he pleaded with the Institute that had welcomed him, honored and chosen him as one of its leaders, "to bury him in a plot of land most frequently trod upon", to make "no more ceremony over him than it would a beggar...found dead at the door". If he had "dared", he would have wished "that his unworthy body be thrown by the roadside". And he desired (a thing that was less strange) "to be clothed in a serving-Brother's robe", so that after his death he might have "the honor and consolation" that was denied him while he lived.

For the rest, quite convinced that he had little chance of being heard, he "put the whole matter under obedience".[62]

For months he had been experiencing weakness and a slow and painful decline. The origin of his final illness was an act of charity. He had continued to care for the young men committed to the reformatory. And as one of them had fallen seriously ill, according to Irenée's' biographer, he was in the habit of visiting him frequently in order to strengthen his patience and provide for his needs. One day the man, full of confidence in his teacher, but being himself in a worsened condition, besought Brother Irenée not to leave him. The Brother remained with him until midnight, speaking to him of God. It was extremely cold. A fire of hot coals was brought into the room. Whether through mortification or inattentiveness, Brother Irenée did not complain but endured several hours of unpleasant fumes and excessive heat. It was his undoing... [63] Very likely he suffered some sort of congestion. Weakened by privations and the want of sleep, the organism, after the initial shock, fell prey to a variety of infections. And death, patiently awaited, manfully and religiously accepted, came on the 3rd of October, 1747.

His body, which he had wanted people to tread under foot, was the first to join that of De La Salle in the crypt at St. Yon; for, as we have seen, Brother Timothy had sought and obtained permission to bury Superiors in that place.

His obituary reads: "This day, the 5th of October, in the year seventeen hundred and forty-seven was interred in the vault under the choir of the church of St. Yon, by me, Noel Le Chevalier, priest and chaplain of the place, the body of the late Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert, called Brother Irenée, native of the parish of St. Martin of Tigy, Valley of the Loire, diocese of Orleans, aged fifty six years, professed religious and first Assistant of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who died the day-before-yesterday after having received the Sacraments. In faith of which we have signed: Le Chevalier, priest, Brother Timothy, Superior-general, Brother Celestine, Sacristan."

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[61] La Tour, pg. 74. Quoted in the Bulletin de Ecoles Chretiennes , May, 1907, article on "la devotion envers la tres sainte Vierge dans les Ecoles Chretiennes", pg. 132.

[62] La Tour, pp. 66-7.

[63] Ibid., pp. 41-2.

After the interment the Superior announced "the precious death" of his Assistant. As the authors of a recent biography wrote his letter was a sort "of scenario for a beatification" .[64]

It proclaimed the heroic life of the deceased, "his perfect love of God", the sufferings he had undergone, the penances he had imposed upon himself "in order to form the novices to virtue and (to provide) the good example necessary (for) their vocation",[65] his "fervor in prayer" ("the wonder of resident pupils, who had a profound respect for him), his "great spirit of mental prayer", his precise obedience, his "attachment to the decisions of the Catholic church", his humility, his love of poverty, which induced him to wear the oldest clothes and eat the most common and tasteless food, his "dedication to frequent communion", and his devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin.

Brother Timothy also recalled the "generosity" with which Claude Francis left "the world and his family"...desiring to live unknown and hidden in the Institute for fear that his mother's affection for him (who was her eldest son) and the mutual affection he had for her would uproot him from his life of humility and penance.

The man who had despised vanities, stripped himself of pride of class, and abdicated rank, nobility and independence, remained the splendor of his confreres. The Superior-general sought to have a portrait of "this great servant of God". "He brought an artist into the room" where Brother Irenée was lying ill. "In order not to alarm (the Brother's) rather skittish "modesty", Brother Timothy pretended that a picture of the Holy Founder hanging in the room needed to be touched up. Brother Irenée finally saw through this stratagem and pleaded that the project be abandoned.[66] However, the work had already been sufficiently advanced.

It is very probable that it is the painting which today hangs in the Superior-general's office in Rome.[67] About 1907, in an attic of the Brothers' residence near the Cathedral of St. Maurice in Angers, a Director of one of the Brothers' schools found an abandoned canvas that was torn in one place and burned in another. He brought it to a M. Audfray, an able painter who liked its power and the vigor of its workmanship, and he agreed to restore it.

The painting was signed "Paul Brard", and was doubtless modelled on the work of an 18th century Normand artist. Its subject is certainly Brother Irenée. It had been known that a portrait of him existed before the Revolution in the residence school in Angers, called the "Rossignolerie", and that it had been returned to the Brothers in 1820 when their schools were reopened.[68]

It was the Claude François du Lac as tradition and imagination had preserved his features: a long face with a rather pointed nose and chin, thin cheeks and a very broad forehead under a halo of thick hair that curled at the ears; both the look and the lips seemed touched with gentleness, while retaining just a trace of their former irony, that "waspish" turn of mind of which the natives of Orleans are accused, sharpened by an aristocratic haughtiness. There is also the suggestion of refinement, of "breed", which must have been immediately discernible, under the dusty clothes of the pilgrim or the worn mantle that Brother Irenée selected from the cloakroom at St. Yon for his visits to town.

The remains of the saintly penitent rested for a century-and-a-half in the vault where it had been placed. But in 1895 the civil administration authorized the Christian Brothers to search for the bodies buried during the 18th century under the chapel. The bodies of the Brothers Superior-general Timothy and Claude and those of Brothers Assistant Irenée and Raymond were found and were borne to the cemetery of *Bon Secours*, on the hillside from which the splendor of Rouen lies spread out before one. One of Claude François' bones bore the mark of the wound received at Malplaquet.

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64 Vie de Frere Irenée, de (Institut des Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes (1691-1747), Procure-general, 78 de Sevres, 1930, pg.

65 He had at the same time "as many as thirty -six or thirty-eight novices", wrote Brother Timothy. The Catalogue of Entrants lists forty-one in 1735 and thirty-three in 1745.

66 La Tour, pg. 45.

67 Motherhouse Archives, BE p. Note by Brother Charles of Mary (Isidore Simonneaux) on the portrait found in Angers and presented to the M.H.Brother Imier of Jesus in 1912

68 La Tour, pp. 47-50. Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 204, summarizes this letter. Most of the texts we have quoted from Father La Tour are found in the 1930 biography but with "modifications", which, no doubt, are explained by the goal of simple edification sought by the authors. But such liberties cannot be justified in an historical perspective.

CHAPTER TWO

The Schools in the South of France

Carried forward from St. Yon to the limits of the organism, the vitality of the young Society followed a regular rhythm unflaggingly and unfeverishly, but with greater clarity and greater vigor in each year of its growth. We propose to lay hold of it and to observe its mounting intensity, by journeying to the various points on French soil where the activity of the Christian Brothers put in an appearance.

And we proceed immediately to the most distant point, the South of France, which, because of its situation, totally removed from the headquarters in which the Superior-general resided and where (except for 1775) the General Chapters would be held until 1767, this region became a very special entity.

The new Institute (the creation of a priest from Champagne), from the very beginning was composed of men from the East and the North, but, at the outset of the 18th century, had unexpectedly emigrated to the South. In the first volume we explained how John Baptist de La Salle's followers were called to Avignon in 1703; and then from Avignon reached Marseilles; and, finally, between 1707 and 1711, promoted by bishops, clergy and politicians to the rank of indispensable auxiliaries in the religious apostolate and especially in the struggle against Protestantism, they spread to Mende, Alès,[1] Grenoble and Vans.[2]

Provence, Languedoc and Dauphine presented them with a field of activity rather different from the one in which (from Rethel to Chartres and from Calais to Troyes) they had been working from the beginning. They found themselves among a people who, under the `Ancien Regime' more so than currently, clung to a quaint civilization, with customs and language that earned them a sort of moral and social, if not a political, isolation. More so than the rest of the kingdom, here passions were more lively, docility less absolute, allegiance more hazardous and debate, whether in assemblies or on the streets, ever welcome. Languedoc had preserved its provincial "Estates", where, of course, the representatives of the king always had the last word, but which allowed for the expression of opinion, for oratorical reputations to make the most of their situation, and for local authorities to display their influence. Marseille enjoyed a wealth, a greatness, a reputation and vast maritime connections which gave it metropolitan status and put it out of the reach of Paris. In the days of the Lord High Constable Lesdiguières, Dauphine was a sort of independent state.

Since the Middle Ages, a separatist mentality, opposition to men and ideas originating in northern Rance had, in some of these regions, prepared a goodly number of areas favorable to the development of heresy. At the same time as the Albigensians of the 12th and 13th centuries, there appeared the Alpine Waldensians whose doctrines spread into Provence at the beginning of the 14th century. Two-hundred years later Calvinism resumed the antique rebellion. It raised its temples and its fortresses in the Gevaudan, in the vicinity of Viviers, on the banks of the Gardon, the Heraut and the Tarn and turned the Dauphine into fire and blood. The religious wars continued in the south until Louis XIII. Grenoble, Montelimar, Die, Privas, Alès, Uzes and Nîmes, Montpellier, Millau and Montauban were Protestant cities in 1630. Out of Orange arose a dynasty which, in Holland and England, rallied the hopes and the forces of the adversaries of Catholicism.

Through the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes Louis XIV sought to re-establish religious unity and, at the same time, strengthen the political community within his realm. He had to have recourse to violence and became embroiled in civil war. Once the Camisards were overcome, the king thought that through the mutual action of law, preaching and repression, he would achieve his ends. In August of 1715, only a few days before his death, his plans were thwarted and his power blunted. A "Desert Synod", without an appeal to arms, drew up a plan for the reestablishment of a Calvinist church. Antoine Court set to work to organize the Huguenots and find pastors for them; and, in 1729 in Lausanne, he founded a Protestant seminary whose students slipped into France to reawaken and assemble the faithful. By 1744 the outlawed cult had seriously expanded its clandestine restoration. Indeed, in that year there were sixty-six Huguenot communities in Dauphine, more than a hundred in Upper and Lower Languedoc, eight in Province, four in the Montauban region, and nine in Rouergue (and the movement was not confined to the southern provinces, since Normandy and Poitou also included dissident families). Soon, the philosophers

[1] We use the current spelling for Alès whenever it is not included in a quotation.

[2] See the first volume of this work, Part Two, chap. ix

and the salons lent their support to Protestantism. Superintendents and governors grew weary of persecuting them. Society was groping toward official toleration, while awaiting (two years before the Revolution) the restoration of the civil rights of the "so-called reformed religion."[3] In the turbulent South of France, divided, quivering with impatience, champing at the bit and determined to sacrifice nothing of its subtle and complex character, the tiny team of Christian Brothers, if it was going to succeed, had to preserve its cohesiveness on the one hand, while becoming part of the region on the other. It was an "importation": without changing its own "nature", it had to become "naturalized". In August of 1712 De La Salle wrote to Brother Gabriel Drolin: I am presently going to begin a novitiate in that region, because there they need people from the region, as there is a difference in language between there and France.[4]

The plan was realized in Marseille, where, after an auspicious (indeed, too promising) beginning, disaster ensued. A conspiracy was raised against the holy man whose enterprise was quickly interrupted, censured, slandered and abandoned. Certainly, Jansenism played an important role in the about-face effected by the clergy in Marseille; but mistrust of the Founder, imported from a great distance and alien to local customs, also played a part. Heavy-hearted, De La Salle made his way up to Baume. One after another, the novices left. And in 1713 their Director, Brother Timothy, joined his Superior in Mende to report that nothing was left of the novitiate in Marseille. In the following year the Founder (according to an expression in one of his letters) "returned to France.'" He never returned to the South of France.

His stay there, however, had not been in vain. With the exception of the one in Valreas, the schools he opened in that region survived. And fifteen years later a new center was selected where men called to live as Brothers in the communities of Provence, Languedoc and Dauphine would test their vocations and train to become teachers.

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Marseille had been De La Salle's city of painful experiences. In 1710 it was a city of death for the two Brothers that he had left behind him there. Both of them succumbed to the great plague that had been brought in by ship from the Orient. Along with Bishop Belsunce, the supervisors and Lord Roze, they had exhausted themselves attending the afflicted. The narrow, loathsome Rue Ferrats, where the parochial school of St. Laurence stood, opposite the Old Port, was an area in which the epidemic flourished. Brother Saturnine was the first of the two Brothers to be stricken. He fell into a lethargic sleep; and his companion, Brother Lazarus, thought he should send word of his death to St. Yon. The news had no sooner arrived in Normandy than a letter followed from the Brother presumed to be dead to the effect that he had witnessed Brother Lazarus breath his last! Temporarily cured, Saturnine resumed his work as a volunteer infirmarian. But this time his devotion cost him his life. And with him, seemed to be buried the very little that was left of the Founder's work and hopes in Marseille.[5]

The same thing was to happen in the Gevaudan. In spite of the sanitary cordon, the Marseille plague spread as far as Mende. There, in the summer and autumn of 1721, it reached its full virulence. In September Brother Nicolas died at the age of thirty-five and was buried in the Franciscan cemetery. His Director, Brother Henri, whom the city fathers asked to assist a priest, Father Alexander, to distribute bread, died "in the infirmary" on the 14th of October; and his body was brought to a common grave at the church of St. Gervais and Protais.[6]

A harvest followed upon these deaths. Brother Timothy sent Brothers Edmund and Paulinus [7] to Mende, who reopened the school in the course of the year 1723. Henceforth, the school in Gevaudan

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[3] Georges Goyau, Histoire religieuse de la Nation francaise, pp. 481-4.

[4] See the first volume of this work, pp. 287-288; 319-323.

[5] Brother Gabriel's letter, 28th August, 1711. (Motherhouse Archives, R. Series C, 15th letter.

[6] Motherhouse Archives HB s28-7. Historique manuscrit de la Province meridionale de l'Institut des Freres de Ecoles chretiennes depuis son orlgine jusqu'a la Revolution, about 1908, using local documentation by Brother Theodore of Jesus, Visitor-general

[7] Motherhouse Archives, op. cit., Cf. the first volume of this work, pg. 328.

would pursue peacefully an existence whose beginnings had been very unsettled. In the present volume[8] we shall have no further reason to mention it.

We must now turn our attention to the foundations in Marseille.[9] In a letter to Brother Gabriel on the 16th of April, 1706, John Baptist de La Salle had predicted that the Brothers "would have schools everywhere (in Marseille)."[10] After Lazarus[11] and Saturnine's exemplary behavior the bias against the Brothers disappeared. Henri-François Xavier Belsunce's goodwill worked in their favor without being thwarted by the Jansenists. Since his nomination in 1709, the great Bishop had been in complete agreement with De La Salle both as to character and doctrine. Born a Calvinist thirty years earlier in the Perigordian castle of his great-granduncle, who was Marshal in the army, and baptized by a pastor of the so-called reformed church, he came to Catholicism with his parents, whose conversion preceded the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. At his confirmation, he added to his Baptismal name of Henri, the names of François Xavier, in honor of his distant cousin from the Basque country, the Jesuit apostle to India and Japan. He was more pleased with that connection than he was with the fact that he was the nephew of the famous Lauzun. He had also dreamed of joining Xavier's religious family; but the feebleness of his health forced him to leave the Society of Jesus after the novitiate and the scholasticate. Admitted in 1701 to the Seminary of Agen, directed by the Vincentians, a priest by the end of 1703, and the following year the vicar-general of the devout Hebert, Bishop of the diocese, he shared the seriousness, the energy and the orthodoxy of his professors. And while he became a Lord Bishop, he was not a worldly prelate.

His litigious and pugnacious temperament gained him enemies. But his greatness of soul and his charity won him the hearts of the people of Marseille. In the eyes of his contemporaries, as well as of posterity, he was the pastor who did not abandon his flock at the moment of the test, but who, quite simply, gallantly and without bluster, as a man of principle, a gentleman and father to his people, risked his life to dispense the assistance of his ministry to the plague-ridden. People were grateful to him for having been, like the bishops of old, the "defender of the city" in a time of calamity and, then, "the faithful spouse" of his Church, which he refused to abandon when, in 1723, he was offered the See of Laon (where he might have assumed the titles of "Duke" and "Peer") and, in 1729, the Archbishopric of Bordeaux. For nearly half-a-century he remained the illustrious and venerated leader of the proud Massilia, alert to preserve his clergy and his people in obedience to the Holy See, not always free of a certain severity, but preaching as many as three or four sermons in the a single day. He died in his eighties, in 1755, a prominent figure disappearing from the landscape as the sky darkened, the last column left standing of Louis XIV's structure as the "philosophic'" storm approached.

This was the man who provided steady support for the Brothers. Once Marseille had been delivered from the plague, he meant to see that the children of the poor had teachers. And, adopting the thought of De La Salle, he invited Brother Timothy to send teachers into the parishes. In order successfully to secure these foundations, the Superior-general designated one of the most qualified representatives of the Lasallian tradition, as well as one of the most able men among the Directors, François Blin, Brother Ambrose, who was at the time fifty-two years old. For him Marseille would constitute the longest and the last stage of his career. He died on the 23rd of November, 1756.[12]

Upon his arrival in 1723 he reopened the St. Laurence school, and in the same year he organized classes in the vicinities of the Cathedral and the parish of St. Martin. Benefactors, Gabriel Moret, Beausset, Francis Gratian, Pierre Olive, and Jean Henri Dupeux supplied the requisite funds. The Confraternity of Our Lady Help of Christians enabled the Brothers to move out their melancholy dwelling on Rue Ferrets, as the churchwardens, André Megalon, Bruni Saint Gannat, Joseph Flegan and J.B. Fabron furnished a house on Rue Roquette for the teachers in the tuition-free school.

It was a far cry from days when Father François Aubert, the pastor of St. Martin's and Father Arnaud, the pastor of Notre Dame Accoules, in spite of Bishop Belsunce, ran the Founder of the Brothers

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[8] According to Brother Theodore of Jesus. Brother Lucard speaks of Brother Hyacinth, who in 1717, was Brother Paulinus' colleague in Versailles. Brother Edmund belonged to the Paris Community.

[9] See the first volume of this work, pp. 321-322; 325-327.

[10] Motherhouse Archives, Series C, 16th letter.

[11] Cf. Henry de Belsunce, eveque de Marseille, by Dom Theophile Berengier, 1886.

[12] Taken from the obituary register for the Notre Dame parish, for the year 1756 (quoted in HIstorique de Marseille, Motherhouse Archives

out of their parishes. On the 1st of January, 1724 the boys in "the Accoules" school became the responsibility of Brother Ambrose's associates. Finally, on the 2nd of the following October, through the generosity of Father Nicholas Bouquin, the Brothers started two classes in St. Ferreol.[13]

The Bishop awaited neither the "Letters Patent" nor the Bull *In apostolicae dignitatis solio* to welcome the Brothers into his diocese with the rank and the rights enjoyed by other congregations. When the kind and the Pope made their decisions, the moment seemed right to ask the city-fathers for a similar recognition, which made the Brothers' community one of the official bodies of the City of Marseille.

The municipal archives has the original text of the petition addressed to "the Mayor and the Supervisors, the protectors and defenders of privileges and immunities in this city". It was signed by Brother Ambrose and eleven other Brothers: — Anastasius, Edmund, Sylvester, Eusebius, Daniel, Stanislaus, Luke, Roch, Antoninus, Maximian and Thibault. Recalling the origin and the development of their Society as well as its beginnings in Marseille,[14] the petitioners stated that "since the plague", they were "established in every parish, including the poor house". (In which there must have been three Brothers, serving the poor and forming a separate community; since the petition states that there were fifteen Brothers in the city, "twelve of whom [probably the twelve signatories] assembled daily in the same residence and held common religious exercises in the home of the venerable Confraternity of Our Lady Help of Christians."

The Brothers were quick to take advantage of their new situation in both Church and State since 1725. They wanted the city to show them the same confidence by honoring (them) with the public recognition similar to that which other Regular Congregations had the distinction of receiving.'

The document is undated, but it belongs certainly to the beginning of 1727, since on the 6th of March of that year, "M. Bathalon, the first Supervisor", presented the petition to the City Council. On his motion, the city decided to welcome the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the number of Regular bodies and communities, so that they might exercise their functions in keeping with their Institute. As shrewd middle-class and economically-minded counsellors, they stipulated that "on the strength of (this) public recognition" (the City) cannot be made liable for any costs or expenses whatsoever, whether for the present or for the future.[15]

The distinction, however, did have its benefits, and Brother Timothy expressed his gratitude for it in a letter addressed to the Mayor and the Supervisors, dated the 13th of April, 1727.3 Nor was money refused, at least provisionally. Cardin Le Bret, the Count of Selles, who combined the responsibilities of first President of Aix and the Commissioner of Provence (a man whose extensive power endured until his death in 1734) saw to it that the sum of 400 livres was written into the city budget, to be paid to the Brothers of Marseille for the year 1728.

His friend, Bishop Belsunce, wrote his thanks on the 18th of July, 1728: "The Lord will not allow such a meritorious act of charity to go unrewarded". However, it was a gesture that needed repeating:
If you were thoroughly aware of the great need, I am convinced, Sir, that you would not limit your beneficence to this year only. Nothing is more necessary in such a city as this one than schools where poor children, who will eventually be going to sea, are educated tuition-free and can learn their religion.[16]

Similarly, in 1729, the Bishop set the matter before the king himself. A letter, dated the 21st of May, which Le Bret sent from Aix to the magistrates of Marseille supplies the proof of this initiative: "The Comptroller-general" (of finances) wishes to know "his thought concerning a request made by the Bishop", who wanted the City to contribute an allocation of 815 livres "toward the subsistence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools". "On the other hand", added the Commissioner, "the Count of St. Florentine was kind enough to write me that His Majesty finds it fitting that the 400 livres given last year be renewed". Le Bret suggested an apparently acceptable solution. He "noticed" that Bishop Belsunce's "memordandum" did not speak of 815 livres, but only of the assistance needed to support sixteen Brothers for whom the 1900 livres produced by private alms are insufficient. The point was not lost on the Supervisors who voted 400 livres for operating expenses.[17]

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[13] Motherhouse Archives, Historique cited. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pp. 428-9

[14] Register of the resolutions of the City Council, no. 129, for 1727, fo 27, partially quoted by Lucard, Vol. II and in extenso in the Historique

[15] Copy in the Historique cited above. (The Bulletin des 'Ecoles chr'etiennes published this document in January, 1936, pp. 1-16.

[16] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 24. The date is also supplied by the Historique

[17] 1 Text published in 1886 by Dom Berengier in Vie d'Henry de Belsunce, following the original which is owned by the Marquis de Clapiers.

Each year the subject had to be brought up again. The Minister intervened once again in 1730: Le Bret alerted the city government, and this time politely suggested its line of conduct: His Excellency, gentlemen, who wishes, he says, to make no demands upon you, nevertheless, believes that you cannot do better than to continue the 400 livres that you have granted the Brothers of the Christian Schools once or twice in the past, without creating a precedent, and he... has no doubt that you are not bound by His Excellency's request, who believes that this institution is useful. There is no doubt that the Bishop of Marseille is of the same mind. .His Excellency has sent me a request signed by a host of distinguished and deserving people.[18]

In 1732 Blain wrote:[19] (In Marseille) sixteen Brothers spread throughout various neighborhoods instruct the children of the poor with great success. Their subsistence has been carefully provided for through charitable foundations set up by the city Supervisors and judges, who are presently working to build up an income of 800 livres. To this end[20] they have prepared a petition to obtain the king's support and have made Brother Superior responsible for presenting it to Cardinal Fleury.[21]Blain's statements were ill-founded; or he mistook hopes for realities. The truth was that the members of the city government were something less than prepared to come to the financial aid of the tuition-free schools. On the 2nd of May, 1733, Le Bret, who was urging the politicians to maintain the subsidy, became aware of their lack of enthusiasm: It seems, gentlemen, that you do not agree as to the usefulness of the Brothers...[22]

It was the king who, perhaps as the result of a fresh request from Brother Timothy, superseded the faltering local authority.

Beginning in 1739, he fixed on the Brothers in St. Laurent an income of 300 livres on his personal account, a sum which was paid right up to the Revolution. A certain number of gifts and inheritances contributed further to reduce the penury of the Brothers in Marseille. In 1730 the Confraternity of Our Lady Help of Christians granted a supplement of 50 livres to each of the Brothers who taught at the school on Rue Roquette. In 1739 Father Marcellin deeded to the Christian Schools a sum of 1900 livres and two houses which had an income of 630 livres. The following year a M. Borrely left 500 livres "to be spent on the building at St. Ferreol," and M. Zachary Ricard left an equal sum for "the buildings at St. Ferreol and St. Martin's." The city corporation became totally indifferent to the material needs of the Brothers, so that twenty-three years later, the Mayor of Marseille, replying to a questionnaire addressed to him by the Mayor of Sedan, was able to assert that the support of the Christian Schools in no way taxed the city's finances. But the Brothers in the Roquette community had for a long time contrived to find other sources of income, as we shall see when we come to speak of the residence schools.

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No matter how important was the establishment of the Institute in Marseille (and throughout the 18th century that foundation made steady progress) and no matter how extensive and efficacious was Bishop Belsunce's support, the powerful port city was not selected to be the headquarters of the communities in the South of France.

Turning its back on the regions to the North, from which its geographical position, its activities and its tastes separated it, Marseille turned exclusively toward the Mediterranean. It was a city lost in the thought of distant commerce and daring enterprise. It was both a threshold and a gateway. It beckoned toward the Orient and, in a certain sense, reached out to meet it; and it inspired travel and the conquest of wealth. While it welcomed missionaries who departed it in order to win souls, it was incapable of hanging on to missionaries. People went on pilgrimage to Notre Dame de la Garde to lay up spiritual strength for a voyage or to pray against a future that was full of peril; but it was not the promised land of the works of the spirit or a fruitful field for solitude and prayer. The failure of the novitiate in 1712 did not encourage new efforts. The Brothers would have to look elsewhere for a center where in peace they could cultivate young vocations, leisurely to assemble (from the neighboring regions) the disciples of De La Salle to be renewed by "retreats", pronounce their vows, deliberate on their spiritual and temporal concerns, and, in illness and old-age, to prepare for death.

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[18] Historique, following the City Archives

[19] Blain Vol.2. p.14

[20] Quoted in the Historique, following the original in the City Archives of Marseille

[21] Blain, Vol. II, pg. 14.

[22] Historique.

There was no need to go far afield: Avignon, the City of the Popes, was the obvious choice. From the opening of the Brothers' school in St. Pierre's parish, Avignon was like an oasis for the Institute and for John Baptist de La Salle. There the Brothers had received very decent lodging from M. Chateau-Blanc. There they felt themselves to be sheltered under the paternal protection of the Archbishop and the Vice-Legate. The Founder had loved this, the "Church's City", standing calm and majestic in the shadow of Notre Dame des Doms and the Palace of the Popes. It was there, in 1711, that he had received such a warm welcome; and there, too, in 1712, he had published some of his writings, where the memory of his educational dedication persisted as well as the edifying way he celebrated Mass in the Convent of the Augustinians.

In the days when Brother Ponce functioned as Visitor of the communities in the South of France, Avignon had already been a kind of headquarters for the small Society which was taking root from Gevaudan to the Alps. It was a thoroughfare between two regions. And, situated on the banks of the Rhone, it was also a necessary halting-place for one who, coming from the North, was making his way toward the Mediterranean.

In the eyes of the "Roman" that De La Salle aspired to be, Avignon offered an incomparable situation. Without it, he could not have guaranteed the physical survival nor the moral support for the disciple whom he thrust like a scout upon the highroads to Rome and left for more than a quarter of a century as a sentinel on the Tiber. It was by way of Avignon that he addressed his letters and subsidies to Brother Gabriel Drolin. He recommended the Brothers to the prelates who, from Avignon, were making their way to the Roman Court. It was Bishop Crochans of Cavaillon who won Clement XI's favor for the French teacher.

Brother Gabriel's tiny "regional school" was little more than a distant annex to the foundation in Avignon. After the "old pioneer's" departure in 1728, the Brothers were camping rather than living in Rome. Like his predecessor, Brother Fiacre reside on the street "opposite the Capuchins", "Strada Ferrea", in the parish of St. Susanna.[23] There he was joined by Brother Sylvester (Francis Regnauldin). The community included only two, and, subsequently, three Brothers.[24] In an audience given on the 2nd of May, 1736, Clement XII declared that there was no need to increase the number of Brothers in the community, since Roman children were already benefiting from the instruction of the Scolopi Fathers. Abandoning the Strada Ferrea in 1733, the Brothers moved from one residence to another for the next ten years, until in 1743 they bought a small house on the "Via della Purificazione". The money to make the purchase came to them from Marseille, where the residence school had been prospering. The French Counsel, M. Digne, and the Procurators-general of the Vincentians and the Carthusians had also, out of sympathy for the sons of De La Salle, as well as with the view of assisting a Christian work, contributed toward the purchase. Henceforth, the Roman institution grew in strength. Benedict XV who, at the time he was functioning as secretary to the Sacred Congregation of the Council, shared in the approbation of the Institute, was entirely supportive of the teachers who had come from beyond the mountains. With the accession of the new Pope, Brother Timothy hastened to inform him of the thoroughly Catholic position occupied by the St. Yon community and its affiliates: Penetrated with a total veneration for everything issuing from the Holy See, we beseech Your Holiness (to whom we testify our joy at his election to the sovereign Pontificate) to permit us to declare that, having been spread to, and founded in, fifty cities and more throughout the kingdom of France, for the purpose of teaching in tuition-free schools for the poor and the working class, there is none of us who is not totally subject to the Apostolic See and its decisions...

Brother Jean Baptist of the community on the Via della Purificatione since 1746, in 1742 added to his responsibilities the function of Procurator-general to the Court of Rome. In 1756 his successor, Brother Rieul, demonstrating the Brother confidence in the future, planned a new building on the Strada Felice

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[23] See the first volume of this work.

[24] At the beginning of 1730 Brother Timothy, in a petition to Benedict XIII "asked...His Holiness to be pleased to confirm the Brother sin their operation of the school for the poor situated near the Capuchins. „as well as to permit them to have other schools in all sectors of Rome." On the 19th of January a note signed by the Cardinal-vicar Prosper Marefuscus stating simply that "without sending any "Brief," the Pope authorized the replacing of Brother Thomas by another Brother of the same Institute, competent and of good morals, with an annual salary of thirty-six écus..." (Motherhouse Archives, HA n 11.).

(now the Via Sistina), in the parish of St. Andrea dell Fratte, not far from the "Trinita dei Monti". Two years later the Brothers took possession of the place.[25]

The origin of the school in Ferrara is also associated with Avignon. The Vice-legate Ranieri Delci[26] had appreciated the results obtained by the Brothers among the children of the people when he represented Clement XI in the Pontifical City on the banks of the Rhone. Having become Archbishop of Ferrara and a Cardinal, Delci called Brother Sylvester from Rome and lodged him in his palace along with another Brother. On the 19th of July, 1741 classes began. Pupils flocked in such great numbers that in the following year it was necessary to double the number of teachers. To this crowd the Marquis Calcagnini opened the doors of his home, near the Church of the Holy Spirit, while a local schoolhouse was being readied. In 1743, on the *Monte della Pieta* in his episcopal city Delci set up a capital sum of 6,000 ecus, the income from which would be used to support the school and the community. At the same time a house was acquired for the Brothers in Ferrara on the Via della Bellaria.[27]

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These brief remarks on the schools in Italy will suffice for the moment. In the history of the Christian Brothers in the 18th century Rome was the center of affection and aspiration, although it was not securely attained until after many long pilgrimages, struggles and trials. A small, gallant band was preparing for a very distant future. And so, we return to France and first of all to the South of France, where the followers of De La Salle had secured a foothold on the road to their future mission and their loftiest achievement, where they were already in the service of the Papacy, while at the same time they stood in readiness to serve their Prince and their country.

In 1728 the Brother Superior-general came to Avignon, which had been the center of his activities between 1713 and 1720. Although a Parisian, he had a wonderful sense of the needs of the communities in the South of France. As the Director of the school in Mende, Director of novices in Marseille and Visitor of Languedoc and Provence, Brother Timothy was familiar with the spirit and the customs of these regions. The common people, whose children he had instructed, held him in veneration. Bishops, pastors, politicians and bureaucrats who had to deal with him personally valued his calm wisdom, his amiability, his sure judgment and his tireless labor.

He did not take long to draw up the plan of organization that he meant to establish. A "Vow Book" (a manuscript of a hundred-and-thirty pages, which is one of the most venerable documents in the Institute's archives)1 opens with the following statement:

"We, the undersigned, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, making the visitation of our houses South of Lyons, acknowledge that it has been quite inconvenient and detrimental to the Brothers in these institutions to have to go to Rouen to make their vows, given the length of the journey, which is not only very tiring, but also dissipating and extremely expensive. Hence, with the advice of our dear Brothers Assistants, we have selected our house in Avignon to serve as a place to convene our Brothers of the region who are ready to make vows, which house will also serve as a place where our Brothers may make their retreats during vacations or at other times, since they are deprived of such an advantage in the individual communities, to the detriment of their spiritual progress. For this reason we asked the Vice-legate for permission to have a chapel blessed in our house in Avignon and the Archbishop, to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed for the profession of vows: which were granted to us by Their Excellencies."

As a consequence, the chapel was blessed by the Vicar-general on the Vigil of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin; and on the following day, September 8, the same Vicar-general celebrated Mass in the chapel and the nineteen of us Brothers received Communion from him.

On the 9th, the retreat began in the spirit of our Institute, and ordered like the novitiate. On the 14th of the same month, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, five of our Brothers who were intended for perpetual vows, pronounced triennial vows. On the 22nd, on the Feast of St. Matthew, twelve Brothers made vows. Eight pronounced perpetual vows and four triennial vows, as is indicated in the

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[25] Archives of the Brother Procurator-general to the Holy See, File no. 1 and Historique

[26] And not "Deley," as the name is erroneously spelled in the first volume of the present work, pp. 295.

[27] This notebook, the present binding of which is modern and which is without a title, is classified in the Motherhouse Archives under the heading Ha m 17.

formulas appended below; this was done on each of the days referred to above, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament, exposed for this purpose, with the intention on our part that this house be reserved for such sacred uses, which would not prevent it from also serving as classrooms, as formerly, according to the last will and testament of M. Chateau-Blanc, who purchased it in order to maintain tuition-free schools here for boys and to house the Brothers. In faith whereof we have signed. Done at Avignon, the 21st of September, One-thousand-seven-hundred- and-eighteen. Brother Timothy."

The first five numbered pages of the book contain the signed triennial vow formulas pronounced on the 14th of September by Brothers Sylvester (François Regnauldin), Daniel (Antoine Rodier), Stanislaus (Albin Bouche) Roch (Jean-Pierre Baueret) and Spiridon (Louis Pellat). We have to move on to page 90 (et sq.) before we come to the vows and signatures of those who made final commitments on the Feast of St. Matthew, at Avignon, on the 21st of September (and not on the 22nd, as reported above).

With feeling we linger respectfully over page 90 of the small book. The formula is in an exaggerated "round hand", rather thick, and with spelling that suggests its 17th century origins and some hesitancy with regard to the use of double letters ("behavior", "gratuitously", "approbation"); it is clearly the work of an old man, and it is signed, "Brother Gabriel, in the world Gabriel Drolin". This was the same man who, on the 21st of November, 1691 had (along with John Baptist de La Salle and Nicolas Vuyart) vowed "association and union...forever as long as the last one was alive", even if "he had to beg and live on bread alone."' This was the disciple of the heroic days, one of the twelve at Vaugirard on the 6th of June, 1694,[28] and the young Society's witness to the Holy See, who had just returned from Rome, and who now approached the altar at the head of his juniors, knelt in the presence of the Eucharist and once again proclaimed his unfailing fidelity which, thirty-seven years earlier, he had sworn to keep and which, in spite of obstacles, loneliness and penury, he had never forsaken. Like his Brothers at St. Yon in 1725, Brother Gabriel in 1728 was complying with the Bull of Benedict XIII. His vows of "poverty, chastity, obedience, stability in the Society, and of teaching gratuitously" summed up and concluded a whole lifetime.[29]

In order to conform to the Rule, Brothers Sylvester, Daniel, Stanislaus, Roch and Spiridon who, the week before had taken triennial vows, on the 21st of September exchanged them for perpetual vows. They were joined by Brothers Philip (Jean Poiret)[30] and Martini (Nicolas Dupont). Finally, four more young Brothers, Raymond (Jean-François Genart), Marcellin (Pierre Ruton), Medard (Jean-Pierre Baudrand) and Thibaut (Claude Jenoulat) pronounced triennial vows. Each of the formulas were countersigned by the Superior-general.

Through the countersignatures identified in the vow-book, we have authenticated proof of the Superiors' (or their delegates') visits to Avignon. In 1729 there was Brother Visitor Denis. In 1731, Brother Gabriel was "deputized" to receive the triennial vows of four Brothers, one of whom, Brother Genereux (Jean-Baptist de Saint) was a future Assistant. The Superior-general wished to bestow this honorary mission on the "Dean" of the Institute, probably the last that Brother Gabriel would have to fulfill before rendering his upright and faithful soul to God and his body, exhausted with work and suffering, to the soil of France.[31] Brother Fiacre, who had been recalled from Rome to resume his functions as Visitor, was in the South of France in September of 1732 and in February of 1733 and countersigned two vow formulas on the Feast of St. Matthew, and another on the Feast of the Purification. And, then, we pick up the trail of Brother Assistant Irenée's long journey in 1733.[32] This well-known leader was in Avignon during the greater part of the September; and on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin he admitted Brother Savior (Pierre Quilliet) to perpetual vows. On the Feast of St. Matthew another Brother Gabriel (David Bouin) and six other Brothers bound themselves by perpetual vows, as Brother Irenée presided. On the same date three Brothers pronounced temporary vows.

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[28] 1 See volume one of the present work, pg. 169.

[29] 2 See volume of the present work, pp. 171-172

[30] 3 There can be no doubt but what this Brother Philip was the Director of the Community in Moulins, who had entered the Institute on the 2nd of September, 1692, was professed on the 14th of June, 1699 and was a member of the Chapter of 1734; he died in October, 1752 in Avignon. (The Register calls him "John Police." But this must be due to a confusion

[31] See the first volume of the present work. We recall that Brother Gabriel came to Auxonne in 1728; and died there on the 11th of January, 1733 "fortified by the Sacraments" and on the following day was buried "in the churchyard," according to the obituary notice drawn up by A. Mouchez, pastor of Auxonne

[32] Cf. above

Brother Claude, of whose role in the "City of the Popes" we shall speak presently, represented the Brother Superior at the vow ceremony on the 29th of September, 1735. In the following year Brother Timothy came in person: his signature is appended to the eight formulas, dated the 20th of May 1736, "Pentecost Sunday". At that time he decided (as we know from a note written by Brother Claude on page 33 of the vowbook) to set aside the remaining pages of the book exclusively for formulas of perpetual vows. Among those perpetually professed on that Pentecost Sunday were Brothers Marceline and Thibault whose triennial vows the Superior had received in 1728[33]

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As a retreat house where vows were renewed, the house in Avignon became, in virtue of a decision made in 1728, and by a sort of logical consequence, a novitiate. The young men whom the Congregation had recruited in the South of France would not have to leave their native region in order to train for the life of a Christian Brother. They were dispensed from the dangers of migration and the long journey. They would teach the children of their own region without, however, the Superior abandoning the practice of "changing" Brothers from North to South. Such changes, furthermore, would continue to be necessary, since throughout the 18th century, vocations originating in the southern provinces were barely sufficient throughout the 18th century.

The date 14th September, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross is the date for the founding of this novitiate. Brother Stanislaus, a man from Ardenne, received the obedience as its Director. God willing, there was none better equipped to undertake this responsibility. Born in Charleville, in St. Remy's parish, on the 15th of February, 1698, Albin Bouche, according to Blain, possessed all the qualities of mind and body.The Feast of the 14th of September had already touched his life, since, on that day in 1717, he had entered the Institute. He had received the name "Stanislaus", after another Brother of that name, Pierre-Jean, of the diocese of Embrun, who, called early to his eternal reward, died on the 27th of the preceding August. Albin Bouche would continue to be one of the models proposed for imitation by the sons of St. La Salle. And it is understandable that Blain reserved a special place for him in the gallery of portraits he appended to his biography of the Founder, entitled *Abridged Lives of some Brothers of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools who died in the Odor of Sanctity*.[34]

Deeply religious, detached from earthly things, exquisitely modest, completely obedient, quietly yet fearlessly courageous in trials, Brother Stanislaus practiced the virtues of which De La Salle was himself the prototype and that he wished to cultivate in his followers. This young man practiced these virtues with a candor that was genuinely touching. In order to describe his fraternal charity, Blain shows him, during the first days of his Religious life, multiplying tokens of friendship for a postulant for whom he was inspired with an irrational aversion. When the Director of novices was surprised by one of these apparently untimely displays, Albin Bouche replied that he wished to conquer his antipathy and proclaimed aloud that he "did not consent to it". Extraordinary for his penances as well as for his gentleness, on one occasion he was the silent victim of one of his confreres. As he knelt in the refectory to kiss the floor in a gesture of humility, a "corpulent and powerful" Brother, coming to place some books on a table, took a hasty step backwards and accidentally trod on Stanislaus' fingers, which, because of the

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[33] "The perpetual vow formulas of the senior Brothers" filled the register until 1763, but in a rather curious order. On the 8th of September 1737, Brother Stephen, the second Assistant, countersigned five of them starting on page 116 and continuing as far as page 120. We must then go back to page 33 where Brother Benezet (Francis Antony Isnard) signed on the 21st of September 1742. Eighteen of his confreres signed in after him, on the same day, from page 34 to page 51. That year the Superior-general returned to Avignon and, for the last time, presided there at the vow ceremony. Soon thereafter, we move on to the 20th of September 1750, the date of the thirteen professions accepted by Brother Assistant Daniel. Then Brother Genereaux contersigned fourteen formulas on the 30th of September, 1753. Those that followed these, on the 9th of October, 1757, are not countersigned by any superior; and they go up to page 87 inclusive. Page 88 is blank, and page 89 explains why the register's chronology must seem so mystifying to the first-time reader: it alludes to Brother Timothy's decision, made in 1736, and refers the reader to page 121, starting with which "all the remaining blank pages are used...right to the end," for the texts of the last eleven perpetual vow formulas, on the 4th of October, 1763, including those of Brothers Genest, Severin, Bon, Amable of Jesus, etc. These Brothers, like their predecessors made their profession with Brother Genereaux as witness. As the note on page 89 attests, a second book existed at one time: it was "larger, in order to cover a greater number of uears." We have no knowledge of it. Probably, it would have enabled us to identify the names of Brothers professed in Avignon before the Revolution of 1789. It would have been interesting as well to have had a register of those taking triennial vows. For our information concerning Brothers in the South of France, the "register" begun by Brother Timothy remains our most important source.

[34] Blain, Vol. II, Abridgement, pg. 85.

severity of the season, were "chapped and chilled". He did not flinch under the weight of the "blockhead" who, to add to Stanislaus' discomfort, was wearing heavy shoes "proportionate to the wearer's size". "The opportunity for suffering was too great" for this penitent, "and he had no intention of losing it" .[35]

Providence provided him with a quantity of other opportunities. Toward 1727 Brother Stanislaus was stricken with shooting pains of the stomach, for which no remedy was found. Nevertheless, he continued to work and to attend the daily exercises. And in 1729 the Superiors decided that he was ready to direct the novices in Avignon where, the previous year, he had pronounced his perpetual vows. It was at this time that he received Brother Irenée's' counsel. [36]The pupil was worthy of his master; and Avignon grew strong on the same teaching and example that had for twelve years edified St. Yon.

Blain has preserved a copy of the "resolutions" that Brother Stanislaus wrote in the notebook he kept for his retreat of 1730. They echo the teachings of Brother Irenée; and they testify to a beautiful serenity of soul, a total confidence and total abandonment to grace.

"I, the undersigned, a very great sinner, after having resolved on the 23rd of October to seek in all things the will of God and put it into practice, I now renew (that resolution) for the third time, on this, the 6th day of August, the Feast of the Transfiguration; thus, I have been following it for nine months and six days. Good Jesus, grant me the grace to practice it through the merits of Your Sacred Passion. Brother Stanislaus, the 6th of August, 1730. God alone.

I add the resolution to follow faithfully the blessed inclination to dwell within my own nothingness, through constant humility, put into practice with God's help. On the 8th of September I made a resolution to renounce my own interests, and no longer think of my sins, even if I were on my death-bed, but purely and simply rely upon God."[37]

Indeed, he had relied upon God, "like a child", in absolute disinterestedness, His physical sufferings continued to worsen, and obliged Brother Timothy to withdraw him from his responsibilities as Director of novices. "It was thought that travel would do him good"; and so, Stanislaus became the Visitor of the communities in the South of France. He trudged from one house to another: "To tell the truth", he confessed, "I am suffering; but I am also rewarded; because I enjoy the continual presence of God". To the Brothers he seemed "like the living image of De La Salle".

By 1731, this man who was only thirty-three years of age was coming to the end of his journey. His brief career remained inscribed luminously on the history of the Institute. "For nine months" he resided in the infirmary in Marseille, reading and praying. He entertained neither regrets nor anxieties: "His death was as gentle as his long illness had been violent". He retained his "unconquerable patience" in the midst of "the cruellest of intestinal spasms",[38] and he died peacefully on the 4th of December, 1731.[39]

He had been replaced in the novitiate in Avignon by Brother Claude who was also a disciple, as well as a contemporary, of Brother Irenée: they were born in pretty nearly the same part of France. Northern France continued to supply the Brothers' schools in the South with leaders. Brother Claude (Jean Pierre Nivet) came from Chatillon-sur-Loing [40] in the diocese of Sens. Baptized in the church of St. Pierre in Chatillon on the 18th of January, 1690, he entered the Brothers quite late in life, after having lived, it seems, as a solid middle-class citizen and landowner in the region of his birth. He became a member of the Institute on the 8th of June, 1726 (i.e., at the age of thirty-six) and made his final vows at St. Yon on the 15th of August, 1730.[41]

On the 12th of February, 1731, he was still living in Normandy, since on that date, along with Brothers Timothy, Irenée and Dositheus, he signed a document in the presence of Master Leger, notary in Rouen[42]. The four Brothers, "representing the body of the Institute", acknowledged having received

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[35] Ms. 11122

[36]Vol. II of the Life of M.J.B. de La Salle. Brother Barthèlemy is the first in the series, and the special pagination continues in the biographies that follow his.

[37] Blain, Vol. II, Abridgement, pp. 87-8.

[38] See above, pp. 160-162

[39]Blain, Vol. II, Abridgement, pp. 91-2.

[40] Idem., Ibid., pg. 94.

[41]Idem., Ibid., pg. 95.

[42]Idem., Ibid., pg. 94.

from Sebastian Nivet, Chaplain of the Chapter of St. Pierre's in Chatillon-sur-Loing, from Jean Pallier, husband of Marie Nivet, from Pierre Caperon, husband of Suzanne Nivet, and from Nicolas Nivet, brothers and brothers-in-law of Brother Claude.. represented by Charles Deschamps, merchant in Rouen and merchants' representative in the same city...the sum of six-hundred livres, as reimbursement...for the sixty livres annuity that the above Nivet, Pallier and Caperon were obliged to pay Brother Claude when he was a secular...because of grants in land that he had made to them, on the occasion of the division of the inheritance of their father, Pierre Nivet, and their mother, Louise Coquet, on the 17th of September, 1720. At the time of[43]this dissolution it was declared that the capital thus paid to the Institute arose from the sale of oak trees belonging to the persons mentioned, in the region of Chatillion, and on sites called Bucheronniere and Loge.[44]

Brother Irenée had great confidence in Claude's sound judgment. He had received this 'late vocation' into the Institute, and very quickly he learned to treat as a friend this conscientious, mature individual who was so filled with good will. He selected him as his Sub-Director. According to Father La Tour, Brother Irenée made Brother Claude responsible "for revealing what he regarded (in his Director) to be reprehensible or contrary to perfection". It was, to say the least, a delicate and uneasy task! Such an order "was a very great penance for me", Brother Claude admitted in a note he left concerning Brother Irenée, which is quoted by Father La Tour: "I was completely at a loss to find any faults in him".[45]

When Brother Claude replaced Brother Stanislaus in Avignon, his former Director of novices wrote him. The letter, which Father La Tour refers to in his book, suggests that Claude's perseverance was not without its problems and it reveals the engaging familiarity with which the saintly gentleman both consoled and controlled his good friend from Chatillon.

“In my poor prayers I never cease to think of you and the precious flock you so capably guide...I was pleased to learn from your letter that your novices increase in number from day to day; and our very dear Brother Superior had the kindness to write me that your work is prospering. Be courageous, my very dear Brother; if you feel nothing, the God of hearts knows how to soften hearts in His own time; even if it were harder than the Rock of Horeb, two slight taps of the rod will draw water to quench the thirst abundantly of those whom you direct into the depths of the Religious life.

If you find that you are distracted and without...devotion and even without any good thoughts, this is so that you might think more of the souls that are entrusted to you and that you might consider yourself with a salutary mistrust and contempt, that you might be guided by the spirit of faith, the spirit of our Institute, and that you might make yourself responsible to see that our dear novices walk in that faith. The Lord, the Father of Mercy, has put you in a cage, like a small, wild bird. He has bound your feet with the salutary bonds of the vows: there is no fear that you will escape from Him. He wants to use you to bring other birds into that cage, perhaps as wild and as little to be trusted as yourself. Greetings to our dear novices and postulants; I beg them to give themselves wholly and irrevocably to God, our infinitely good and lovable Father.”[46]

It was thus that the spirit of John Baptist de La Salle spread into the Rhone Valley and to the shores of the Mediterranean. Brother Stanislaus knew the Founder personally. He brought to the youth of the South of France (to those first novices to whom he gave the names of the great patrons of their region, like Benezet and Agricola) light and strength directly drawn from the spring of a living, present and continuously contemplated holiness. And, then, the master's great disciple, Brother Irenée, sent South an

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[43] Idem., Ibid., pg. 94. Idem., BE y-2, copy of the receipt for the 12th of February 1731

[44] Modern Chatillon-Coligny, in the diocese of Orleans and the Department of the Loiret. The Baptismal certificates of Brother Claude (Superior-general of the Institute from 1751 to 1767) unfortunately has not been identified in the Archives of that commune, since the pages containing the certificates covering January and February of 1690 have been ripped from the register. (Letter from Father G. Bracquemont, pastor and Dean of Chatillon-Coligny). The date, the 18th of January, 1690, is given by ms. 11122.

[45] Blain says November 4th. The date, December 4th is given by the ms. in the National Library, which also mentions Marseille as the place in which the death occurred.

[46] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 11, Vow Book, pg. 56.

educator whom he himself had trained and upon whom he spared neither learning nor encouragement. Subsequently, Brother Irenée came to visit Brother Claude, enlarging thereby with his prestige an authority already fully established and demonstrating to the Brothers in Avignon, by word and example, that the unity and continuity of the Institute were tangible realities and that to follow in the paths laid out by Brother Claude was to follow in the footsteps of the colleagues of De La Salle. According to his biographer, Brother Irenée, visited the South of France once again in 1738 and travelled through Comtat, Provence and Languedoc during the hottest season, on foot, without mitigating his fasts or leaving aside the hairshirt -- an astonishing model of penance that was sustained by a nearly miraculous heroism. Through Brother Claude, who remained Director of the Southern novitiate until his election to the generalate in 1751, and through his former novices (the Benezets, the Cosmos, the Marcels and the Daniels) Brother Irenée's influence was perpetuated throughout the century. Brother Bernardine (Pierre Martin Ronsin), like Claude Francis du Lac, an immediate disciple of the Holy Founder, was also one of the leaders of this group. With such apostles the work of the Christian schools enjoyed abundant growth.[47]

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We cannot enter into the details of all of these foundations. Such a procedure would be tediously repetitious and would multiply accounts that have little or no interest. Taking a bird's eye view of the regions to which the Brothers were called, we shall simply attempt to emphasize certain facts and certain important names -- those that might throw light upon a situation, reveal attitudes or cause a human face to emerge from the shadows. As our point of departure, we take Avignon, the "Capital" of the Christian Brother communities situated, as they use to say at the time "on this side of Lyons"; and then we shall move down to Provence and up to the Dauphine; and finally we shall cast a glance at the schools in the regions of Montpellier, Toulouse and Montauban.

In Brother Timothy's time thirty-one cities were the beneficiaries of the zeal of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Avignon, Marseille, Mende, Grenoble, Alès and Vans had already received at De La Salle's hands their first teachers devoted to the education of the children of the people. There remained twenty-five cities or towns which, between 1720 and 1751 witnessed the coming of the black robe, the white rabat and the broad brim hat of the Brothers of the new congregation, whether because particular benefactors had provided for the foundation of a tuition-free school or because the religious and civil authorities, together, had decided to invite the Brothers to struggle, sometimes in spite of the people, against ignorance and heresy.

The Brothers, approved by the Bull of 1725, felt genuinely at home in the "Pontifical City". They enjoyed a variety of incomes and subsidies and were at complete liberty to acquire real property. M. Chateau-Blanc had "founded" the school called the "Matheron Gate" in the Chaumette House. It was there that the novitiate was opened in 1729 and where the elderly Brothers lived when their infirmities posed the final obstacle to their activities as teachers. In 1742 this building was abandoned for the reason that Brother Timothy himself gave in his note written on page two of the "Vowbook": Because, since the year 1728, our houses on this side of Lyons have greatly increased and because we need a more spacious house than formerly for retreats and for the novitiate, we have transferred (the novitiate) to the "Gray Penitentials", and the school behind the "Picpus".[48] ...Done at Avignon, the 27th of September, One-thousand-seven-hundred-and-forty-two.

From the beginning, the Holy See had assisted De La Salle's undertakings. The second school, begun in 1718, was, starting in 1731, a "Pontifical school" maintained by regular subsidies from Clement XIII and, thereafter, from Benedict XIV. From 1733 to 1743 a third school existed in the buildings of the "Poor House", where the town council cared for poor children. Here Louis Maurice Suarez, the Grand Penitentiary for the Church in Avignon, had undertaken to introduce the Brothers. Ten years later some sort of hostility on the part of the "Rectors" of the institution led the Superior-general to annul the contract.

[47] La Tour, pp. 64-5. The Motherhouse Archives, HA m 30, possesses (in a register, dated March 1767, containing copies of bills of sale, etc.) the imprint of the seal of the former novitiate in Avignon: it represent the shape of a heart topped by a cross, from which issue rays of light; it also bears the motto: "I came to bring peace. -- Avignon".

[48] In the 18th century the "Picpus" were the penitential Brothers of Nazareth who belonged to the Third Order (Regular) of St. Francis of Assisi

However, the administration of the "Poor House" was changed by Benedict XIV, and, in 1752, it recalled the Brothers to resume their teaching.[49]

Outside of Avignon, but within the Papal enclave which in France constituted Comtat-Venaissin, at this time only the town of Bollene had its own popular school, which owed its existence to the generosity of a saintly priest, Joseph Roquard, who had earlier had founded a school for poor girls and a convent for the perpetual adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament. For the boys' teachers he provided a furnished house and an income of 230 livres. But the people of Bollene at first rejected these gifts. Such opposition on the part of cities was always inspired by the same motives: fear of future expense, for which the community would be responsible and indifference or hostility to the education of the poor. In this instance the Vice-legate Delmonti had to intervene. The City Council decided that it was prepared to obey; and on the 16th of August, 1723, it voted an annual subsidy of 170 livres, which, added to the Roquard income, would contribute to the support of two Brothers; and it also supplied for the furnishing of the classrooms. The school opened on the following 1st of November. It proved successful and was, in the end, consolidated by a contract signed on the 7th of July, 1735, between the officials of Bollene and Brother Director, Marcel, who represented Brother Timothy. [50]

The Roman orthodoxy of the Congregation and the goodwill shown it by the representatives of the Sovereign Pontiff in the Papal States recommended the Brothers to the prelates who prided themselves in being completely united to God's Church in its combat with Jansenism. One of the most zealous of these prelates was Jean Baptist Antoine Brancas, Archbishop of Aix. The Church News, the famous Jansenist newspaper, heaped anathemas upon him. When he died, the paper informed its readers in scandalized tones of the wealth he left behind him. However, his inheritance went to the Major Seminary in Aix and to charitable works.[51] During his lifetime, Brancas had also used his fortune for the common good. It was he who brought the Brothers to Aix, with its noble palaces and beautiful fountains. "In the year 1736, on the 10th of the month of August", in the presence of a notary, he signed the following agreement: Wishing to obtain a Christian education for the boys of this city and fully convinced of the piety, the good morals and the regular and edifying conduct of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, whom, for several years, he had been inviting...to teach children tuition-free...he ceded them...a house...situated in a a plot of land in Aix, on a street formerly called "Bastoniers" (a house which the Brothers had already been occupying and that the Archbishop had acquired on the 1st of October, 1733); further, he gave them control of a fund of 17,000, the income from which (at 20% interest) came to 850 livres.

Four Brothers were to reside in Aix-en-Provence: "they shall always be under the authority, jurisdiction and dependence of my Lord (the Archbishop)...and his successors". However, the Archbishop was to introduce nothing "whether into the rules or in the way of managing or running the schools...customary in the Institute". Thus, both the letter and the spirit of the Bull of 1725 regarding the relations between the Congregation and the diocesan authority were thoroughly safeguarded.

But Archbishop Brancas meant to thwart every possible escape hatch for Jansenism. Thus, with a foresight that anticipated the least probable eventuality, he had the following clause added: If, unfortunately, a thing which God forfend and which may not be reasonably presumed, there should spread throughout the Body of the Brothers some spirit of novelty, to which the Superiors-general might adhere through some public act or gesture, in that case, my Lord or his successors would be empowered to revoke the present foundation...unless the Body of the Institute, employing its power, deposed the Superior-general and proceeded to the election of another completely subject to the Holy See.

Brother Daniel (Antony Rodier) subscribed to these conditions. The Superior-general sent his ratification accompanied by a letter to the Archbishop: Our Institute is endlessly indebted to Your Excellency, who has been so kind as to found the tuition-free schools in His Archiepiscopal city maintained by our Brothers, which lifts a great weight from our small Community and which cannot fail to serve as a model for the many prelates of the kingdom...Indeed, it was an important point to have obtained from a very active and visible leader of a provincial capital not only his expressed approval but all the funds necessary for the schools. On the 7th of February, 1738 Archbishop Brancas indicated his satisfaction by a new act of generosity: a sum of 8,000 livres, which would provide an income for two

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[49] Motherhouse Archives, Historigue de la Province meridionale, Vol. I; Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 49; See also Bulletin des Ecoles Chretiennes for July, 1937, the article by Francis Martin "Les Freres des Ecoles Chretiennes en Avignon, 1703-1907", according to Brother Saturnine's notes.

[50] Historique, loc. cit. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 78

[51] Sicard, op. cit., pg. 377

more teachers. Henceforth, the Brothers would operate three schools in Aix, in the parishes of Holy Savior, the Madeleine and Holy Spirit.[52]

That same year the Brothers moved into Apt, which was a dependency of Aix.[53] Arles, the other archbishopric, quickly joined the movement. Here, the promoters were two fine Christian gentlemen, Maurice Montfort and Pierre Betel. They appealed both to Brother Claude, Director in Avignon and Brother Ambrose, Director in Marseille. They wrote: "We heard speak in laudatory terms of the remarkable talent with which you are gifted for instructing young people and forming them to piety. We would be happy to have at least two of your confreres among us. To this end, we have established a fund of ten-thousand livres for their support and subsistence. Beyond that, should the need arise, and the number of pupils grow and a third Brother become necessary, we promise you to add another subsidy of two-hundred livres to what we are offering you today..."

The negotiations having been firmly set in motion, the Arlesian benefactors informed the City Provost, Jacques du Roure, of what was going on: they were setting up a fund of 12,000 livres, which they were giving to the community in order to provide teachers for poor children. We are made aware of these preliminaries through the deliberations of the City Council, dated the 21st of August, 1740.

The Provost transmitted Montfort's and Batel's proposal to the city officials. At this point there arose a certain M. Lincel, whose difficulty was the same as so many *beati possidentes*, so many people in modern times who are blessed with wealth and talent: Of course, the institution under consideration would be quite advantageous were it viewed exclusively in terms of religious principles; but since the Brothers are supposed to teach reading and writing tuition-free, the peasants will send their children to this public school. Since these children will not be trained to work from their earliest years, they will never be prepared to labor. Hence, this city, which by reason of its size has need of a large number of hand-laborers (of which even now it does not have enough) will be totally stripped of workers. Dairy and poultry farms, the only industry our city has, would, of course, be compromised by such an institution...[54]

Thus, in Lincel's opinion, ignorance was the lot of peasant, the chain which, for the greater good of the nation, bound him to the soil; should he break that chain, he would be fleeing his station in life. Since Lincel's audience might have found the this argument somewhat lacking in specificity, the orator added that it would be unwise and burdensome to accept the gift of 12,000 livres, since Arles would then be responsible for the school's survival, and would never be able to rid itself of such an obligation.

On this shabby note, the Council concluded its deliberations and rejected the endowment; but, in order not to embrace Lincel's principle, a subsidy of two hundred livres was voted in support of the future school.

But could that be done? Apparently so, since by a private understanding between the Institute and the benefactors, the school became legal the moment the City Corporation agreed to invite the Brothers. Brother Claude accepted the funds and the Brothers' community in Marseille guaranteed their use. Furthermore, the elderly Archbishop of Arles, Jacques Forbin-Janson, was thoroughly in favor of the project. He had known De La Salle personally. As a young priest in the St. Sulpice Community, in 1688 he had conducted, under Father La Barmondiere's direction, the inquiry into the reforms that the Holy Founder had made in the parochial school; having found in favor of De La Salle against the Father Compagnon's accusations,[55] he retained a veneration for De La Salle and an admiration for his work. He was aware of the Brothers' activities in Avignon, Alès and Marseille, and he rejoiced at their imminent arrival in the ancient city of Arles. To house them he drew on his own personal funds in order to purchase a residence.

On the 20th of October, 1770 Brothers Honorat, Zacheus and Ignatius arrived. The Archbishop welcomed them graciously as the "educators of a precious part of the flock of Jesus Christ", of the children of the poor "so beloved of the Divine Shepherd". He promised to assist them in the accomplishment of their task.

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[52] All documents used above are taken from a ms. account of the schools in Aix-en-Provence in the Motherhouse Archives, HA 91.

[53] Motherhouse Archives, HB t 1.

[54] The contemporary sense of raising cattle and poultry

[55] See the first volume of this work, pp. 162-163.

He died, a very old man, on the 13th of the following January, having willed to the Brothers in Arles the sum of 2,000 livres as well as the house they occupied in the parish of St. Martin's. His successor, Jacques Bellefond, moved the Brothers in 1744 to the Convent of St. Claire, which he ceded over to them along with the conventual church for as long as the school endured.[56]

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Like Avignon and Provence, Dauphine had won the attention of the Founder. We have spoken of his visit to Grenoble in 1711 and of his long stay in that city between 1713 and 1714.[57] "The Christian Schools" were administered there by a "Bureau" of "clerical and lay persons commendable for their authority and piety".[58] It was this Bureau (and not the Brothers) that, through "Letters Patent" issued on the 17th of August, 1730, obtained legal recognition within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Grenoble. The members of the upper magistracy and the clergy which initiated the foundation meant to remain the masters of its future. Their position was explained in memorandum attached to a written report of the arrangements.[59]

The work, the results of which are obvious, cannot be maintained without the direction of a Bureau empowered to acquire and accept gifts...The problem is not one of establishing a religious body or community...The Brothers whom we have invited or shall invite in time to come will never be a group independent of Grenoble, nor will they be able to acquire property and will always depend for their temporal needs upon the Bureau...In vain does His Majesty propose St. Yon as a place for training people capable of being sent into the city of His kingdom to operate charity schools, if he rejects the only means possible in Grenoble for founding and maintaining the same sort of schools which he wishes to open in all the cities of his kingdom. The petitioners concluded by voicing the hope for the rapid authorization that was rightly due "the advantages of such a salutary enterprise".

Having prevailed, they continued to assume total responsibility for the schools and for the teachers' subsistence. Their supervision of the teachers does not seem to have been burdensome. The most irritating aspect of the system of "School Bureau" was that, once the zeal of the administrators cooled, in the second or third generation, financial support became irregular and inadequate, and, since the Institute did not have the right to supplement its income through the acquisition of property or the investment of capital, the Brothers endured severe poverty. This situation became a reality in Grenoble.

More distressful, from a moral point of view, was the position of the Brothers in the "Poor House" -- those vast hostelries in which the Ancien Regime shut away its able-bodied beggars, the ill, the aged and the orphans. In these places administrators dealt with Religious who were placed at their disposal as though they were domestic servants. What happened at the Poor House in Rouen during De La Salle's lifetime[60] and what took place in the Almshouse in Avignon had their parallels in the Poor House in Grenoble. There is an account dating from 1722 or 1728 (the date cannot be verified) of two Brothers who went to work in this institution, situated in the beautiful neighborhood of Bonne, near the Isère. In 1735 there were three Brothers who formed the Community and who had two-hundred-and-six men and boys "under their charge". Brother Marcellin was appointed to the infirmary; Brother Gabriel took charge of religious instruction, and Brother Eusebius taught school. But their duties did not end there: they directed manual labor; they presided over meals and they distributed linen and clothing. They were required to keep a register of people who were admitted or released and, each week, make a status-report to the Director. The work was crushing; the Brothers did not even have the leisure for spiritual exercises; but without expecting either gratitude or recognition, they held out for more than a half-century.[61]

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[56] Historique, loc. cit. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 93-9. The school in Cannes completed the list of institutions founded in Provence by Brother Timothy; it does not seem to have opened until 1745; and it was not in existence at the outbreak of the Revolution

[57] See the first volume of this work, pp. 317-318; 323-326.

[58] Ibid., loc. cit

[59] Departmental Archives of Isere, Series G, 206. See the summary of the statutes, Vol. I of the present work, pp. 309-310.

[60] ibid

[61] Archives of the Aigle Residence School in Grenoble: copies of documents collected in the Departmental Archives of Isere, Series B, no. 145 and Series E no. 22. (And Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I).

The schools in Grenoble built the reputation of the Brothers throughout the province. But in opening schools elsewhere the system used in Grenoble was not followed. On the 29th of March, 1731, Jean Ruel, physician and first magistrate in Valence, announced to the City Corporation that Bishop Milan (who had occupied the See for forty-five years from 1725 to 1771) was going to provide the citizens with "primary schools" taught by "two Brothers of the Doctrine". The house and the furniture would be supplied by the prelate. The City agreed to pay the wages, three hundred livres a year. For this purpose, in the first place, it disposed of the one-hundred-and-twenty livres budgeted since 1687 "for the tutor of the young"; the remainder would be levied from funds raised from taxes. On the 8th of June the Superintendent approved this decision.

In May, Brother Bernardine and his assistant had arrived and had moved into a house called "the Good Shepherd", near the Cathedral. A year later Bishop Milon transferred title to the property to the Institute. In 1733, a third Brother was added, because the suburban community of Bourg-les-Valence supplied a financial contribution. At the time two hundred children were attending classes.[62]

This success moved the Bishop to ask for Brothers for another city in his diocese, Montelimar. Bishop Milon's letter, read on the 26th of December, 1733, to the municipal assembly by M. Bayle, the first magistrate, formally invited the city to follow the example of Valence.[63] The king's Procurator, present at the meeting, was no less positive: Montelimar could not refuse to do whatever would be needed to have a school. The city complied willingly enough: and on the 18th of April, 1734, two Brothers, for a rent of sixty livres paid to the owner, M. Mirabel, by the Commune, moved into a house on Rue Grande.

The neighboring diocese of Die included a large number of Protestants. To work for the conversion of their flock, Bishops Daniel Joseph Cosnac (1734-1741) and Alexis de Gaspard-Plan Augies, his successor since 1742, recruited the assistance of the Brothers. In this proselytization the civil power, represented by the Superintendent of Dauphine, continued to lend strong support.

In a letter of the 2nd of January, 1735, at the beginning of his episcopacy, Bishop Cosnac proposed to the municipal officials of Die the opening of a popular school: he would invite "three La Salle or Christian Doctrine Brothers".[64] In fact, he had asked Brother Fiacre (Jacques Nonnez, whose multifaceted activities had not abated even after thirty years of Religious life) to come to Valence to discuss a contract. A rough draft, signed by the Brother, by the Pastor Dailhe, and by the Councilmen Viguier and Buis, called for three Brothers at the school: one to teach reading, another to teach penmanship and arithmetic, who (was to be) a good penman and a good mathematician, and one to teach elementary Latin.

It is surprising that Brother Fiacre, so closely associated with the traditions of his Congregations, could have agreed that a Brother would teach Latin. The Superiors at St. Yon were quick to indicate that "that was directly opposed to the rules of their Institute". The Bishop, pastor and city officials did not insist: they simply substituted a cleric for the third Brother.

So staffed, the school began its work. Even its name revealed the idea that inspired it: as an apostolic work in an heretical environment, it was called the "Propagation", from which its pupils got their name of "Propagators".[65]

It was mission country. The Blessed Sacrament Fathers, founded by a member of the Marseille hierarchy, Bishop d'Authier Sisgaud, preached in the Drome Valley. They found that "most of the inhabitants of Crest (a small town in the diocese of Die) were so poorly instructed in their religious duties that they did not know how to go to confession nor to answer the simplest of questions...This ignorance could have its source only in carelessness for the education of the young and a lack of good schoolteachers...The town could not do better than to have two Brothers of the Christian Schools, who, while teaching their religious duties to the children, would also teach them how to read and write with such superb method that even the slowest child could profit from their instruction...Once these Brothers are

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[62] Historique, loc. cit, and the ms. account of the school in Valence, in the Motherhouse Archives; Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 15-20.

[63] Motherhouse Archives. Ms. account of the school in Montelinar. And the Historique. . .loc. cit

[64] Once again there is the designation "Brothers of Christian Doctrine" that we met with several times in the past, especially in Cardinal Corsini's report to the Sacred Congregation of the Council. We have held that it is easily explained by reference to the principal purpose of the Brothers' apostolate. It may be well to add that, in the South of France, where the "Fathers of Christian Doctrine", Caesar de Bus' "Doctriners", had many institutions, minds and tongues tended naturally to confuse the two Religious Institutes, both of which were dedicated to education.

[65] Motherhouse Archives, Historique...loc. cit, Vol. I.

established, they create practically no more expenses than the schoolteachers who had to be maintained previously.

The Council, the pastor and the Vice-bailiff, meeting in the City Hall on the 23rd of March, 1739, concurred in the truth of these observations. The matter was then turned over to Bishop Cosnac, who thereupon applied to Brother Timothy. The authorities in Crest began a subscription, accepted furniture, linen and "508 livres, 4 sols" in hard cash for the future teaching Community. Brother Caesar came from Valence to prepare a list of materials that would be required. The existing school was remodelled. The three hundred livres of salary annually for the two Brothers were guaranteed by farming out taxes.

Everything seemed securely in place. But when Brother Victor, coming from Gevaudan, appeared in Crest on the 2nd of January, 1741, the town was full of grim-looking people. There was probably something of a flare-up of Calvinist feeling. The Brother had to wait until the 8th of January for the keys to the house. And the City Corporation declared that it was explicitly reserving the right to fire teachers whenever it pleased. As time went by, there were incidents. Indeed, in 1753 the school was closed for a time.[66]

Saillans, another town on the Drome River, upstream from Crest, had its Christian school, which dated from the previous year. In this instance, the arrangements which also had been work out by Bishop Cosnac, were better handled. Brother Gregoire, Director of the school in Die, and accredited by a letter from a Vicar-general to the Councilmen Jacques Aubert and Paul Souvion, informed the latter of the Bishop's wishes. In response, the Superior of the Institute was prepared to send two Brothers to Saillans on condition that suitable lodgings be found for them and that an overall salary of three-hundred-and-seventy livres be provided.

The Council met on the 22nd of November, 1739. François Faure, pastor of Saillans, and Father Piffard, pastor of Chastel-Arnaud, were admitted to the meeting along with Brother Gregoire. Faure offered 110 livres for furnishings and supplies; Piffard, who owned a house in Saillans, agreed to rent it for forty livres. A Protestant official and five other Protestants were seated at the meeting; and they protested that the community was too poor to pay the wages for two teachers. On this occasion a majority of the members decided to ignore the objection.

The opposition, however, did not consider itself beaten. It intrigued so vigorously that the project was returned for further deliberation: and a second vote annulled the first. A letter of explanation sent to the Bishop of Die emphasized, of course, the financial situation.

The Bishop, however, refused to accept the reversal of the decision of the 22nd of November. The city officials turned to higher civil authorities, only to meet with another set back: "His Majesty's intention is that this school be opened", declared the Superintendent of Dauphine. But the townspeople in Saillans grew obstinate, and they appointed one of their fellow-Huguenots, a man named Barnave (probably an ancestor of the famous orator) to plead their cause at Grenoble. On the 28th of March, 1740, a commissioner for the king, M. Jomaron, provisionally appointed to the administration of the community, requested the sub-delegate, Sibeud, to inform the dissidents that "their position would be regarded as the product of criminal disobedience". On the 4th of April, Sibeud wrote to the Council: “The arguments you use to delay the Brothers' school are insufficient. M. Barnave should have informed you that the position he was appointed to defend is without merit. There remains, then gentlemen, no other recourse for you but to obey, and that promptly.”

The city was given two weeks to weeks to start the school. Thus, an issue involving the citizens of Saillans became a "matter of State": royal bureaucrats took over the rigorous enforcement of the Edicts of 1698 and 1724. Brother Pierre, a native of Rheims, previously Director of the Community in Vans, had already arrived at his new post; he signed the customary contract; and, on the 7th of September, the Commune signed a lease with Pastor Piffard.[67]

This row (which, by the way, had no serious consequences) reveals quite clearly the resistance encountered by Louis XV's government from Protestants a half-century after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In spite of so many exiles, confiscations and condemnations to death or the galleys, the Calvinist minority held firmly, intransigently, to its principles. It sent its children to Catholic schools, because it was forced to do so. Teachers entrusted with the education of young Huguenots needed a very special patience

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66 Ibid., JE a, 6. Ms. account of the school in Crest. And Historique de be province meridionale, Vol. I.

67 Ibid., loc. cit.

and a thoroughly tactful charity. They had to tolerate the parents' and pupils' hostility In spite of all the obstacles, De La Salle's disciples persevered for the love of God and of souls.

But before their educational zeal prevailed, the Brothers experienced some very difficult moments. The village of Mens provided them with some of their most disagreeable moments. They were living there surrounded by a population that was as harsh as the mountains of Devoluy and as violent as the waters of the River Drac. We can imagine the reactions of the "twenty-seven inhabitants present on the 27th of March, 1740, in the city hall" when the officials informed them that they had received from M. Jomaron, Squire, Counsellor of the King, Treasurer of the provincial office of finance, Commissioner deputized by His Majesty for the execution of His orders in Dauphine in the absence of Lord Fontainieu, Superintendent...a letter dated the 4th of the month, in which he (Jomaron) pointed out that His Majesty's intention was that the Brothers of the Christian Schools be established in this parish for the instruction of youth...in the Roman Catholic and Apostolic religion.

On that March 27th, Brother Caesar, whom we have already met in Crest, was in Mens. Father Zomberghe, Vicar-general to Bishop Cosnac, sent Caesar to James Pelissier-Tanon, "Captain, Royal Lord of the Manor", the government's representative in the town, "in order to come to an agreement with the community of Mens for what will be necessary to the support" of two teaching Brothers. Thus, the opening of the new school was a part of the overall plan begun in Die and extended thereafter to Crest and Saillans.[68]

Brother Caesar asked for an annual salary of 330 livres. The Assembly agreed. (What else was there to do, since the king's wishes in the matter were already clear?) There was a plan to furnish "three rooms" to house the Brothers and the school, and to contract a loan to defray the initial expenses for the furniture. But, in higher quarters, it was understood that this move was not made in good faith. Indeed, the community withheld the information that it did not have enough income for the payment of rents, repair of roads, bridges and causeways, the maintenance of the church, the city hall, the priest's house, the common furnace, the shade-coverings over the marketplace...

The report of the resolution was sent to Grenoble. Jomaron, in his letter of acknowledgement on the 11th of April, showed that he was not about to yield. He forbade the loan: “You can easily find the funds (for expenses) from the interest on general revenues, which adds up to more than 2,000 livres, a thousand livres of which I see no useful employment, deduction being made of the 150 livres for the wages of the schoolteacher you will have to find and of whom, however, there has been no mention...You will be attentive so to act that the school opens immediately. I charge you...to report the matter to me so that I shall be in position to inform the Minister.”

Six years later the central government would be enlightened by the description of the way in which the Huguenots intended to comply with its orders. A report, signed by the city officials on the 17th of December, 1745 and a petition addressed to the Parlement of Grenoble in April of 1746 by Councilmen Dupuy and Perier detail the serious and illuminating facts.

The Councilmen wrote: “There exists in Mens a school operated by two Brothers of the Christian Schools, in consequence of the king's orders...against the will of the Huguenots who make up the majority of the population of the community...Very few young people attend classes or catechism; those who do so disobey the Brothers and daily rebel against them, raising their fists against (their teachers) in the school with the threat of striking them; and when they are outside the school, they throw rocks at the windows and against the door; and, finally, the children riot in the streets ...and insult (the teachers).”

This sort of affront is the principal subject of a report prepared by the Mayor, Jean Segond, Supervisor Pierre Bernard, Councilman Michel Gachet, financial attorney Jacques Cachet and two other "duly sworn officials", Jacques Ducros and Pierre Flachaire.

On the 14th of December, 1745, the children "yelled all sorts of insults at Brother Chrysostom". On the 17th, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the son of a certain Antony Massot, being in the school, rang the bell: which obliged the Brothers, in order to restrain the pupil, to inflict some slight punishment upon him. And thereupon...all the pupils in a loud, lusty voice cried for help, pounding with their feet in order the better to be heard.

The petition to Parlement contains the same account: a crowd having formed, M. Segond was obliged to intervene. For the entire disorder, the petitioners found no other cause but the "cabals and hostility of the Huguenots", who wished to force the Brothers out of Mens, so that their children would not be educated in the Roman Catholic and Apostolic religion. They pretended that the school was too expensive for the community. If such conspiracies were tolerated, the schools would have to close. The

[68] Historique de la province méridionale

sons of Catholics would suffer as a result, since they would be unable to receive an education provided by competent teachers.

Hence, Dupuy and Perier pleaded with "their lordships" of the Court of Grenoble to add the weight of sovereign authority to the scales of justice. Let it please the magistrates to require the complete fulfillment of the royal decree of the 14th of May, 1724: as a result, enjoin fathers and mothers and others to restrain children within their duty and obedience to the Brothers, (to determine the list of fines to which the officials of Mens) might sentence violators; and also forbid, subject to fine, every sort of person of whatever condition or quality from insulting (the teachers in the Christian schools).

On motions of the attorney-general, Vidaud Batie, an appropriate ordinance was voted in on the 29th of April, 1746. It obligated parents to send their children to school and to catechism class up to the age of 14 years and to Sunday and Feast Day instructions up to the age of twenty. It recalled that the pastor had the right and the duty to supervise the education of all young parishioners, including those where the social situation of families permitted instruction in the home or at a boarding school. This legal decision may have protected the Brothers from some assaults. But for nearly twenty years they continued to suffer (as we shall see) from the social irritants in cities dominated by their adversaries.[69]

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Dropping down the River Drome and crossing over to the right bank of the Rhone, where Calvinism had many adherents, we reach the diocese of Viviers, whose very remarkable Bishop was one of those men who, in Father Sicard's phrase, retained a place "in the memory of his people" .[70]To mention the name...of Villeneuve in Viviers was to evoke steady discipline, a clergy regenerated by seminaries, retreats, conferences and diocesan statutes; and the faithful instructed and supported by catechetical formation, preaching, missions, hospitals newly constructed or restored, and alms distributed...[71]

François Renaud Villeneuve was born on the 2nd of April 1682, of a father who was a lawyer in the Parlement of Aix and later on a justice in the Courts of Marseille, and of Magdeleine de Forbin. There were seventeen children in the family, of which François was the fourth. He was ordained a priest in 1707 and belonged to the priestly Congregation of the Holy Watchers. Named to be Bishop of Viviers in 1723, and consecrated on the 13th of August, 1724, he distinguished himself immediately by his orthodoxy: in 1727, he was one of the judges of the elderly Jansenist Bishop, Bishop Soanen. He continued his struggle against the sect, while at the same time he worked for the conversion of Protestants. After his transfer in 1747, he continued his apostolate in Montpellier, in which See he died in 1766.[72]

On five occasions he was a deputy to the Assembly of the Clergy and played a major role in the First Estate of Vivarais, and subsequently, of Languedoc. The historian, Soulavie, (who, in Sicard's view, was beyond the suspicion of bias) in his History of the Bishops of Viviers, admired the talents and virtues which gave Bishop Villeneuve an immense influence: He used everything for the glory of God and the well-being of souls. Simple, and indeed severe in his own personal life, he ate nothing but common food and, in his pastoral visits, insisted that meals be served with the greatest frugality. He dressed like a poor, country pastor. He was a saintly prelate, out of the past, and everything about him declared a genuinely extraordinary man.[73]

The Brothers won his esteem and confidence. He invited them first to a small town called Bourg-Saint-Andeol, on the banks of the Rhone, some twelve miles from the episcopal city, and where his predecessor, Bishop Ratabon, had built a Minor Seminary. A document dated the 20th of June, 1739, supplies us with some information concerning the final disposition of the school. The building in which "the seminarians" were "educated" had become too small for their numbers. Bishop Villeneuve moved the young men into his own home, an estate which the Bishops of Vivier occupied in their capacity as "Lords"

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[69] Regarding Mens, the Motherhouse Archives contains an abundant file, in which the most curious documents are the copies made in 1907 by Brother Odoricus of original documents preserved in the municipal Archives of Mens (Isere). Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 74-7.

[70] Sicard, op. cit., pg. 544.

[71] Idem., Ibid., pg. 337. At the same time Sicard extends this approval to Montillet, Archbishop of Auch, to Ribeyre, Bishop of Saint-Flour, to Durfort, Archbishop of Besancon, and to Pressy, Bishop of Boulogne

[72] Quoted by Father Sicard, pg. 544.

[73] Deed quoted by Brother Theodose in his Historique, according to a copy preserved in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse. See also in the Motherhouse Archives, the Bourg Saint-Andeol file, HB t 2.

of Bourg-Saint-Andeol. Into the former Seminary he introduced "the charity school that he had recently founded" in that town "for both boys and girls". He had the house divided and separated in such a way that the section set aside for the boys school and the schoolmasters' lodgings had no communication with the section for the girls and the schoolmistresses' lodgings... The formal document that he signed on the 20th of June "at Viviers, in his episcopal palace", had for purpose to guarantee this dual arrangement "in perpetuity" .[74]

In the cities of Vivarais, Bishop Villeneuve's educational undertakings were accorded an even worse welcome than what the councilmen and the citizens of Die had shown Bishop Cosnac's activities. However, at Bourg-Saint-Andeol it wasn't just a matter of the Bishop making a partial contribution to finance the school. The local authorities absolutely refused to vote the least subsidy. Appeal had to be made to the Superintendent of the region in Montpellier, who imposed upon the inhabitants of the town the annual payment provided for in Article 5 of the Royal Decree of 1724, i.e., 150 livres, with the addition of forty livres for the expense of lodging the teachers. The priory, the hospital and the seminary had, on the Bishop's authority, also to be tied financially to the tuition-free schools.[75]

At Privas, one of the early Calvinist centers, the energy of the resistance nearly extended to open rebellion. Bishop Villeneuve had commissioned one of his Vicars-general to obtain the services of the Brothers for this town. The representative wrote to Brother Timothy; and then, once he had arranged the terms of the foundation, he announced the teachers' arrival to the Corporation, while he urged the city magistrates to decide about the money that was to be paid to the teachers.

On the 17th of November, 1743, the Councilman François Brueys Lacaumette proposed to his colleagues that their reply be a flat rejection. The suggestion was approved; and the Superintendent was informed of the results of the deliberation.

However, the Brothers had already arrived in Privas. As in Valence 12 years earlier, the very competent Brother Bernardine had been selected to open the school. On the 26th of November a bailiff appeared to announce the City Council's opposition. Immediately informed, the Bishop of Viviers decided to ignore the Council. He was strongly supported by royal authority and had even obtained from Louis XV a personal gift for the purchase of furniture for the new teachers. Besides, the population welcomed the Brothers and their classes were filled with pupils.

Four months went by: on the 26th of March, 1744, the bailiff returned with a summons to leave the premisses. Brother Bernardine wrote to the Mayor: “Since we are here by the orders and the arrangements of Bishop Villeneuve, it is only by his orders that we shall leave.”

On the 19th of May, the Bishop wrote to one of the leading citizens of Privas, M. Rochemaure: I do not understand the kind of intoxication that leads the Councilmen to insist on forcing the withdrawal of the schoolteachers, of whom I have approved, and whose wisdom, ability and diligence meet with the approval of every reasonable and sensible person, and under whom the children have made greater progress than they did under any other teacher.

Obliged to intervene, the Superintendent of Languedoc, Jean Le Nain Asfeldt at first encouraged the City Council of Privas to exercise a spirit of conciliation. The school was "a considerable advantage to the town" which was only being asked for the legal minimum contribution of fifty écus. But, obstinately, Privas exhausted its every recourse. And, on the 25th of August, 1744, the following decree was issued: We...through the negligence of present Councilmen of the said place, having imposed for the current year the sum of 150 livres as wages for the tutors in the schools...condemn the Councilmen, under law, to pay the said 150 livres for the said wages out of their personal property, at liberty to include in next year's taxes the sum of 150 livres for their reimbursement.

It was a pure and simple application of the royal edicts: the community was committed to pay the "school teachers...approved by the Lord Bishop of the diocese"; and the Brothers were selected by François Renaud Villaneuve to fill that post. The yearly wage, neither more nor less, of the school teacher, whose function they filled, was indisputably theirs. Asfeldt thought it necessary to summons Lacaumette to Montpellier in order to cool sectarian passion with a good tongue-lashing. However, Brother Bernardine continued throughout the year without a single penny from the gentlemen at City Hall. With time things began to settle down. And, besides, assistance from other sources was not wanting to the small Religious

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75 See above, pg. 140.

community: in 1748 the Vicar-general, Melchior, assured the Brothers an income of 200 livres from the Clergy, and, in 1749, lodged them in a suitably furnished house opposite the parish church.[76]

In the century covered by our account, Le Velay, like Vivrais, belonged to the Intendancy of Montpellier. The school that the Christian Brothers were to open in this region prior to 1792 would always be considered as "on this side of Lyons", and a part of what would later be called the "Southern province". As, for the time being, we leave the region of the Rhone for that of the Loire, we remain faithful to our geographical and historical itinerary. But as we move from one region to the other, we experience a change of atmosphere. The diocese of Puy has as its capitol, Bourges, a city of the midlands long associated with the kingdom of France and closely related to Paris. Ideas, doctrines, the king's men and the Church's men came from the North, while pilgrims ascended the Valley of the Loire to Our Lady's Sanctuary. The Sulpicians, Father Olier's immediate disciples, had been invited there to direct the Major Seminary. They in turn, in the lifetime of John Baptist de La Salle, had conceived' the plan of entrusting the education of the children of Puy to the Christian Brothers. Father Guyton, the third Superior of the Seminary in Puy, suggested the idea to Bishop Bethune; and those who directed the Seminary in Paris were asked to intercede with the Founder of the Institute: I have spoken to De La Salle to have his teachers (Father Leschassier wrote to Father Guyton). He promised he would supply the Bishop of Puy. He figures that he needs fifty ecus for each Brother and in each house at least three Brothers to teach and one to do the housework...[77]

Apart from this brief note, there remains nothing which seems to be earlier in time to the persecution visited upon the Founder by Father Chétardye. Thereafter, all is silence until 1717. In that year Bishop La Roche-Aymon directed in his will that 1,000 livres be set aside "for the opening of schools for young boys in this city". Father Guyton's very ancient plan was coming into fruition, but very slowly. It appears that the Brothers did not come to Puy before 1741. This is the date suggested by the author of the Life of Father Lantages as the time when the Brothers moved into "Pannessac Boulevard". However, in 1738, Marie Colin des Roys, the widow of Pons Gaspard Pinot, deputy-general in the Court of Puy, was planning to let the Brothers have a house, garden and field situated in a place called "Gouteyron" , on the eastern slope of Mount Cornelius. After a variety of dealings with the clergy (who, in 1741, acknowledged a debt of 2,000 livres "in favor of the elementary schools opened earlier") the Poor House, the Hospital, the Cathedral Chapter, the University of St. Mayol and the Chaise-Dieu Abbey (all of them interested parties, with more or less extensive rights to the property in question) Madame Pinot finally made her donation on the 24th of April, 1744. Brother Justin, Director of the Community in Puy, accepted it in the name of Brothers Timothy, Irenée and Étienne, "all three representing the Body of the Institute", on condition that the Brothers, henceforth in possession of the estate, assume the responsibility for the education of "the children of this city...who come to their schools"

Two years earlier the City Corporation had decided to open schools in three neighborhoods, and, with this end in view, had voted a subsidy of a thousand livres for the teachers.[78]

At nearly the same time the Brothers were introduced into St. Ambrose, Uzès and Montpellier. The diocese of Uzès had, since 1711, witnessed the Brothers' work in the market-town of Vans; and Bishop Michael Poncet Rivière in 1711 had received De La Salle, who was visiting Marseille. In 1740, it was one of his successors, Bonaventure Bauyn, who opened a school in St. Ambrose, and nine years later, a school in the episcopal city. In the act of foundation of the 17th of October, 1749, the Bishop stipulated that associated "with his title" would be the right "of inspecting" the school, and that he would be able to command the Superiors to change the teachers who were unacceptable to him, and that if the superiors or a great part of the Brothers should be seduced by heresy and fall into error...the Bishop then in office would be empowered to expel the Institute...without so much as a pretence[79]of a trial.

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[76] Historique cited.

[77] In Vie de M. de Lantages, 1830 ed, pg. 417. Cited in Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes October, 1912, pg. 377, and the number for January 1934, pp. 29-30. Mgr. Bethune was Bishop of La Puy from 1664 to 1703, and Mgr. La Roche-Aymon from 1703 to 1720.

[78] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1934, pp. 29-33; and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I.

[79] Historique de la province meidionale, Vol. I. The draft of the deed of foundation is in the Motherhouse Archives. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 188.

Similar concerns did not preoccupy the Bishop of Montpellier, Charles Joachim Colbert, one of the four "Appellants". Only with the death of the intractable Jansenist (3rd of August, 1738) was it possible to open a Christian Brothers School in the capitol of Lower-Languedoc. On the 21st of August, 1742, Father Parezy, Canon in Arles, wrote to Father Le Noir, Archdeacon in Montpellier: need some clarification. The Brothers of the charity school that the Bishop of Montpellier wishes to open in his city need to know as soon as possible whether certain decisions regarding them have been made... This undertaking seems to me to be among the most important, and it can have marvelous results. We are experiencing this here every day...

The new Bishop, Georges Lazarus Berger Charency had, indeed, decided to translate intention into action. His school opened in about November, 1743. An order of the Council, dated the 30th of January, 1744, provided than an income from one of the Chapter's prebends would be reserved for "the support of a tutor" for tuition-free instruction. It was a project that involved the very special cooperation of the government in Versailles in relation to religious and political interests. The organization of this very important school, situated in the chief center of the Intendancy and in the traditional seat of the Estates of Languedoc, was entrusted to a very experienced Brother, born in Normandy, Brother Edmond (Antony Dupre). Very early, a small residence school was added to the tuition-free classes. The "new converts" had their special teachers: two Brothers directed them in a house that was called "The Propagation of the Faith".[80]

In 1750 the small, neighboring diocese of Agde received the Brothers.[81]

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The Brothers had also taken root in the Intendancy of Toulouse. Two Bishops, both men of excellent reputation and lofty moral character were their supporters and defenders: Armand Bazin Bezons in Carcassonne, and Jean Baptist Champflour in the diocese of Mirepoix.

The former was the nephew of another Armand Bezons who, as Archbishop of Rouen, had approved the Rule of the Institute in 1721.[82] In the history of the Church in Carcassonne he occupied an important place, not only because of the length of his episcopacy (1730-1778), but also because he ruled with vigor and, indeed, with a sort of severity. There exists a lively description of him, sketched by a Capuchin Father who belonged to a monastery in Carcassonne: He was in every sense a great Bishop, endowed with rare virtues and pure morals -- too austere for himself and for others...While he was a terror to his secular Clergy, Religious in general, of whom he was never very fond, suffered more than once from the lash of his haughty disposition. Apart from that, he was a very fine person, of easy access, indeed, rather free, with a generous and sympathetic heart, when he was alone. He faithfully attended the final week of our missions, going so far as to speak to the people, developing with them the holy truths of religion in the most enthusiastic way. He sought to embrace all hearts with the sacred fire of the charity with which he himself was penetrated, especially in the celebration of the divine mysteries.[83]

He does not seem to have disturbed nor frightened the Brothers. He enjoyed them. They experienced the friendliness of his welcome, the goodness of his heart and the expansiveness of his virtue. They were, perhaps, surprised by his toleration for Jansenists. But Bishop Bezons's position in this matter translated into a settled bias against the Jesuits rather than a clear-cut challenge to doctrine. He did not object to signing Alexander VII's oath and he didn't seem very hard to please in the matter of the Bull *Unigenitus*. This approach was to lead him in 1765 to refuse (along with his confreres in Lyons, Ales and Lescar) adherence to the Acts of the General Assembly of the Clergy.[84] It was an unfortunate dissent and a deplorable example. But the faith was safe: Armand Bezons was no Pierre de Langle. There was no evidence that the orthodoxy of the Christian Brothers suffered either diminution or persecution at his hands.

Equally brilliant, the mind of Jean-Baptist Champflour labored under no such shadow. The Bishop of Mirepoix belonged to a people that was faithful to the Holy See. His uncle, Étienne Champflour, Bishop of La Rochelle, combined with François Lescure, Bishop of Lucon, to condemn

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[80] Historique de la province tneridionale, Vol, I and Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 127-128.

[81] Lucard, op. cit., pp. 184-185, following the Municipal Archives of Agde.

[82] See above, pg. 69.

[83] Published by Father Sicard, op. cit., pg. 560, following Mehul, Cartulaire de Carcassonne, Vol. V, pg. 518.

[84] Sicard, op. cit., pp. 478 and 620

Father Quesnel's Reflections on the New Testament, a "book full of impious dogmas". Cardinal Noaille, who thought he was right in protecting the Jansenist theologian, prohibited the publication in his own Archdiocese of Paris of the censure issued by his two brother-Bishops. Extending to the nephew the animosity he had shown to the uncle, Noaille had Jean-Baptist Champflour expelled from the Seminary of St. Sulpice -- with the effect that Champflour became thereby only a more determined defender of the true doctrine. He was elevated to the episcopate as late as 1737, during the time of Cardinal Fleury, when he was already fifty-two years of age. His See was a tiny one, at the foot of the Pyrenees and on the banks of the River Hers. In the words of his biographer, Father La Tour,[85] he was a remarkable Bishop whom "God, in His mercy, had given to the Church (at this time)".[86]

"His concern and example kept his diocese within the bounds of sound doctrine." As an exegete, "he wrote learned and probing introductions to the books of Holy Scripture, which he ordered read in his Seminary"; as a liturgist, he was the author "of several offices special" to the church in Mirepoix. We also owe "a beautiful commentary on the Psalms" to his efforts. His learning was exceeded only by his charity. He familiarized himself...with the needs of the poor and sent them unexpected assistance, in hidden ways, in order to spare them the shame of asking for, and the embarrassment of accepting, alms.

In 1752, during a period of great scarcity, he anticipated the decisions of the Parlement of Toulouse by setting up a "charity bureau" for the distribution of food. He borrowed "on all sides"; he sold his furniture, his silver and his carriage. His income was moderate: the See of Mirepoix took in only about thirty-thousand livres; and the Bishop saved nothing from his personal patrimony. A few friends helped him out from their own savings; but this was meagre assistance, "far less than he gave away. Only God's blessing...could open up to him the inexhaustible supplies he needed". Jean Baptist Champflour died on the 3rd of February, 1768, penniless, but also debtless. He made the poor his heirs; but all that the Directors of the Hospital (his executors) could collect was the return on some furniture that was sold at auction. Here indeed was one man whose epitaph did not lie: he was conspicuous by the ardor of his faith and fidelity, by the austerity of his life, his love of the poor and by his contempt for "display" .[87]

"He was loved by all".[88] And, indeed, he was – especially by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who cultivated a fondness for their benefactors. At the bottom of a portrait Bishop Bezons of Carcassonne bequeathed to the Brothers as a souvenir, they wrote: *Domus Fundatori, pauperism Patri et Doctori*.[89] In their humility, they enjoyed featuring in their houses those people who had called them to work and who had entrusted them with poor boys as their pupils and as their adopted children.

The Brothers had come to Carcassonne in 1738. At first there were only three of them, including the Director, a Brother Macharius, a native of the diocese of Cambrai. By 1740, they were teaching more than two hundred pupils. The Bishop housed them, and the city paid them a wage which, rather rapidly, rose to three hundred livres for each Brother. Brother Macharius, who was only thirty-three years of age, died in 1744 of overwork. One of his pupils, Pierre Bilhac, two years later in the novitiate in Avignon, chose the religious name of his late instructor.[90]

Between 1740 and 1744 schools were begun in Mirepoix and Mazeres. In both of these cities the education of girls was in the hands of a "group of young ladies named after the city of Mirepoix": Louis XIV had relied upon them to convert young Protestant girls to Catholicism. Actually, through their tuition-free classes and residence schools, the ladies taught the entire female population.[91] What was needed were parallel institutions for boys. Bishop Champflour, who maintained a Seminary in Mazeres, worked energetically to find the means to locate the Brothers permanently in the two critical spots of his diocese.

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[85] 1 As we have stated (Cf. Vol. I of the present work, pg. 357) Vie du Frere Irenée, which was published in Avignon in 1774, was followed by Eloge historigne de M. de Champflour, evegue de Mirepoix. There is every reason to assign the second work to Bertrand La Tour as well as the first.

[86] La Tour, pg. 111.

[87] Idem., op. cit., pp 115, 119, 120-121, 123, 130-131, 137, 140.

[88] Idem., Ibid., pg. 140

[89] Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I.

[90] Ibid. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 85-87.

[91] La Tour, pg. 114.

He was supported by the City Council, more or less eagerly, depending upon circumstances and income. Finally, he had the opportunity to finance the undertaking. And, at Mirepoix a residence school was added to the popular school. It was there, too, that in 1751 De La Salle's gallant colleague and compatriot, Brother Bernardine, died.[92]

In the same administrative district there was the last foundation to be associated with Brother Timothy's generalate; here we meet with a prelate with whose role -- less favorable to the Institute -- we shall have to study in another theatre of activity. In 175, Dominique La Rochefoucauld, the youngest son of the famous aristocratic family, who was called to a brilliant career in the Church, was Archbishop of Albi. On the 19th of July of that year Deputy-mayor Audibert explained to the City Council that the Archbishop ever attentive to the best interests of the city, planned to open a public school in the city under the direction of the Brothers of the Christian Schools...The Assembly, in the name of the community had to give its consent...to grant power to the Deputy-mayor and the Councilmen to seek authorization for the necessary expenses to cover housing, furniture and supplies...and to approve that the sum of 100 livres provided for the writing-masters be paid annually to the Brothers...With everything in order, classes began, in Albi (with its red Cathedral)[93] on the 1st of January. Later on, they would enjoy Cardinal Bemis' favor.

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Perhaps enough has been said to account for the Brothers' situation in the South of France between the Founder's death and that period of continuous growth that coincided with the first half of the 18th century. We have become familiar, at least in a general way, with a story, repeated pretty nearly everywhere, of the undertakings of the most apostolic and charitable bishops, the activity of the king's representatives, inspired by goodwill, assisting in the execution of orders originating in Versailles, the variety of attitudes among municipal authorities, and the eagerness of families (except in a few Protestant towns) to entrust their sons to Religious educators. And we have an idea of the environment in which, daily, the Christian Brothers fulfilled their task, a task at once monotonous and obscure, but also sublime and which required a degree of heroism and a great deal of love.

In conclusion, we need only mention Bishops Michel Verthamon Chavagnac and Jean d'Yse Saleon who, in Montauban and Rodez, were the emulators of their colleagues in Languedoc, Dauphine and Provence in the work of the education of the common people. Verthamon -- like Champflour, singularly faithful to his duty of "residency" (in an episcopacy that spanned thirty-three years he was only absent from his diocese for a few days), deeply religious, of unquestionable morals, devoted to the poor and profuse in pastoral visitations and in preaching[94] -- in 1742 sponsored two Brothers for Montauban, in the Faubourg Villenouvelle, won them the goodwill of the municipal authorities who, beginning in 1744, paid the Brothers the honorarium formerly given to the "tutors of the poor".[95]

D'Yse Saleon, Bishop of Rodez, after having been Bishop of Agen and before he had been transferred to the Archiepiscopal See of Vienne, had long figured among the best and most enduring friends of the Institute, when in 1744, he lodged Brother Maclou and Didier in a house connected with his palace. He guaranteed them an annual income of 640 livres from the French Clergy, and, (the following year) bought them a large and beautiful house. As a Canon of St. Andrew's in Grenoble, in 1707, he was one of the organizers of the School Bureau. And in 1713-1714 he was rather closely associated with De La Salle as he introduced the Founder to the hermitage at Parmenie; and there he played an important role, indeed a decisive one, in the vocation of "Montisambert, the soldier".[96] It is understandable that Brother Irenée would be careful to please Bishop Saleon the moment he expressed the wish to have the Brothers in his diocese of Rodez. In 1745, the Bishop gave the city of Millau a school. The Bishop's generosity secured the major part of the teachers' salaries. The city had only to hand over to the Brothers the 150

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92 Historique, cited. Cf. Lucard, Vol, II, pp. 116-117, 507.

93 Ibid. Cf. Lucard, ibid., pp. 185-187.

94 Sicard, op. cit., pg. 543.

95 Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I.

96 See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 309, 324, 359.

livres allocated for the direction of the primary schools. However, a special teacher was appointed to teach the children introductory Latin grammar.[97]

Rodez became one of the strongest citadels of the Institute.

[97] Historique, cited. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 118-119.

CHAPTER THREE

Schools in the Paris Region And In the Western Provinces

Pursuing our study of the opening of schools through the regions of France which -- in the eyes of the Brothers in Avignon -- were 'beyond Lyons", we shall try to avoid diffuse and monotonous accounts, the details of which, full of flavor and meaning for monographs covering local history, teach nothing about souls or lives nor the causes and effects of human events. It seems that what we must draw from the mass of documentary material are the rather precise notions concerning the education of the common people and the religious and educational influence of the Brothers during the 18th century: how this education was understood, encouraged and organized; how these men, dedicated to the teaching of catechism, reading, writing and calculating, were received, protected and supported. Was the value put upon their methods and results above suspicion'? After the fertile impulse of the previous century, did the movement to which the De La Salle gave such a powerful impetus and such decisive direction run up against obstacles and falter? These questions will, of course, be answered when., as we approach the age of the "philosophers", we shall be faced with new doctrines developed by the educational theorists; when, as well, we shall be examining more narrowly the Brothers' theories, not only in their elementary schools, but also in their residence schools; and when the Brothers themselves, analyzing the principles and the results of their daily efforts, reveal what they themselves thought. But without further delay, it is possible to glean from the accounts, documents and administrative correspondence the words and the gestures that reveal essential tendencies.

Ideals and reactions are not everywhere the same. During these years of the "ancien regime" provincial individualism continued to be quite 'pronounced; we have seen this and noted it in the South of France. Elsewhere, there were other preoccupations, other biases. The problem raised by the Protestant revival was not as sharp, or it was unknown. Difficulties arose from Jansenism, Gallicanism or simply from a sort of narrowness of vision of the middle-class, from stubbornness on the part of judges, from professional competition or from financial miscalculation. The customs or the wishes of a population, social concepts or the charitable inclinations of government decided the fate of a school. And this is why we believe that it is essential to pursue our journey over the map of the kingdom of France by going directly, first, to Paris and to the cities which surrounded the capital; and, secondly, by viewing the regions of the Northwest and the West: Artois, Picardy, Normandy, Brittany and Anjou. These are the objectives of the present chapter. Another chapter will be devoted to the schools in the East, in Champagne and Lorraine. With the Franche-Comte school in Dole and the one in Bugey we shall reach the Swiss frontier, which we cross in order to get a glimpse of the school in Estavayer. In this way we shall have an overall view of the schools of the Institute after the tremendous efforts made by the second Superior-general.

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In 1725, it was possible to group around Paris and the St. Sulpice schools, the Brothers' Communities initiated by De La Salle in Laon, Chartres, St. Denis, Versailles and another which Brother Timothy started two years earlier in Nogent-le-Rotrou. These institutions subsisted apart from the new ones, which may seem to be a lot. But it was not without considerable and commendable sacrifice on the part of the Brothers that some of these cities supplied by the Founder continued to have a school. Both Laon and Chartres were extremely poor. The five Brothers in Laon had nothing but a single salary of 400 livres between them; and since St. Martin's Abbey stopped serving the Brothers their dinner each day, in about 1730, the ordinary fare was reduced to "two pounds of meat a week, vegetables and water to drink". In 1732, the Brothers had "no heat in the house except what came from the lamp".[1] The Community in Chartres was for a long time without a fixed income. According to Blain, it lived "on a certain amount of bread and wine" supplied by Bishop Merinville, and by the alms of "some pious persons, especially Father Truchis".[2] Finally, people interested Duke Louis of Orleans, the very devout and charitable son of Regent Philip, in the plight of the courageous teachers. When Blain was writing his life of the Founder, the Duke granted an annual allowance of 500 livres to the Brothers "who were working in hunger, thirst, in the

[1] Motherhouse Archives H B t 3 Historique du district de Reims.

[2] Blain, Vol. I, pg. 377.

cold... and in persecution".[3] As we know, Blain was not adverse to exaggeration; but, at the same time, it is true that in the Beauce pocketbooks never opened very wide. The magistrates in Chartres proved openly hostile. Elsewhere we have recounted how, in 1718, they attempted to restrict the freedom to teach that was enjoyed by "the school Brothers".[4] A few years later they denied the Brothers any right to an inheritance of a Mme. Preaux, who had left them 1,000 écus in her will. The magistrates thought that the Institute could not acquire either personal or real property outside the jurisdiction of Normandy; since the "Letters Patent" of 1724 had been granted only to St. Yon.[5] Surely, this was a narrow and overstrained interpretation, further examples of which we shall notice later on. Nevertheless, the Brothers believed that they should submit.

There were, however, decisions that went in the contrary direction. Of some of these the St. Denis Community was the beneficiary. Its great benefactress, Marie Poignant, had deeded a house with a garden and the income on a capitol of 354 livres to the Community. The natural heirs contested the validity of the bequest, because it involved an institution not recognized in the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris. The judge in St. Denis found in favor of the Brothers. But M. and Mme. Boirat, who were to supply the capital for the income, brought the matter to court. On the 20th of June, 1730, they lost their case. But, stubborn plaintiffs that they were, they appealed to the Parlement. Brother Dositheus, as Procurator-general, acting in the name of the Institute, and Brother Jean-François Boucqueton, the Director of the St. Denis school, successfully defended the suit. The Boirats, at first condemned by default, saw their case finally dismissed on the 22nd of January, 1733.[6] Seventeen years later, René Baillot, a priest residing in St. Denis, in St. Marcel's parish, had no difficulty in making "the Community of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in St. Yon, near Rouen" his residuary legatee and responsible for "endowing" a third Brother in St. Denis of France. He had named the "head judge" M. Ragot, as the executor of his will.[7]

In the shadow of the palace in Versailles the Brothers enjoyed a sort of calm. No one dared to pick a quarrel with them where the king who was protecting them resided. In 1730, new classes were opened in St. Louis' parish. And from that moment on we find ourselves in an era of accelerated expansion. For the Paris region and the provinces associated with it, Orleans and Berry,[8] we shall list the names of the schools immediately and completely: Meaux, 1728; Soissons, 1735; Paris, St. Madeleine's school and Bourges, 1737., La Fere, 1738; Noyon, 1739; Fontainebleau; Orleans, Chateaudun, 1740; St. Germain-en-Laye, 1742; St. Étienne du Mont school, Paris, 1744; Gros Caillou School, Paris, 1745; Herisson (in the diocese of Bourges) and Montargis, 1750.[9]

In Soissons there were several charitable persons who collected the necessary funds to open a school and support schoolteachers, and Bishop Lefebvre Laubriere suggested the Brothers as the best educators. In the Parisian neighborhood of Ville-l'Eveque the Duchess of Charost summoned the Brothers and the pastor of the Madeleine paid their salaries. At Bourges Cardinal Frederic Jerome La Rochefoucauld entered the .picture. In that city, Claude Gosse, pastor of St. Martin's in Noyon had anticipated the Brothers' school by obtaining from their Founder, in October of 1718, the services of one of the graduates of the seminary 'for country teachers -- one of the laymen who had been trained according to the methods of the "Great educator", and who, ideally, were supposed to fulfill the role of private auxiliaries to the Institute and teach in those parishes where it was not possible to have a Community of

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[3] Idem., loc. cit., pg. 377.

[4] See Vol. I of this work, pp. 225-228.

[5] Blain, loc. cit.

[6] Motherhouse Archives, H A q 9, St. Denis file. Taken from Register of the Parlement in Paris, collected by Mme. Mirbeck and "note to assist in the understanding of a contradictory decision".

[7] Same file. In 1788, Blessed Brother Solomon wrote: (At St.Denis) we have a small house with three Brothers assisted by the Benedictines and the Ursalines; the former supply the bread, the latter the soup and the boiled beef. (Letter no. 85. Motherhouse Archives, R-2.)

[8] We do not presume to give a rigorous definition to "Paris region". Meaux, for example, was once in Champagne. However, we shall see that the opening of the school in that city enters logically into the history of the institutions on the Ile-de-France.

[9] National Archives L. 963; Motherhouse Archives, LI v, statistics of 1779 and the files of the institutions

Brothers. [10]Twenty-one years later Bishop Bourzac of Noyon fully realized Claude Gosse's hopes by welcoming Brothers Hubert, Esprit and Magloire.[11] In 1743, with great solemnity, he moved the Brothers into a spacious house; and the pastor of St. Martin's, now an old man and close to death, had the children chant the *Nunc dimittis*.[12]

Cardinal Fleury had favored the opening. of a school in Fontainebleau, and had arranged for an annuity from Louis XV of 900 livres for three teachers.[13] On the 20th of October, 1720, Charles Philip Albert, Duke of Luynes, ceded a farm to the Institute on condition that the Brothers open a school in Chateaudun. His kindness toward the Brothers was unfailing. When the farm stopped producing, he substituted an income of 500 livres supplied from taxes and excises; and he made the school and the Community dependent upon the Dunois chateau. [14]In St. Germain-en-Laye, where the Irishmen, descendants of the companions of King James II's exile (and perhaps there were those among them some whose fathers were taught by the Founder in the Grande Maison on Rue Vaugirard),[15] still lived, Father Conigham, the pastor, entrusted his charity school to the Brothers who were sent out from St. Yon. They enjoyed all the advantages of the previous teachers, along with an additional 500 livres annually. The pastor could withdraw the funds and give them to the St. Germain Alms House to feed orphans, if the Superiors of the Congregation failed to send the pastor teachers acceptable to him.[16] In 1749, a gift from the King of France allowed the school to be relocated to the Chancellery Palace.[17]

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We shall dwell somewhat longer over the Parisian Communities of Meaux and Orleans, which furnish us with precise documentation. "The Holy Spirit House", on the Rue Neuve, 5 the headquarters of the Brothers in St. Sulpice, profited from some rather important legacies and gifts. Some of the wording in the contracts really deserves to be studied. In a will date the 25th of January, 1728, Count Vaureal left 4,000 livres to the Brothers of this institution with the sole condition that each year they have a said for the repose of his soul; and further the pupils were to attend the Mass and recite the *De profundis*. He explained the reason for his generosity: Frequently he saw these children coming to Mass in the Hospital for the Incurables, as many as 120 of them, in perfect order...each one with his small prayer-book in hand and in perfect silence...

Their attitude "inspired (him) with devotion". He also thought that the Brothers' school "was useful not only to religion, but as well to the State...(which) was interested in the good education of its subjects". A Mlle. Marie-Charlotte Dagarat had, "in the name of the Mother of God" given the bare ownership of her house and a part of her garden on Rue Vaugirard to the Hospital "for the poor orphan children in St. Sulpice parish", situated on Rue Vieux Colombier. She decided the land that was left over would go to her neighbors, the Brothers. This arrangement became the object of a contract on the 30th of September, 1731, notarized by Dionis and Jourdain. “Aware of the success with which the Brothers of the Institute of the Christian Schools, founded in this city in the Holy Spirit House, give a Christian education to the poor and desiring to secure and perpetuate such an advantageous and necessary (work) Mlle Dagarat...has voluntarily given...as an irrevocable gift between living persons, to the Institute of the Brothers...(and) to the Community of St. Yon in Rouen, Brother Thomas...accepting in the name of and as Procurator for, Brother Timothy, Superior-general, and the Brothers Assistant,the remaining portion of her

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[10] 2See Vol. I of the present work, Part Two, chaps. ii and v.

[11] Motherhouse Archives, Hb t 4: Historique de l'Ecole de Noyon.

[12] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 137-8

[13] Idem., Ibid., pg. 83, following the National Archives L. 963

[14] Report of the Archeological Society of Eure-et-Loire, Vol. VII, March, 1874, article by Lucien Merlet.

[15] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 183-184.

[16] "Letters Patent" of the 15th of March, 1749, mentioned in the 1904 brochure. Blessed Brother Solomon, in 1788 (Letter no. 85, already cited) speaks of six Brothers at St. Germain

[17] See above, pp. 56-57.

garden [18] excepting its use, and on condition of granting "the said young lady"...participation in the prayers and good-works (of the Parisian Community)."[19]

Six weeks earlier Brother Thomas had accepted in name of the same Community, a rather appealing legacy, which was delivered by a M. Veron, agent for the Countess de Roye. "The late François Durandard, a native of Savoy formerly doorkeeper to the Count de Roye, was creditor to the said Lord for the sum of 7,000 livres." During his lifetime he turned over to the Procurator of the Institute a note signed by the Count in 1722. A few days before his death, Durandard sent a request to the Countess de Roye, in whose service he continued to be, to remit the sum in question to the Holy Spirit House.

M. Veron was carrying out the last wishes of the wonderful old man: and the Institute, through Brother Thomas apart from assuming the responsibility for a large number of Masses requested by the deceased, undertook to teach tuition-free in its classrooms "on the customary days and usual hours, the Savoyard children who were able to come". In memory of the doorkeeper the Brothers would admit to the Rue Neuve Notre-Dame-des-Champs the young foreigners who came down from the Alps to make a living as water-bearers and chimney-sweeps. A 'copper plaque' fixed in the chapel commemorated this benefaction.[20]

Alongside this faithful and patient servant in the gallery of generous benefactors there is a place for a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church. On the 30th of July, 1735. In the presence of the Parisian notary, M. Meunier, Henry Thiard, Cardinal Bissy, Bishop of Meaux and Abbot of St. Germain-des-Près, with the view "of realizing various works of piety within the confines of his Abbey" deposited with the pastor and the churchwardens of parish of St. Sulpice a fund of 16,305 livres, 13 sols, which produced an income of 5,367 livres, 13 sols and 8 deniers. Out of this sum, paid from the abbatial income, 2,316 livres, 13 sols and 4 deniers contributed to the twelve Brothers of the Christian Schools who taught tuition-free in the elementary schools and for the (religious) instruction of poor children in the said parish, so that their "salaries" might be "funded" as "securely" as possible and that the parish budget might thereby be relieved. This gift was given to the Brothers in the Holy Spirit Community along with "another income of 1,000 livres", of which we shall presently describe how it was paid and its curious purpose.[21]

Cardinal Bissy, successor to Bossuet at Meaux and one of the most ardent defenders of the Bull *Unigenitus*, was a Bishop who was conscientious about his duties. He strove "to provide for all the spiritual and temporal needs of his flock",[22] and he was especially earnest about Christian education. As Bishop of Toul, on the 10th of March, 1695, he issued a statement on this subject.[23] Transferred to Meaux, he attended to the education of both boys and girls throughout his See. The archives of that city contain a document of 227 pages in which are listed the institutions that trace their origins to him: he appointed "vicars, Latin teachers", as well as schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in many 'parishes.' It is understandable that he would be most sympathetic to the Brothers and give them his most effective assistance. In October of 1722, he sent them a most eulogistic recommendation for a brief that was to be sent to the Sacred Congregation of the Council.[24] On a visit to Rome in 1730, (in a testimonial preserved in the Motherhouse) he vouched for the good morals of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, for their sound teaching and for their total attachment to the Holy See and its pronouncements.[25] It was a valuable

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[18] National Archives S 7046-47. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 25-26. In 1788, the Brothers had four Communities in Paris. One of fourteen Brothers in the Holy Spirit Community, another of three Brothers in the "Big Stone", and a third of three Brothers in St. Madeleine, and one of seven Brothers at St. Roch. (Letter of Bl. Brother Solomon, nov. 1788.)

[19] Ibid., S. 7046

[20] National Archives, S, 7048.

[21] Ibid., S 7046-47, copy of the contract, on parchment

[22] Sicard, op. cit., pg. 429, note #4.

[23] Mémoire de l'academie de Stanislaus, année 1888

[24] This document was discovered cit., pg. 429, note #4.

[25] See above, pp. 80. 3 The original, in Latin, is signed Archives HA q 6. by the educational historian, Maggiolo (quoted by Father Sicard, op. "H-us Card-lis de Bissy", the 28th of August, 1730, in the Motherhouse archives

testimony from such an orthodox prelate; and the Brothers used it to obtain from the new Pope Clement XII, a support similar to that they had received from Benedict XIII.

For more than a year the Brothers had been residing in the diocese of Meaux. On the 7th of March, 1729, Brother Thomas, empowered as Procurator for the Superior-general, Brother Irenée, signed a contract with His Eminence in the abbatial palace of St. Germain-des-Pres.

The document opens with a broad statement of purpose. Cardinal Bissy had observed with extreme sorrow that the greater part of the young people of the City of Meaux and its environs (and particularly the latter), were without education and instruction...for the want of attentiveness on the part of those who were supposed to have this responsibility, or for the lack of means on the part of parents, who were unable to pay the "small" scholastic "fees". “The children, raised thus in ignorance of the most essential truths of religion, remained ignorant for the rest of their lives, since experience showed that (if these truths) are not acquired in youth, (they can be learned) only with difficulty at a more advanced age.” There follows a history of the steps taken by the prelate and the initiation of the project. "His Eminence had' long "reflected upon" the measures to be taken to instruct "the future generation, which always deserves special attention". It seemed to him that there was nothing better "suited" than to invite "the Brothers founded...by the late De La Salle, Canon of Rheims, whose headquarters were in the City of Rouen", to Meaux. (For these Brothers are exclusively dedicated to education; and they have made "considerable progress in Rouen, as well as in several other cities of the kingdom...") Bishop Bissy "had shared his plan with Brother Timothy...pointing out to him" that he wished in the beginning to undertake a test to see "whether the Brothers came up to his expectations". In October of 1728, the Superior having sent five Brothers to teach in two public schools, the children "began to be better instructed"; and people noticed in them "greater docility and less dissipation and dissoluteness". "Many simple townspeople...were inquisitive enough" to visit the classes; and they stated that "the simple way" the Brothers used to teach "was as excellent as it was particular to them".

"Fully persuaded that a school of such a nature could only be pleasing to God and useful to mankind", the Bishop translated what had only been provisional into something permanent. Two schools were required, one in the St. Nicolas neighborhood and the other "in the city's principal marketplace". Class schedules, holidays, vacations, the responsibility for taking the pupils to Mass and Vespers, the daily half-hour of catechism on workdays, and religious instruction on Sundays and Feasts were strictly determined. The contract also specified the powers of the Bishop over the Community: These five Brothers will always be under obedience to, and the jurisdiction of, His Eminence the Cardinal and of (his) successors... who shall be able at all times and when it pleases them to dismiss those of the five Brothers who may not suit them, and the Institute will be obliged to send others in their place upon demand... The Brothers in Meaux could not have either "their own church or their own cemetery", and they were to be, except for the expense of blessed bread, the most regular parishioners.

In exchange for all of these services and for "the upkeep of the school...the house, food, support and other needs in health and in illness", the Cardinal gave:

“A house situated in the St. Nicholas district, on the main street, called "Tril" ...at the sign of the Pinecone...and 1200 livres of income, on a principal of 25,000 livres, with Father Jean Martel, Canon of the church in Meaux as trustee. For classrooms in the "Grand Marché", it was up to the Brothers themselves to find adequate space and pay the rent without demanding "any increase of funding, indemnity or recompense". Instruction would, of course, be completely tuition-free. No pupil could be "excluded or refused", except by order of His Eminence.

At the end of the contract fresh stipulations sealed the Brothers' dependence upon the authority of the Ordinary: And in case it happens in the future that the zeal, the devotedness or the attentiveness of these five Brothers notably cools, or (in the case) of the irregularity of their morals (which God forbid) or that they fail to fulfill...the above conditions in such a way that the public should be disedified..., the Lord Bishops, the successors of His Eminence, will take pains to inform the Superior-general every two months, and if, after six successive months, the Superior-general fails to correct matters, it will be licit and allowable for the Lord Bishops, with the advice and consent of the mayor and the supervisors and the principal citizens of the city, assembled in a general meeting, to expel totally and without further formalities...all five Brothers from the city of Meaux and from the house given to them and to deprive them of the benefits and the income that they shall be at the time enjoying, in virtue of their contract.

The bishops would, in person or through their Vicars-general or other persons they might judge suitable to designate, visit the Community and the school "to ascertain whether things were going well". At each visit the Brothers "would be held accountable for receipts" and expenditures for the current year. The

reinvestment of income in the expectation of increased capital was to be done under the supervision of the Bishop's office.

The Cardinal thought it was necessary to obtain legal approval for this foundation, which, after all and in spite of the promises demanded by the donor upon the Superiors of the Institute, was not a part of the patrimony of the Motherhouse in St. Yon. The Cardinal submitted his project "to the good pleasure of the king", which was expected to be expressed in the form of "Letters Patent".[26]

The "Letters", peculiar to the school in Meaux, were granted during the month the contract was signed. But the Parlement in Paris did not consent to register them until after a detailed process *de commodo et incommodo.* The Cathedral Chapter, the pastors of the parishes in Meaux, the mayor and the supervisors, the officers of the bailiwick and of the presidium and the financial officials were consulted. Some of their remarks reveal a certain anxiety over the extension of the rights of *mortmain*, and a certain suspicion of a new Congregation capable (in the eyes of the officials and the townspeople of Meaux) of overrunning the city.

Earlier the City Corporation, called together at the request of the Cardinal-Bishop on the 7th of February, 1729, before the contract was drawn up in its final form, showed very little enthusiasm for opening wide the city gates to the teachers of the poor. The Brothers "were not...to add" any other real estate "to the house" that was given to them, nor acquire any other in the city, the market or the suburbs. And the five would be the maximum number of Brothers.

On the 11th of July, 1729, an assembly of supervisors and leading citizens approved these conditions. Other groups were not convoked prior to 1731 in virtue of a decree of Parlement dated the 3rd of March. Nearly all of them seconded the restrictions imposed by the city leaders.

On the 22nd of March officials of the bailiwick and the presidium insisted that there be imposed upon the Brothers, "as the fundamental and absolute condition of their admission" into Meaux never to be able, either they or their Institute, to own any other house (beside the one in the neighborhood of St. Nicolas) under any pretext or in whatever way, whether by acquisition, exchange or gift, legacy or endowment, even if subsequently they shall obtain the explicit consent of the City.A map was to be drawn of the existing structures in St. Nicolas; in that way it would be possible to prevent future expansion. Over the entire country, convents had taken over too many houses and gardens, to the detriment of the inhabitants who were "excessively hemmed it". It was further necessary to forbid the new community to borrow money; and it could reinvest only with the consent of the Deputy Procurator-general of the bailiwick and by submitting to him all records of temporal administration.

Two days before, the election officials, to show their misgivings, adopted a new approach. They warned the public officers against an excessive recruitment of pupils, since classroom space would rapidly become inadequate: That would be used as a pretext by the Brothers to increase their numbers and enlarge their buildings. On the other hand, should it become necessary to pick and choose pupils, the well-to-do would be given preferential treatment to the prejudice of the children of the poor; and that would be "contrary to the spirit of the foundation". Competition from the tuition-free school would put teachers in pay-schools out of work, which would be harmful to education in general and would deprive the parishes of valuable cooperation for religious ceremonies. It was therefore necessary to take every precaution so that only the poor would be the beneficiaries of the Cardinal's generosity.

On the 29th of March the officers of the "Salt house" demanded, like those in the bailiwick, conditions that would prevent eventual encroachment: they further stipulated the prohibition against reinvesting the capital of the 1,250 livres of income in real estate, where an option for purchase existed.

In conformity with the decision of the Judiciary on the 29th of March, a plenary session of corporate authorities was held on the 31st at the City Hall, with the Deputy-general of the bailiwick presiding. It endorsed the preceding conditions; and it passed the following resolution, which originated with the supervisors and the leading citizens: namely, that every year a visit be made to the school by delegate of the city in order to ascertain whether the Brothers were indeed abiding by the conditions of the foundation, whether the youth were being properly instructed, (and to) hear complaints, if there were any. The same municipal magistrates should be present for the financial report, just as they are in the offices of the Hospital and the Alms House.[27]

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[26] The document analyzed in the above text is an "abstract from the minutes of the registry of the bailiwick of Meaux" signed by the notary in Rouen, Lefebvre on the 16th of May, 1738. (Motherhouse Archives HA q 6, Meaux file.).

[27] Motherhouse Archives HA q 6, Meaux file, an old copy of the entire enquiry in seventeen pages of a large notebook.

The Parlement of Paris retained the restrictive conditions imposed by interested groups, although it did not require the municipal inspection of classes nor the supervised financial reports. In case there were a complaint, the Deputy Procurator-general was to call for the administrative records. The bailiwick or the Parlement itself was to make a decision on the steps to be taken, "without, however, the approval of the Institute of the Christian schools as forming a constitutive part of the kingdom". The inclusion of this latter qualification in the record., dated the 28th of March, 1732, was significant: since the Paris court did not recognized the "Letters Patent of 1724", it meant to ignore the legal existence of the Congregation.[28]

An inventory of furnishings was drawn up on the 28th, 29th and 30th of July, 1732, by the architect, Monvoisin. It suggests that the Cardinal had set the Community up rather comfortably, with a parlor, refectory, cellar, wood-house and a large garden. The first classroom measured 25 feet by 12 feet; and the second, 25 by 18 feet.[29]

Henry Bissy did not distinguish his duties as Bishop of Meaux from his duties as Abbot of St. Germain-des-Près. In the latter capacity, he took an interest in the Brothers in the St. Sulpice schools, and came to their assistance in the first place through the intermediary of the Community in Meaux. In 1734, he granted the ecclesiastical court in Meaux an income of 7,425 livres, from which 1,000 livres was to be given annually to the Brothers. Any Brother in the diocese might draw upon it; but provided that the said sum be employed, before any other use, to supply wine (to the teachers) who teach poor children tuition-free in the parish of St. Sulpice in Paris...His Eminence... neither wishing nor intending that the gift be used as a pretext to reduce the salary...up to now paid to the Brothers, which was insufficient to provide them with the wine, which is necessary to support the work of their Institute.[30]

A transaction, undertaken in 1739 between the Community in Meaux and the Holy Spirit Community, left the use of the 1,000 livres at the disposal of the former in exchange for the capital (recently refinanced) that funded the income of the 7th of March, 1729. Brother Thomas was pledged "in the name of the Superiors...to supply the Community in Paris with the wine for which the Community in Meaux had been responsible". To this end, he had to obtain the consent of both Cardinal Bissy's successor, Antoine René Fontenille, and the king's Procurator for the bailiwick and the Presidial Seat of Meaux, Louis Charles Francis Bocquet.[31]

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With equal kindness and generosity on the part of the diocesan leadership, but with greater trust and enthusiasm on the part of the population, another city in the Paris region welcomed the Brothers in 1740. Father La Tour writes that it was "the reputation of Brother Irenée" that won the Brothers "their schools in Orleans".[32] The Brothers were no strangers to the people of this city, nor were they outsiders whom one rather respects and keeps at a distance until they had given proof of their purposes, good conduct and the soundness of their work. Irenée had become the Brothers' guarantor, and, as Father La Tour remarks, the city had not forgotten that its elementary schools had benefited from the marvelous dedication of Françoise du Lac, Claude Francis' aunt.

A loving and persevering effort in favor of education (protracted by some people to the point of heroism) placed the antique virtue of Orleans in the service of the instruction of the very young and the very poor. In the preceding volume we have written about Alexandre Colas Portmorrant, Pierre and Louis Tranchot, Pierre Aubert, François Jogues Bouland, and François Perdoult Bourdeliere. St. Euvert's school, founded by François Jogues (who aspired to be a great penitent) and directed by his friend, Serlorges, soldier-become-priest, still existed after more than half a century. In 1740, it lost its director, François Pelle.

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[28] Motherhouse Archives, Meaux file, transactions of the 27th of July, 1739. (Copy verified by Mirbeck).

[29] Motherhouse Archives HA q 6, Meaux file, copy of the document of registration, with a copy of the contract dated 7th of March, 1729.

[30] Archives, dossier de Meaux

[31] Died on the 26th of July, 1737.

[32] Motherhouse Archives, Meaux file, Gifts made by H.E. Cardinal-Bishop de Bissy. Old copy

This is why Nicolas Joseph Paris, Bishop of Orleans, decided to call upon the Christian Brothers. In his youth, as a Canon in Chartres, he had seen the Brothers at work. Like Henri Bissy, he knew them to be faithful to "sound teaching". He himself was clearly opposed to the Jansenists, after the example of his kinsman, Fleuriau Armenonville. (His maternal uncle and predecessor in the episcopal See of Orleans was Louis Gaston Fleuriau, whom Bishop Paris succeeded in 1783 after having been coadjutor for nine years.)[33] There were some schoolmistresses who, because they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Bull *Unigenitus*, were forbidden to teach by Bishop Paris. But with the thoroughly "Roman" disciples of an exemplary holy man, orthodoxy would dominate their catechetical instruction and their classrooms.

Father La Tour notes the "agreement" between the Bishop, the Intendant and the municipal magistrates to bring the Brothers "into this great city" of Orleans was probably obtained without difficulty from Brother Timothy and his first Assistant. From its very beginning the St. Euvert School must have had some kind of income.[34] Bishop Paris assumed the costs of remodelling the house, which, in 1743, cost him 3,385 livres and in 1744, 1,759 livres.[35] When the Brothers arrived in October of 1740, he had guaranteed them the ownership of their residence "on the street and in the parish of St. Euvert".[36] Finally, he decided to grant them an annual subsidy in proportion to their daily needs.[37]

In a formal portrait of vast dimensions, Natoire has represented Bishop Paris entering his episcopal city: the prelate is receiving the oath from his clergy which, in procession, has just fallen to its knees. The magistrates, stationed at the Bishop's left, are awaiting the gesture that will liberate the prisoners who are amassed in the foreground. At the center of the canvas the light plays excitedly on the benign features of the conquering, figure who is about exercise his clemency.[38] The man portrayed here is the same one (less majestic, but no less gracious and kind) we meet with in the letters of Brother Robert,[39] the Director of the Community in Orleans.[40]

This Brother was a talented draughtsman; and, while he knew how to draw (he had made a sketch of St. Charles Borromeo that was presented in 1774 to the Count of Artois, the future King Charles X), he also knew how, in a relaxed style, to describe events and tell stories. Born in 1717, in Cerisy, in Artois, Joachim Caron entered the Institute in 1736, ands as Brother Robert, was professed in 1742. He must have been close to thirty years of age when Brother Irenée, who knew him well and valued him highly, assigned him to the schools in Orleans. His correspondence provides us with the following testimony:

“Bishop Paris continues to give us magnificent proofs of his affection...He never passes the house without stopping by...The schools prosper; he visits them and questions the pupils. He always has a kind word, encouraging both for the Brothers and for the pupils. His very presence inspires them...”

The Bishop was as kind and accessible as a father. "Come to see me as early in the morning as you please; I will receive you", he told the Brother Director, who had remarked that he "felt at home in (the Bishop's) palace". For his part Bishop Paris entered the Brothers' house as he might his own home. It was only a short distance from the Bishop's residence to the Community on Rue St. Euvert ; and, like a next-door neighbor, the good-natured prelate would turn up unexpectedly.

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[33] La Tour, pg. 39.

[34] Gallia christiana, Vol. VIII.

[35] Loc. cit., pg 39.

[36] In 1792, the Community in St. Euvert had 100 livres of income from the king, 600 from the Clergy and the Canonesses Regular of St. Genevieve, 100 from the Estates of Languedoc (which came from Masson Mannerie's legacy), 299 from Bishop Paris' inheritance and 30 "from Simon Darnault, of St. Mark" (Departmental Archives of Loiret, L 464 "Enquete sur l'etat des etablissements d'instruction dans le Loiret, 1792".)

[37] A. De Foulque Villaret, l'Instrnction primaire avant 1789 a Orleans, Orleans, 1882, pg. 145[37].

[38] Departmental Archives of Loiret, loc. cit.

[39] Motherhouse Archives HA p.4; Brother Lucard published extracts from these letters in the documentary proofs found in Vol. II of his Annales, pp. 727-29.

[40] Natoire's huge painting still decorates the stairway of the former bishops' residence in Orleans (today, the city library). The city's museum owns the rough-draft of the painting.

One day he came to visit a Brother who was quite ill; the Brother was occupying a room in the attic [41] that was accessible only by a very narrow and steep stairway. Bishop Paris had a difficult time getting up...and to get down, he had to call his servant and lean on his shoulder.

Another story tells of the Bishop venturing on foot during black ice to inquire after the Brother Director, who was "ill with exhaustion". He sat on a stool in Brother Robert's room and ordered the cook to prepare a soup for the patient, that was made of "half a fine chicken (even though it was a Friday!) to which "two well-beaten egg-yokes" were added.

There were Fenelon-like stories of the sort that the 18th century loved to hear, which bring us closer to the gentleness of the Bishop of Orleans. The last one confirms his generosity with regard to the Brothers-schoolteachers. On one occasion he saw "the Brother who was in charge of purchases holding in his hand a pile of bills and accounts". The Bishop took all the bills and added them up: "They come to 1800 livres", he said; "tell Brother [42]Robert that I will take care of it."

"The schools in Orleans were thriving", reports Father La Tour.[43] The site of the principal Community, which had four Brothers, was a place not far from the ancient Abbey, "opposite 'Little St. Loup'. For twenty years there was a residence school connected with this tuition-free school. But, in 1767, the residence school had to be discontinued when the influx of pupils forced the Brothers to turn all available space into classroom for tuition-free pupils.[44] This school was reserved for the children of parishioners of the churches in the vicinity of Holy Cross Cathedral. Almost immediately after their arrival, the new teachers crossed over to the left bank of the Loire to be at the service of the St. Marceau neighborhood.[45] St. Donatian's and St. Peter's, on the right bank, had invited them in 1742.[46] There was an average of three-hundred pupils in each of these parochial schools. As at St. Marceau and at St. Euvert, the Brothers had renovated and enlarged a previously existing institution, begun through cooperation or agreement with Bishop Paris' predecessors. [47] The same situation seems to have obtained at St. Laurence's and St. Patern's. The former of these huge parishes entrusted its school to the Brothers at the same time that the Brothers were moving into St. Donatian's. In 1771, a meeting of the parishioners of St. Laurence's decided "to continue the charity schools for poor boys...by two Brothers of the Christian Schools", in spite of the legal reduction in the income that had been budgeted for this works The principal ledger for St. Patern's mentions that "the Brothers of the Christian Schools began teaching on the 11th of July, 1746", and that (the Brother) in the lower class "began on the 8th of December 1747".[48] Everywhere, organized charities together with pastors, guaranteed the maintenance of school buildings that were rented or purchased. The zeal of the people of Orleans for the education of the poor did not slacken until the "Ancien Regime" was overthrown.[49]

In the 18th century the most illustrious benefactor of elementary education in Orleans was Jean Baptist Masson Mannerie. He belonged to one of those great local middleclass families which had vastly enriched foreign trade and which had connections with Nantes for the importation of cane-sugar and the exportation of manufactured goods. His relatives included the Jogues[50] a name frequently met with in the annals of the Church and the city, as principal magistrates, manufacturers, priests, Religious or as employing their fortunes or giving their lives in the service of God and of the poor. Without intending to compare him with St. Isaac Jogues, the martyr of the Iroquois, or with Jogues Bouland, the advocate of the

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[41] Lucard op.cit.p.726

[42] Lucard, op. ca., pg. 726.

[43] La Tour, pg. 39.

[44] Foulques Villaret, op. cit., pp. 42-3, and the Motherhouse Archives, "Historique de la communaute de Orleans".

[45] There were still Brothers at St. Marceau in 1792 (Departmental Archives of Loiret, L. 464, loc. cit.)

[46] At the outbreak of the Revolution the two parishes had only a single school. (Ibid.)

[47] Foulques Villaret, pp. 46, 101-2, 125.

[48] Departmental Archives of Loiret, G z No. 198-8. Record of the decisions of the parish of St. Laurence. An incorrect reading led Mlle Villaret to think that the Brothers had perhaps not arrived in the parish until this date.

[49] Ibid., Gz, no. 205-5.

[50] Departmental Archives of Loiret, L 464, loc. cit.

school, Masson Mannerie left behind him the reputation for being a man of good and great things. His obituary, taken from the records of St. Michael's parish, says that he died "full of religious and charitable works and lamented by the poor", on the 7th of July, 1749, "at the age of about eighty-four years."[51]

His body was removed from St. Michel's to St. Paul's church, "there to be interred...in the sepulchre of his ancestors".[52] But it is at Notre Dame de Recouvrance that, today, his memory is preserved in the form of a commemorative plaque placed two years after his death in the chapel "reserved by the Jogues family"[53] On it he is referred to as "the father of the poor and an example to the rich", and the parishioners promise him eternal gratitude, because he left them a huge sum of money to be used for charitable purposes. [54]The man whom the words in marble commemorates "lives in every heart"; and he is put forward as a remarkable model: *Abi, viator, admirare et imitare!*

Notre Dame parish was only one of the groups that benefited from the posthumous generosity of Jean Baptist Mannerie. In wills, dated the 4th of August, 1729 and the 7th of February, 1749, he left orders to his heirs to distribute from his estate 950,000 livres to be divided among various pious foundations.[55] He especially recommended to their care the poor children and the school teachers who taught these children Christian Doctrine. Thus, after establishing incomes for the benefit of the indigent, the infirm and for youths, who were offered apprenticeship grants, there remained a capital of about 120,000 livres to be distributed among the primary schools in Orleans and its suburbs. In the Archives of the Department of Loiret, [56]we have identified the names of eight parishes in Orleans and eighteen suburban parishes that shared in the Mannerie legacy. The Brothers' schools that benefited were: St. Donatian, St. Pierre, St. Paten, St. Laurent, St. Marceau and St. Euvert. They were to use the money especially for books (spellers, catechisms, psalters, digests of the Old and New Testaments, and copies of the Imitation of Christ.[57] The administration of the legacies left to the schools was to be handled by the Bureau for Schools.[58]

Bishop Paris, so dedicated to the Brothers during his episcopacy, did not forget them in his will. Dictating his last will and testament to the notaries, Pineau and Bordier on the 4th of January, 1756, "in the abbatial palace of St. Euvert", to which he had retired after his resignation, he had written in, as second in the line of his inheritors (anticipating the death, without direct heir, of his nephew, the Marquis of Montbrun) the Major Seminary of Orleans, the Hospital and the Alms House of Orleans the House and the Community of the Good Shepherd, the Community of New Catholics, and the charity schools for boys...directed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. "I hope", he added, "that my successors will continue to support these (institutions) of the Brothers."[59] In this helpful and approachable prelate, who wanted to bequeath in good works "the little that remained to him"; in this prelate, himself humble and modest, who, in order to mark the site of his burial place "behind the cathedral choir" asked for no more than the words, *Hic jacet Nicolaus Josephus ohm episcopus aurelianensis* on one of those "square stones" in the passage; in this wonderful man who distributed legacies to all those who had served him faithfully,[60]

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[51] The parishes that we have mentioned are the only ones of which we can say with certainty that they gave the direction of their elementary schools to De La Salle's Brothers. Elsewhere there were lay teachers or, as at Notre Dame, teachers who were called "Brothers", although we do not know for a certainty whether they belonged to the "Congregation of St. Yon". In 1788, Brother Solomon wrote that at Orleans there are twelve rather badly housed Brothers (and) ten schools in five different neighborhoods of the city which is huge and which could easily use ten more Brothers. (The St. Donatian and St. Peter Schools were by this time united.)

[52] Departmental Archives of Loiret, record of St. Michael's parish in Orleans for the year 1749.

[53] Death certificate cited

[54] Departmental Archives of Loiret, Gz 216-2, Recouvrance Council, Record of Pews and Seats, F-0 192.

[55] Departmental Archives of Loiret, Gz 192, 198-8, 205-5, 210, Presbytery and Council, taken from the wills of J.B. Masson Mannerie

[56] Series G and Series L.

[57] Items referred to in the deed of gift to St. Donatian's parish, Gz 192-12.

[58] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 8, Orleans file.

[59] Departmental Archives of Loiret, B, 27, record of entails, contracts, wills and codices (1747-1767), will of N.J. Paris, former Bishop of Orleans.

[60] Ibid., B 27, transcript of Bishop Paris' will.

the Brothers had met with perfect understanding and agreement. When he died, they preserved a love for his episcopal city that had been personally inspired by him.

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In the North and the Northwest of France, in Picardy and in Artois, the schools in Guise, Calais and Boulogne were landmarks fixed by the Founder for the future development of his work. His successor, Brother Barthélemy, had also worked and suffered in this region. His dignified resistance to the Jansenist Bishop, Pierre de Langle, in the diocese of Boulogne and in the surrounding countryside, consolidated the position of the Institute and only served to intensify the confidence and the respect of the Catholic population and its orthodox pastors with regard to the young Society. The opening of a new school in St. Omer, negotiated by the first Brother Superior, inspired fresh hopes and provided a serious pledge for the future.

Fundamentally, the clergy in Boulogne and Artois had been, on the whole, won over to the cause of education. As Father Sicard notes,[61] the clergy had "blanketed" these areas with seminaries, colleges and elementary schools. On the 2nd of March, 1728, the city of Ardres signed a contract with Brother Rigobert from the house in Boulogne: It was a matter of putting the finishing touches on the founding of a Christian school for the parishes of Ardres and Bremes, in conformity with the intentions of the late Philippe Desailleurs, priest, pastor of Bremes and Dean of the region of Guines.Two Brothers were "installed", under pastoral supervision, with a salary of 140 livres each, a residence and classrooms in a house on Rue Port d'en-Haut. The teachers' steady income depended upon the rents from a piece of land situated in Elinghem.[62]

When we study the residence schools, we shall have an opportunity to speak of the programs, the clientele and the results of St. Omer's residence school. In 1744, a new concept was applied in Boulogne: Brother Benedict, one of De La Salle's immediate disciples and a former colleague of Brother Irenée in Laon in 1717, was sent to Normandy by the Superior-general to arrange terms with the city for the opening of a special course designed for youths who were planning a career in business. In the contract of th 4th of September, 1744, the course was entitled simply as a "class in penmanship". The number of pupils was limited to thirty-five, and, to be admitted, the prospective pupil had to present a note from the Mayor. Here, the principle of tuition-free instruction was set aside, and tuition was fixed at three livres, ten sols a month or thirty livres a year, as the family preferred. The Mayor himself received deposits, and a municipal deputy collected the remainder of the fee. It was, then, the city, and not the Brothers, that received the money. It was the city as well that took the responsibility for those "who had talent, but not the means of paying". Eight such scholarship pupils were enrolled "at the same time and (for) as long as necessary".[63]

In an announcement addressed to the heads of firms, business men and others, the Mayor detailed the purpose of this new development: Sirs, we are announcing that on Thursday the 1st of December, 1744, there will take place at the Christian Brothers' school in Boulogne the opening of a class for advanced penmanship, arithmetic, bookkeeping with double and single entry, together with foreign exchange.[64]In fact, from the outset a separate building was purchased and furnished.[65] The operation of what was really a commercial school was sufficiently important to the city fathers that they committed public funds to it. And its success corresponded to the effort. The student-rolls for the years 1744, 1747, 1769 and 1780 are preserved in the city Archives of Boulogne. They show that many of the heirs of the upper-levels of commerce attended the school; and some of the names reflect minor local reputations.

There was nothing as important at Abbeville where, since 1740, the Brothers operated a school in St. Wulfran's parish, which was due to the generosity of a legacy left by Mlle Marie Wapllon and to the supplemental support provided by the pastor, Francis Monchambert. In 1746, Holy Sepulchre parish followed the example of St. Wulfran's.[66]

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[61] Sicard, op. cit., pg. 430.

[62] Motherhouse *Archives, "Historique des communautes du district de Saint-Omer, HB t 17 and 34.*

[63] Ibid., HA q t, Boulogne file; agreement of th 4th of September and the rule of the following 23rd of November

[64] Ibid; Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 139-41.

[65] Ibid., contract of sale of "the house and site on which the new schools for penmanship was built", 18th of December,

[66]According to Chassagnon, Vie du Bienheureux Salomon, pg. 33; and Lucard, loc. cit.

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Since De La Salle himself had transferred the center of his Institute to Normandy, and since, beginning in 1705, there were Brothers in Darnetal and Rouen,[67] and since the "Letters Patent" of 1724, granting legal existence to St. Yon, could not be misunderstood in the jurisdiction of the Parlement that had recorded them, it was obvious that the Brothers had been spreading from their Motherhouse throughout the entire province.

The origins of the Communities in Caen, Dieppe, Coutances, Vire, Cherbourg and Avranches date from Brother Timothy's generalate.

It is not known exactly in what year the Christian Brothers assumed the direction of the charity school in Caen. It seems that they were invited by the teachers who had made up a small local society, "the Daviot Brothers", who turned over their income and their schoolhouse to the Christian Brothers. The income proved rather scanty, since, in 1730, we find the Community addressing an appeal for help to the king; and, on the 4th of September, Louis XV ordered that for six years running the sum of 1,000 livres, levied on the income from city taxes, should be set aside for the teachers operating the school in St. Giles' parish.[68]

The story of the school in Dieppe is less obscure. It began with a pastoral visitation by Archbishop de La Vergne Tressan on the 22nd of May, 1729. Father Benard, pastor of St. James in Dieppe told the Archbishop of Rouen of his desire to open a tuition-free school. The Archbishop promised a subsidy of 1,000 livres a year to be furnished from the income from his Dieppe Viscountcy. A public subscription was begun, which produced a matching sum of money. A Mlle. Duprey added 2,000 livres to cover the costs of furnishings. The city assumed the responsibility for lodging the teachers. And, in July, five Brothers arrived: three of them were to teach in St. Jacques and two at St. Remy. In 1734, Father Heuzy, pastor of Neuville-le-Pollet, who was known for his Jansenist tendencies but also for his great charity, gave his vestry a piece of property and funds on condition that they support a school and pay a schoolteacher an annual salary of two hundred livres. He had expressed the desire that the teacher be a cleric. But, having an open mind, he agreed on an alternative suggested by his parishioners, and two Brothers were invited to Pollet in 1735. Three years later the entire Community in Dieppe was united in a former tobacco mart, a huge and beautiful structure made of brick and timber, which the Institute purchased for 12,500 livres and to which a chapel was added.[69]

The school in Coutances opened in 1732 or 1733.[70] The school in Vire traces its origin in 1736 to the Mlles Goisdier, who obtained special "Letters patent" in order to distribute, for the support of schoolteachers, the income from twenty-four dwellings built on a site ravaged by the great fire of 1727. A Brother Yon (Jean Baptist Voisin, born near Laon in 1707 and entered the Congregation in 1726) made the school in Vire famous: "He was as remarkable for his knowledge as he was for the distinction of his manners;" He "civilized" his pupils by liberating them from "the coarseness of their character" and from "the rusticity of their behavior". His efforts at evangelization were even more successful: never did children "possess" more completely "the spirit of Catholicism than under the guidance of this most deserving of men". Even young men in their twenties, and fathers of families were know to have occupied a desk in his classroom to learn "how to write a letter, draw up a lease, or keep an account-book".[71]

Father Michael Le Hericey, pastor of Cherbourg, in 1725, received from Pierre Hervieu, one of his parishioners, the sum of 6000 livres, the income from which was to pay the salary of two Brothers. No less than seventeen years past before the donor's wish was realized. Michel Le Hericey gave the money to. Brother Étienne, Assistant to Brother Timothy, in a notarized deed, dated the 17th of October, 1736, while adding 500 livres for the cost of the deed, travelling expenses and furniture. The problem of a residence remained to be solved. A priest in Cherbourg, Louis Girard, promised to give his house on Calvary Place,

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[67] Darsy, les Ecoles et les Colleges du diocese d'Amiens, 1881, pp. 182-3. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 91-2. According to Brother Solomon (Letters cited), there were seven Brothers in Abbeville in 1788.

[68] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 238-246

[69] Motherhouse Archives HB t 2. "Historique de la Maison de Caen"; Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 13-4.

[70] Ibid. "Historique de la Maison de Dieppe". Cf. Chas. Robbillard Beaurepaire, Recherces sur l'instruction publique dans le diocese de Rouen avant 1789, Vol. II, 1872, pp. 367-8.

[71] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 14; and Motherhouse Archives, LI t, u, v, statistics dated 1779.

but retained the use of the premises during his lifetime. He declared that if he were still living in six years time, he would house the Brother at his own expense. Thus, it was that the school was opened in 1742. Father Girard did not die until 1771.[72]

Matters proceeded in Avranches much as they did in Cherbourg, but without the long delay. Gabriel Artur who, for fifty-seven years (from 1704 to 1761), was pastor of the principal parish in Avranches, on the 24th of August, 1743 donated an annuity of 300 livres to the Brothers provided that the Superior-general send two Brothers to teach the poor boys of the entire city tuition-free. Classes began the following October in a house given by Father Artur [73] to serve both as a school and as a residence for the Community, which was regularized in 1749 by the addition of a third Brother and another 100 livres of income. "The Big Hats" was the familiar name that the people of Avranches gave the teachers who wore the huge, three-cornered hat that was part of the Brothers' characteristic silhouette.[74]

It will have been noticed, of course, that individual initiatives were at the origin of the schools in Normandy. In this wealthy province the inhabitants' generosity was lavish, and local personalities assumed the leadership; so that people in high places had little or no reason to intervene. Bishops gave their consent, and some times their silent cooperation, to the decisions of their pastors. Cities came to easy agreement with founders. There is no evidence that superintendents needed to be petitioned to enforce the royal will, as was the case in the South of France. Normandy, in the time of Brother Timothy, was a region open to the Brothers' peaceful conquest and uncontested progress.

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It was not quite the same thing in neighboring Brittany. Not that here men of goodwill or zealous alliances were in short supply. As we shall see these were indeed active. Here, however, one ran up against a certain diffidence, a kind of irascibility of manner, lively and volatile temperaments, as well as obvious monetary difficulties. The Parlement in Rennes was openly hostile to the Brothers; and, in their relations with them, the cities were neither encouraging nor generous. In 18th century Brittany the winds of revolt, a stubborn resistance that strove to assert independence, were omnipresent. "We have here the beginning of mischief-making in the kingdom; and every tree must bear its own fruit", wrote the Duke, Marshall Estrees from Rennes to the Controller-general, Le Peletier on the 28th of September, 1728, the day after the opening of Brittany Estates. [75]It was the judgment of a man of whom Bretons had reason to complain and who had no love for them. Nevertheless, it's impossible to resist the reflection that, on certain occasions, his was the fitting description. In the end, Brittany would become strongly attached to the patient and devoted teachers whose robust virtues were so much like their own; totally absorbed by Catholicism, when the time came, Brittany would become the soil from which would spring numerous vocations to the Institute.

But before that happened, there were some rather rude confrontations. The Brothers appealed to the representatives of the central government. In this respect, they did get a hearing, and the Superintendent of the region of Rennes and the Governor of the province were among their most notable defenders. From 1735 to 1753 Jean Baptist Elias Camus Pontcarré, Lord Viarme, was the king's man in Brittany. Son of Nicholas Peter Pontcarré, the friend of John Baptist de La Salle, and the brother of Geoffrey Pontcarré, he shared his family's friendship for the Brothers. Having entering the Parlement of Paris at the age of twenty, Master of Petitions in the king's Council and, at the age of thirty-five, Superintendent in Brittany, he was the worthy bearer of a great tradition. Pocquet has written of him that he was "a clear-and fair-minded man, with a dominating and resolute character".[76]

As for the Governor, whose title during this period was almost totally honorific and whose functions were reduced mainly to pomp and display on ceremonial occasions, he did nevertheless inherit

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[72] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 87-9, according to a note on the Christian Brothers' school in Vire, which Lucard found in the Departmental Archives of La Manche; and "Historique des Maisons de Normandie", in the Motherhouse Archives HB s 246. "Historique des Maisons de Normandie". Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 89-90.

[73] He died suddenly during this year, at the age of 90.

[74] Motherhouse Archives, "Historique des Maisons de Normandie"; Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 132.

[75] National Archives, H, 250.

[76] In his Histoire de Bretagne, Vol. VI, 1914, pg. 212.

some real influence from his kinship with royalty. And his Christian conscience, his lively concern for what touched the interests of religion, inclined him to come to the aid of the simple servants of the Church and the people, even the most obscure. Louis, Duke of Orleans (of whom we have already made mention in connection with the schools in Chartres) was "granted the government of Brittany" in 1738, during the minority of his cousin, Louis John-Marie Bourbon, Duke Penthievre, to whom the responsibility rightfully fell after the resignation of his father Louis Alexander Bourbon, Count Toulouse.[77]

Pontcarré Viarme's first intervention on behalf of the Brothers is recorded in a letter of the 27th of November, 1736, addressed to the Mayor and Supervisors of Nantes. The latter were worried sick about charging the city with a subsidy that their predecessors in 1724 had granted the Brothers with the consent of M. de Brou.[78] In 1736, their refusal was explicit. Brother Joseph, the Director, informed Pontcarré, who ordered the magistrates "to make up a fund" of three hundred livres, as in the previous years, "and pass a resolution to this effect, of which he would approve".[79]

Nantes complied for three years running. On the 3rd of February, 1738 there is proof of the payment of 310 livres granted to the school-Brothers...as a charity, without precedent for the future, in conformity with the orders of the Bureau, dated the 18th of December, 1737.[80]

But, in 1739, the Director, Brother Milaine, wrote to Pontcarré Viarme: The Brothers of the Christian Schools teaching in Nantes have so often received the proofs of your goodness and patronage that they dare once again to appeal to you in the unpleasant circumstance to which the hardship of the times and the cooling of the charity among the faithful have reduced them. In past years you have won them some relief; and City Hall has, in accord with your intentions, helped them to survive...They have learned, sadly, that this year and perhaps forever hereafter, the city will be unable to grant them this gratuity. You know, Sir, that however modest the Brothers' expenses, they need at least bread, water, a place to live and something to wear: that, however, is what is on the verge of being taken from them... The public is perfectly satisfied with their way of teaching, which has produced a complete transformation in the youth with whom they have become involved. But the public as a rule is beside itself with admiration for the good things that are done, without being excessively concerned with those who procure those good things. Please, then, to take the poor Brothers under your protection. They will add this new obligation to all those that they have already received from your illustrious family, which they regard as they would their mother.[81]

The Superintendent acted without delay. Since the people in Nantes opposed him with the weapons of inertia, he appealed directly to the Minister. On the 11th of May, Count St. Florentine wrote from Manly to the Gentlemen of the City Bureau: The king was surprised and rather disedified to observe the difficulties you raise about continuing the customary gratuity to the Brothers of the Christian Schools...especially since the gifts from the City are considerable. You shall not fail to inform me of the reasons for this situation, so that an explanation can be given to His Majesty who regards these institutions of great usefulness.

In his reply the Mayor conceded the Brothers' "selflessness" and the excellent results of their efforts with the young. What, then, would he charge them with in order to explain the attitude of his compatriots toward the Brothers? The diminished income of the taxpayers. "All the schoolmasters, solid townsmen, natives or adoptive inhabitants of this city, who bear its expenses" and pay taxes complain "daily of the way their pupils are leaving them". And, further, the Congregation of St. Yon did not have "Letters Patent" for Brittany!

These were obviously shabby arguments. And the Minister, in Council, reported them to the king, who viewed them accordingly:

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77 The youngest son of Louis XIV and Madame Montespan. For the list of Superintendents and Governors of Brittany, see the Inventory in the Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, Series C, t. I.

78 See above, pg. 52.

79 Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG, 662.

80 Ibid., CC, 212.

81 Ibid., GG, 662. Copy of the "petition", dated "1799".

“I shall not conceal from you (St. Florentine replied to the city magistrates) that His Majesty found a little too much obstinacy in your position...He has directed me to order you...to pay, in accordance with the regulation of the Superintendent, the sum of 300 livres to the Brothers, which you shall not fail to do immediately.”[82]

It was a severe reprimand. However, it proved to be insufficient. Brother Melaine's requests and petitions were repeated year after year: a whole file of them exists in the Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine,[83] among the administrative documents of the Rennes Intendancy, along with the interventions and observations of Pontcarré Viarme, Count St. Florentine, the Duke of Orleans and Chancellor Aguesseau. However, it must be admitted that the Brothers' Community in Nantes was in a rather false situation, since it had never obtained official approval from the municipal corporation. It stood in violation of the Edict of 1666 -- a fact that had been pointed out by Cardinal Fleury, the Prime Minister, who was personally sympathetic to the Brothers in the tuition-free schools, but who was also bound to uphold the law. The Duke of Orleans wrote to Pontcarré on the 5th of November, 1731: No matter how much I might wish to please the Brothers, Cardinal Fleury's last letter has put it out of my power to take any step regarding the gratuity they are seeking. St. Florentine, after writing in such strong terms to the people in Nantes, had to beat a hasty retreat: “His Eminence did not think it appropriate to force the (city) to incur this expense by some sort of order, but he thought it well that the Superintendent exhort (the municipality) to treat the Brothers as it had done the year before. It was in order "to make" these obstinate people "understand" that this sum was no great thing...and that there was a sort of hardheartedness in withdrawing it (from the beneficiaries) at a time when (they) need it most of all.”[84]

We are here at the heart of Fleury's shrewdness, his distaste for the heavy hand and his system which, for the most part, was one of "watching and waiting". On this occasion, its success was zero. On the 20th of January, 1744, Viarme indicated to the Chancellor that the Gentlemen in Nantes were still persisting in their refusal, and that they were basing their position on the late Cardinal's decision.

But the Brothers did not move. Lacking help from the local administration (which, of course, allowed them to stay on as long as it did not have to pay them), they were able to rely upon the assistance from the bishops. Bishop Christopher Louis Turpin Crisse Sanzay, in his will dated the 16th of May, 1746, made them the heirs to a legacy of 2,000 livres,[85] to which were added a variety of acts of generosity from people in the diocese.[86] Four years earlier an agreement with Bishop Sanzay had the effect of strengthening the school in Nantes, and even of obtaining through royal decree outright enfranchisement for the Brothers. For a long time, the Community had been miserably housed on Rue St. André in a residence that was too small for it. In a petition addressed on the 4th of June, 1738, to the Mayor and the Supervisors, Brother Melaine complained about this situation.[87] In 1742, outside the walls of the busy, teeming, space-poor city, standing between the Loire and the Erdre, the State was clearing a piece of land in what was called "the Mercoeur trenches". The Director asked for it as the site on which to build a structure that would serve both the Community and the school.

Deputy Durocher wrote to the Superintendent: “I do not see how this institution is a detriment to anybody; and I do not believe that the mayor in any way opposes it.” And he referred to the Brothers as useful and edifying. He continued: “But since it is to be feared that they may eventually lose their primitive fervor, it has been thought wise that this project be undertaken in the name of the Bishop of Nantes, who is their immediate superior, which would always enable his successors to give the schools to others, in the event that these Brothers fail to live up to their commitments.”[88]

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[82] Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG, 662.

[83] Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, Superintendency, C, 1317.

[84] St. Florentine to Pontcarré Viarme, Versailles, 12th of June, 1741

[85] Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4, outline of a contract that mentions this legacy.

[86] Especially those of two priests by the name of Lorido, the Marquesse Coetmadeuc, Lady Claire Le Breton, and the widow Marchand. (Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4). See below, pg. 448.

[87] Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG, 662.

[88] Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, C 2461, Superintendency of Brittany, Supplement.

Conveyance, then, was made to Bishop Sanzay "and his successors" in consideration of "a qui-rent of three livres to be paid annually to His Majesty's estate. But, as the decree passed in Privy Council on the 26th of June, 1742, explained, the purpose of the transaction was "to bind the Brothers of St. Yon totally to Nantes" and to locate the charity schools "which are extremely necessary",[89] in a proper and convenient place.

It was the prerogative of ecclesiastical authority to confer ownership of property upon the Institute. Such was the purpose of the unilateral declaration issued on the 9th of February, 1751, by Bishop Pierre Mauclerc Musanchere.[90] With episcopal approval, the Brothers had already put up their buildings with the help of funds provided by "several pious persons". Bishop Musanchere "allowed (the Brothers) to move into the building", while continuing to make use of a house they had received from "the late M.Barbere...near St. Andrew's Chapel in the neighborhood and parish of St. Clement". They were assuming responsibility for:1)maintaining and improving these properties;2)teaching every day of the year, except Sundays, Feastdays, and customary holidays, six classes, morning and afternoon...(namely) two in the neighborhood and parish of St. Clement, two in the parish of the Holy Cross, situated in the city, and two in the neighborhood of St. Similien, in the newly built house.

The upkeep, repairs and eventual expansion of the facilities placed a heavy burden upon the shoulders of mere users who (as the declaration stipulated) would have no indemnification in the event that their precarious tenure was terminated. How would the Brothers in Nantes, devoid of funds and refused municipal subsidization, face up to these expenses? Indeed, how would they live? The Bishop gave them permission "to take up collections". Thus, the educational work would depend pretty nearly totally on casual alms. Furthermore, even these would be cut off when episcopal councils would decide that "the faithful's generosity had been sufficient to put the Brothers in a position to forego the collections".[91] The promise of such an uncertain future induced the Brothers in Nantes to plan a residence school "in the Mercoeur trenches".

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As we move on from Nantes to Rennes we see the Brothers struggling with the same problems. They had to follow in the footsteps of their master: and the story of the Founder, criticized, suspected, condemned by the courts, but all the while guiding his project toward its goal was recapitulated in the history of the Institute. Rennes, which had not always been soft on preachers, even when they were her own sons (time was when Louis Grignion had met with indifference and contempt there), Rennes, frequently turbulent, aggressive and frivolous under the appearance of seriousness, made the lowly Brothers suffer, even more so than did Nantes, which, when it was least merciful, continued to be civil.

The capital of Brittany arose more beautiful from the frightful fire that ravaged it in 1720, destroying 850 houses in the heart of city. There it stood proud, with its new neighborhoods, orderly and solemn, on the banks of the Vilaine, and with its public buildings, its superb Courts of Law where the sometimes agitated meetings of Provincial Estates were held, and with its people who appeared to live quietly but who suddenly broke out into riot and revolts of irrepressible violence.

Its Bishop was Louis Guy Guerapin Vaureal, "the handsomest man of his time", according to the writer Charles Colle. As President of the Estates of Brittany, Vaureal was an able politician. He exhibited an appetite for action, accompanied by ambition and an ability to deal with people. In 1740, he was [92]Ambassador to the Spanish Court. Witty, a brilliant conversationalist, he was elected to the French Academy in 1749. He was rather rarely seen in his diocese: *infrequens fait*, as the *Gallia christiana* puts it. Still, he had some zeal: as a disciple of Cardinal Bissy, he combatted the Jansenists and took strong measures against "the Appellants"; he also published a diocesan catechism. There was a sort of goodness about him, "a proverbial charity". Endowed with wealthy abbeys, he died poor, because he distributed his income and capital widely.[93]

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[89] Vol. XIV, col. 765 (Haureau's continuation

[90] Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG, 662.

[91] There was a proposed contract in 1750 (Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire G-4); the Brothers did not accept all of its provisions and this is probably why the Bishop preferred a declaration which imposed his wishes. 3 Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4.

[92] Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4.

[93] Pocquet, Histoire de Bretagne, Vol. VI, pp. 202-3.

By affection and conviction he tended to be sympathetic to the Christian Brothers. Faithful to the memory of the Cardinal-Bishop of Meaux, he invited the Brothers to Rennes in 1738.[94] But he didn't take the trouble to have them approved by the city corporation; and his absences prevented him from defending them effectively. He could not be relied upon when the Brother had to defend themselves against hostile appetites.

They had hardly accepted the prelate's invitation when middle-class sentiments concerning them became perfectly clear. The Brothers had declared, however, that "they would never ask anything from the city", that "they would not be a burden to it". The municipal 'community' "had been formally opposed to their foundation". It had invoked the famous Edict of 1666. The Parlement of Brittany, immediately informed, rendered a judgment (based on the conclusions of the king's Procurator-general) that "forbade the Brothers of the Christian Schools from establishing themselves in Rennes" and ordered that they be forced to withdraw according to the ways and to the extent indicated by the ordinances, edicts, declarations and regulations.

Most of this was, of course, so much wet gunpowder. One must "endure" intruders "out of respect for the protection that their superior power carries with it".[95] Was this an allusion to episcopal power? Probably higher than that, to judge by the petition that the Director, Brother Gaspard, sent on the 10th of November, 1741, to Duke Louis of Orleans. In a stately style, the Brother suggested that His Royal Highness, "concerned for the misfortunes of fathers and mothers burdened with dissolute children" and "inspired by the heavenly insights in all his activities", could contribute to the founding of a school and "of a house like the one that our dear Brothers have in Rouen" on "a piece of land outside the walls, belonging to His Majesty". This is what "the public" is saying (*vox populi*,*vox Dei!).* Success would be total if, through the Prince's influence, the "Letters Patent" granted to St. Yon were extended throughout the realm.[96]

But the petition was badly timed, and it came close to spoiling everything. Handed on by the Duke to Pontcarreé Viarme, and by the Superintendent to the Mayor of Rennes, it aroused half-dormant passions. The city owned the public land; and it argued vigorously against the Brother's request for any of it. The Brothers could not "establish any institution in Rennes", and they were "incompetent to receive any gift". Three-quarters of the property in the city and in the suburbs was "already owned by persons under mortmain, who contribute neither to housing nor to the staging of troupes...nor to poll-tax, nor night-watches, nor patrols, nor any other assessment". Moreover, the public lands, through an abuse of which the mayor and the supervisors complained bitterly, were nearly all subject to tolls; the inhabitants were free to use only the "Champs-Elyssés, (for thirty years) reserved as a public park".[97]

The municipal authorities concluded on the 7th of December, 1741: Thus, (even if the Brothers of the Christian Schools were legalized as the result of the registration of the "Letters Patent" and they were as useful as some people think them useless, the city is powerless to grant them land. And, adding insult to injury, the representatives of the city of Rennes qualified the kind words that Brother Gaspard had put into the mouths of their fellow-citizens as "myths".[98]

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[94] In the curious "Journal of a 17th Century Burger in Rennes or the Book of the Account of the Families of Bordeaux and Duchemin", the original manuscript of which belongs to the Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine (F.306), we read on page 268: "On the 2nd of September, 1683, the Brothers of Charity, called the`Freres Ignorantins', were brought to Rennes to teach poor boys tuition-free." This passage has created a problem, not about the date of the arrival of De La Salle's disciples at Rennes (There can be no question of there presence there in 1683, when the Institute had only just begun), but concerning the existence of a charity school prior to the work of De La Salle and still maintained by "Brothers". It is well to note that additions were made in the 18th century to the text as edited by its original author , the notary, Rene Duchemin, who died in Rennes (as mentioned in the Journal) "on the 9th of May, 1695". We have singled out a number of these additions, identifiable through the handwriting and incontrovertible because of the events referred to in them (v.g., the fire of 1720). The remark concerning the "Ignorantins" is in the same handwriting as the reference to the fire (pg. 161). The interpolator's source seems to have been the "Historical Collection" by the town clerk, Giles Languedoc, an 18th century manuscript (Municipal Library of Rennes, no. 485.).

[95] Municipal Archives of Bermes, no. 534-a, "Community Register", 1741

[96] Ibid., copy of Brother Gaspard's letter

[97] Ibid., loc. cit

[98] Copy of a letter from Brother Gaspard

Somewhat earlier Cardinal Fleury had declared in favor of the strict interpretation of the Edict of 1666. The Duke of Orleans and Viarme were thus as powerless in Rennes as they were in Nantes. This is exactly what they came to understand in their exchange of letters on the 19th and 31st of December.[99]

Nevertheless, the royal government meant to put an end to the bickering. Count St. Florentine, in a letter dated the 15th of April, 1742, called upon the Superintendent of Brittany to inform the inhabitants of Rennes that His Majesty believed the legalization of the Brothers to be "a good and useful thing"; that as a consequence, they must not be "disturbed"; and that "far from forcing their withdrawal", the city "must urge them to remain", because of the advantages they bring "to the city and to the public". [100]

As Viarme had noted,[101] in the absence of "Letters Patent" in the Parlement of Rennes, it was impossible to do more. The Brothers survived on subsidies from the Bishops. Over and above, Bishop Vaureal had obtained for them from the Estates of the Province an annual subsidy of 500 livres, which was discontinued after the death of their benefactor. Finally, they were able to purchase a house and, with it, some income; and the city, having long observed the Brothers at work, decided to put them in its budget for 200 livres. They were receiving this sum prior to 1770. At the time there were eight Brothers, and they were teaching about 600 boys in the parochial schools of St. Germain, St. Helier and All Saints.[102]

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Under Brother Timothy schools were also opened at Le Croisie Brest, St. Brieue and St. Malo. But in these four cities the schools began with the cooperation or consent of the cities. In Le Croisie, there was direct agreement between the Institute and a meeting of the inhabitants brought together for this purpose on the 22nd of November, 1735, by the Mayor Pierre Tenguy, Lord Pargumel. Unfortunately, the small city could only guarantee 100 livres in salary to each of the two teachers, which was obviously inadequate. The Brothers had to beg alms. Toward the middle of the century, when food prices rose, they experienced extreme poverty. The city considered giving them an additional fifty livres apiece by abolishing an contribution to the physician from municipal funds. The region, through its representatives, believed that "it could get along without a physician,but not without a Christian school". The proposal, however, came to nothing; and the Brothers, having come to Le Croisic in 1737, were obliged, twenty years later, "to abandon their dear pupils", whose "disposition to piety" and "qualities of mind and heart, natural" (as they asserted) to this beautiful people, they so greatly appreciated. Their departure continued to be lamented by the Deputy-delegate, Benoit, wrote, in 1775, to the Superintendent, Gaspard Louis: We shall miss the Christian Brothers whom I brought here from Nantes...on the orders of the late Pontcarré Viarme, your predecessor; they trained excellent young men for the sea and for business. Upon leaving the schools (the youngsters) entered the Bouguers' school (a maritime academy). In the Nantes River the city (of Croisic) has a nursery for competent sailors and the State for pilots and captains of privateers.[103]

In the great port of Brest the Brothers from St. Yon, chosen to fulfill the same functions and feeding intelligent, well-trained and disciplined recruits to the royal navy,[104] also knew some precarious moments, but proved durable; for which the Brothers were indebted to the generous legacy of a naval lieutenant, John Louis Hennot. The Hennot legacy, of the 10th of March, 1740, enabled the Brothers to purchase a house. On the 5th of February, 1743, a contract was drawn up between Brother Timothy and the municipal corporation. The salary of each teacher (at first only two were assigned) came to 200 livres. The Brothers, employed in perpetuity, could not be dismissed as long as they observed the precepts of the orthodox religion and their rule.

On this point, the decision would be left to the Bishop of Laon. After a number of delays, arising, apparently, from opposition in the Parlement of Rennes, registration of the "Letters patent" for the school was obtained. The school opened on the 1st of March, 1746, on busy and noisy Rue Siam. Later on an

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99 Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, C, 1317.

100 Ibid

101 In a letter addressed to the Duke of Orleans C, 2461.

102 Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, C, questions put to them by Father Bonteville, April, 1770".
on the 19th of October, 1742. Departmental Archives cf.1317 "report by the Brothers in Rennes in response to Vicar-general of the diocese, in his letter of the 10th of…..

103 Archives of the Mother House Establishment of the Brothers in Brittany

104 ibid

annex was built in the Recouvrance neighborhood, where each day two teachers, went, crossing the roadstead on "the admiral's gig".[105]

There appeared before notaries in St. Brieuc on the 3rd of September, 1746, Jean-Baptist Kersalious Plessis, Dean and first officer of the Cathedral church...and Brother Denis, Director or the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rennes...who, with the consent and under the authority of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Lord Hervé Nicolas Thepeault Breignon, Bishop of St. Brieuc..., and with the agreement of the Gentlemen of the Chapter of the Cathedral church...and of the community of the townspeople and the inhabitants of that city, agreed to open a school that would include three Brothers. Father Kersalious provided a capital sum of 10,000 livres. On the following October 19th, Canon Brohel, also authorized by the Chapter and the municipality, signed a deed ceding his property, "The Blue Ribbon", on Rue Vicariate, to the Institute.[106]

The school in St. Malo began in the same year. The mayor had announced to "the assembly of the community of inhabitants" in a meeting on the 31st of December, 1744, that a person zealous for the education of the youth of this city (planned to open a tuition-free school), administered by the Brothers of the Christian Schools...from St. Yon. (An annual salary) on the income from an adequate endowment of which he himself would be the security (would be supplied by the person in question) as long as (the teachers) worthily fulfilled the obligations of their Institute. The assembly raised no objections but specified that "under no conditions were the Brothers to become a burden to the city" .[107]

In brief, the people of St. Malo welcomed De La Salle's disciples. At one time their clergy had been completely "Jansenized" by Bishop Desmaretz, who showed little enthusiasm for Father de Montfort's preaching. But his successor, Bishop La Bastie, with a quite different mind, worked to rebuild the overall authority of the Holy See: and he considered himself fortunate to find the Brothers willing to help in carrying on an active propaganda in popular circles.

The founder of the school was a layman, Jean-Baptist Louis Goret Trandourie. By the 25th of June, 1745, he had received episcopal approval for his project. Right up to his death he was involved with the success of the school, to which, on two different occasions, he had granted an increase in income.

Thus, in spite of winds and high water, the introduction of De La Salle's work into Brittany was accomplished. In St. Malo and St. Brieuc on the North Coast, in Brest up to the tip of the peninsula, in Nantes on the Lower Loire, in Rennes, the agricultural capital, the Brothers were in possession of the principal points in the region in which the French language was spoken. Like trees battered by the wind, they had often to bow their heads; but, gathering themselves together, in a posture both of resignation and resistance, they thrusts themselves more deeply into the soil. Their schools were nothing much to look at: even the residence school in Nantes (as we shall have occasion to note) could not bear comparison with the more prosperous ones in St. Yon, Maréville, Marseille and Angers. But perhaps the roots of the Institute were only the more deeply sunk into this rugged earth.

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Before leaving the western provinces, there remains something to be said about the beginnings of the Christian Brothers on the banks of the Maine, in the clear, thin air of Anjou.

Describing the city of Angers at the start of the reign of Louis XVI, Pean Tuilerie notes that "near Lesviere (a district situated at the gates of the city, on a hill overlooking the river) there is a house belonging to the Christian Schools, popularly called "Providence'. The author continues: This Community owes its existence to Bishop Vaugirault...who brought these Brothers from St. Yon in Rouen in 1741 in order to guide the young, to teach them their letters, how to read, write, calculate, how to keep books and accounts, but especially to inspire them to piety, goodness and religion, which is a great advantage, and

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[105] Motherhouse Archives HB s 633 les Etablissements des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes en Bretagne et en Anjou (Ms. assembled with the help of local documents). For the school in Le Croisic, the documents are taken from the Municipal Archives of that region, Series B b.).

[106] 2 The statute of the 8th of October, 1721 had determined upon the opening of special schools in Toulon, Brest and Rochefort, in order to train "naval penmen" who would form a pool of subordinate officers.

[107] Municipal Archives of St. Malo, GG, 320.

which does not exist in schools where the young, left to themselves, often lose much regarding morals and gain very little knowledge.[108]

The Brothers had a precursor at Lesviere in the person of a priest who was totally devoted to the cause of education. François Chollet, born in Angers in 1659 (and, as a consequence, within a few years of being a contemporary of John Baptist de La Salle) had in about 1685 been assigned to direct the young people in the diocesan seminary. He did not restrict himself to this role, but was eager to spread colleges throughout the region. He began or rebuilt colleges in Chateau-Gontier, Baupreau, Bourgueil, Pouance, Doue, and Beaufort. Besides this, he was interested in primary schools and opened one in his native parish of the Trinity and others in St. Michael's and St. Martin's. He supplied the schools he started with classical texts, purchasing them with his own funds or having them printed at his own expense.

He was also involved in a shelter, called "the Clog School", where a layman by the name of Julian Hamon admitted "beggars, run-aways and the dissolute" in order to teach them religion and a trade. This school, after a change of location, was situated in 1723 in the Lesviere district. Francçois Chollet never wanted for problems. Hamon, fleeing the place, went off to Nantes to finish his days as a prison guard in Chateau-Gontier. On the 15th of March, 1724, Father Collet deeded the property over to the Bishop in order to open a charity school on the site. Stricken with premature senility, the poor man finally died in 1730; and even at Lesviere his work had become little more than a memory.[109]

Jean Vaugirault, whom his diocese venerated, also sought the good of souls. Three years after the Brothers' arrival, he decided to turn the old school over to them. He had originally employed the Brothers in the Trinity parochial school, where Brother Yon (moved from his assignment in Vire) did wonders, as he had done in Normandy. The introduction of the Brothers to Lesviere seemed to have involved as an immediate consequence the obligation of admitting "delinquents". In 1745, the royal government sent several priests under "secret letters" (*Lettres de cachet*). Families in Angers succeeded in getting their sons confined to the institution. The presence of these undesirables in a school (which, for financial reasons, would presently be admitting paying resident students) became the source of severe difficulties. And the open hostility of the city corporation further complicated the situation. But the history of these vicissitudes and their solutions belongs to another period.

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The most distant reach into the West was the departure of Brothers for North America. Canadian "New France", where a vast field was opening up to evangelization and Christian civilization. For a century the Jesuits had been at work there, where they had early been joined by the Sulpicians. The Brothers' place seemed obvious alongside these Religious "Companies" united to their new Society by so many strong ties. An entire nation of simple French people awaited them, as well as a temporal and spiritual future of great promise.

Unfortunately, circumstances were not favorable. In 1718 the request of Brother Charron (the Quebec resident who had become the founder of hospitals and schools) after a sympathetic audience with Brother Barthélemy, had met with the insurmountable obstacle of De La Salle's query: "What are you doing?" And this rejection, at first enigmatic, placed a damper on the courageous spirits who were on the threshold of a worrysome adventure.[110]

Charron died in 1719 on the boat that was being readied to leave La Rochelle to return him to Canada. In about 1721, his successor, Brother Christian, came to the mother-country to recruit school teachers. He besought the Brothers in St. Sulpice to lodge and train nine young men who wished to return to Canada with him. A short time later, one of these recruits thought that his real vocation was with the Christian Brothers, and the Institute retained him for France. As for the others, we do not know how Brother Christian was able to use them. He was still in Paris in 1724 at grips with inextricable financial problems.

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[108] Ibid., GG, 333. "Petition of the Brother of St. Maio to the Parlement of Rennes", 15th of June, 1773, with the view of confirming deeds of gift. Description of the City of Angers, 1778, pg. 138

[109] Father Charles Urseau, L'instruction primaire avant 1789 dans les paroisses du ciocese actuel d'Angers, 1890, pp. 185-7; and Thorode, Notice de la vale d'Angers, (Ms. 879 Angers Library, published in 1897 by E.L.), pp. 374-5.

[110] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 355-356.

Nine years later, the Canadian community of the "Charron Brothers", reduced to a few members and overwhelmed by debts, was on the verge of collapse. Its representative, Brother Gervais, made the same European crossing as his predecessors. Received at St. Yon, he explained a plan to Brother Timothy: De La Salle's Institute was to assume the responsibility for putting the work of Jean Francis Charron back on its feet. The Superior-general was not a man to recoil before a bold enterprise *ad ntajorem Dei gloriam*. But in this instance, more so than in others, he thought that a preliminary inquiry was indicated.

From the Minister of the Navy he obtained passage to North America for Brothers Denis (Louis Le Doux), previously Director in Boulogne, and Pacifique (Nicolas Francis Caron). They were to inquire how schools might be opened, how local recruitment might be begun, and what was the real situation of the alms house maintained in Montreal by Charron's successors. However, this institution's creditors were only waiting for the signing of the contract (that had already been drawn up between the Charron Brothers and the Christian Brothers) in order to attach the property at St. Yon. There were conversations. But Brother Timothy broke off negotiations and, in 1737, recalled Brothers Denis and Pacifique to France. And, in spite of further intervention on the part of the Governor of Montreal, Boisberthelot Beaucour, who sent a petition signed by a number of distinguished people to the Minister Maurepas demanding the presence of the St. Yon Brothers in Canada, the Superior-general did not change his mind.[111]

It can hardly be assumed that the Superior-general was aware of another plan (perhaps, we should call, rather, an explicit wish) outlined in 1742 by a co-worker of Bienville in Louisiana, the paymaster Slamon, who had hoped the Brothers would open an elementary school in New Orleans. He wrote: Such a school is all the more necessary in that here there are nothing but soldiers who do not even know how to teach children their ABC's. The teachers, who would cost only $600.00 a year, would be housed without cost to the king on a piece of land, close to the church, which was granted to a businessman who was hired to put up the buildings for this school...[112]

A day would come when the voice of the New World would resound much more urgently. De La Salle's disciples would answer these calls which would brook no delay. They would then hasten to the St. Lawrence in the Canada that would remain faithful to the Catholic Church and the French language, even after the treaties that would separate it from the mother-country. They would speed also into Louisiana, become an integral part of the United States of America, and to the Mississippi, which had been discovered by a close-relation of the Founder, a native of Laon and the son of Rose de La Salle, Father Jacques Marquette.

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111 Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 99-101 and the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for November, 1907, pp. 367-9, following Blain, Vol. II, pg. 115. Naval Archives, dispatches from 1733-1736. Vie de Mme d'Yonville, foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Villemarie, by Father Faillon, 1852, pp. 16-29. See also Rivista Lasalliana, for March, 1938, "Cento anno di attivita lasaliana nel Canada", pg. 108-10.

112 Documents in possession of The Louisiana Historical Society, (Margy Ms. Vol. III, pg. 70) and published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April, 1926, pp. 137-8.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Schools in the East

When, in 1771, the Brother Superior-general divided the schools of the Institute into three Provinces, each with its own headquarters, he grouped the schools and Communities of the "Eastern Province" around an institution in Lorraine -- Maréville. For the convenience and clarity of our account, we are setting the clock ahead a little; and after studying the schools in the South of France and those in the Paris region and in the West, we are concluding our itinerary and explanations with the third and last sector, the East. Our only guide, however, is geography. Since we are writing about a period that greatly antedates Brother Florence's arrangements, we are completely ignoring the administrative division which, for reasons of statistical balance, historical tradition or expediency, included Ardres and Abbéville, for instance, in the Eastern Province, and joined Moulins with the West -- a city which, depending at the time upon the diocese of Autun, might have been included with Bourgogne in a district that included Champagne, Lorraine and the Franche-Comte.

In the light of these remarks, we recall that in 1725, to the east of a line drawn, approximately, from Guise to Allier, the Institute was already established in Rheims, Rethel, Troyes, Auxonne and Dijon. To these five cities we add Moulins, located outside the Paris region and outside the southern provinces.

Rheims, the Christian Brothers' "Holy City", with its satellite, Rethel, takes us back to the heroic days. From the beginning of the century, Troyes and Dijon welcomed the teachers sent there by De La Salle. Auxonne witnessed the death of Brother Gabriel Drolin in 1733. The Bourbon school had a special history: it was initiated by a priest, Louis Aubury, who was a teacher as well as a founder. The "tuition-free charity schools of the Holy Child Jesus of the City of Moulins" had "Letters Patent", obtained in June 1717 and registered in 1727, after delays inspired by the tenacious opposition of the directors of the hospital, local officials and the pastors of Yzeure. The Brothers had no share in this struggle, so courageously sustained by Father Aubery, who continued to guide and administer his school with the help of a Committee, until, in 1730, he died in his eighties.[1] Up to the Revolution his successors would be, like himself, priests assigned by the Bishop of Autun or by a Vicar-general especially responsible for this diocesan project. First, there was John Labanche (from 1730 to 1758) and then Jean Baptist Angoille (from 1758 to 1765), then Claude Gilbert Panay (from 1765 to 1779), and Claude Coujard (from 1779 to 1792). Under these four "Rectors" the school operated normally; the teachers were supplied by the Institute to the satisfaction of the Committee; and Christian Brothers' programs and methods were always in effect. In spite of the poverty in which the Brothers struggled, there was not even the suggestion of difficulties in the relations between the administrators, Superiors and the teaching personnel. Religious and educational interests were coordinated and did not conflict with one another. The organization planned as early as 1712 by Louis Aubery continued to exhibit its flexibility and strength.[2]

In Dijon, the Brothers continued to be supported by a family belonging to high officialdom, which Blain calls "a holy family". Claude Rigoley, "First President in the Office of Accounts" in Dijon, and founder of an elementary school in St. Pierre's parish, died in Paris in 1716 and was buried by his brother-in-law, Languet Gergy, pastor of St. Sulpice, in the St. Charles Chapel of that church. His widow, "the mother of the poor", and after her, their children, with the cooperation of one of their relatives M. Rochefort, Counsellor in Parlement, supported the school with their contributions and obtained salaries for more teachers.[3] In 1733, seven Brothers, approved by the Bishop's office in Langres and by the city of Dijon, taught in three neighborhoods of the city.[4]

It might be considered surprising that tuition-free and Christian schools did not grow in number in Champagne, the region in which the Institute originated. Without urging in this instance the Biblical text

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[1] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 251-264, the entire section devoted to Louis Aubery and the schools in Moulins

[2] See the Bulletin de l'Association Arnicale des Anciens eleves du Pensionnat Saint-Gilles, Moulins, for the years 1933-34, "Les Freres de Ecoles chretiennes de Moulins de 1710 a 1792", a series of very scholarly and well-documented articles by Brother Gustave of Mary.

[3] 1 Blain, Vol. I, pg. 45.

[4] At the time Dijon was not an episcopal See and was under the jurisdiction of the Duke/Bishop of Langres

nemo propheta acceptus est in patria sua, it is worthwhile noting that the center of the Lasallian Society moved westward beginning in 1688. The Ile-de-France and Normandy profited from most of the energy and the zeal of the Brothers, even from those of them whose roots were in the east.

We are, however, aware that Rheims, where the Founders' own family was not accidental to the prosperity of his work, remained an important center of religious and educational activity;[5] that since 1720 Troyes, with the approval of Bishop Bossuet, had added two schools to the one already existing in St. Nizier's parish which was begun by John Baptist de La Salle and François Le Bé in 1703.[6] And between 1717 and 1718 Rethel was edified by the virtues of an exemplary teacher, a disciple of, and a successor to, De La Salle.

Jean Robin, "a native of Viserny, near Montbard, in the diocese of Langres, and the son of Guillaume and Nicole Millerot",[7] entered the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1709 at the age of twenty-one. To him Father Blain devotes five pages of well-deserved commendation in his "Abridgment of the Lives of Some of the Brothers...Who Died in the Odor of Sanctity".[8] The biographer writes that "he had only a small share of the natural qualities that are thought valuable in mens` eyes". Grace made up abundantly for the lack of talent. As Brother Louis, the young teacher thought only of seeking God's will. Indifferent to the suggestions of self-love, without any personal ties, and ready to go wherever it pleased his superiors to use him, his every effort was bent upon the duties of his calling. His work was accompanied by continuous prayer. And his pupils, influenced by his presence even more than by his words, seemed like angels in the classroom. He prepared them so well for Confession that priests "were in admiration". The Dean of Rethel paid him the following tribute: “Children once so dissolute that they refused to go to Confession...since receiving Brother Louis' instructions, show the consequences in their conduct...There is no longer any difficulty in hearing their Confession...Through the clarity and sincerity of their examination of conscience, they made the confessor's task easier.”

But Brother Louis was wracked by an extremely severe case of articular rheumatism. Burning hot steam, a therapy which had succeeded for De La Salle and demanded the endurance of a saint, was prescribed for the ailment. But it did not restore the Brother to health, for whom walking or any movement required extraordinary courage. Should his foot strike a sharp rock, or should he take an awkward step, the pain he experienced was enough to send him into convulsions. To climb the fifteen steps that led to the entrance of St. Nicolas in Rethel, he needed the help of his pupils -- two of the strongest held him by the arms, while another supported his back. Zeal was his strong point: invalid though he was, he not only taught his classes, but on three different occasions he journeyed to St. Yon as a delegate to General Chapters.

His strength, however, was soon drained. The Brother Director in Rethel died at the age of forty, in March of 1728. Father Tanton, the Dean, speaking to the clerics assembled in the sacristy before the funeral, said: "We are going to fetch a saint, the holiest person in my parish." And when he went to collect the body, his tears prevented him from finishing the prayers. Jean Robin was buried on the 10th of March in the cemetery of St. Nicholas.

He was succeeded by Brother François (Georges Bertin) who had a long career at Rethel, where he successfully continued Brother Louis' educational mission. In 1729, he was given a house, which was enlarged and furnished for the use of the Community and school: -- the gift of Nicholas Barthélemy, a lawyer in Rethel. The city attorney and the Supervisors approved the gift and promised to continue their assistance and support to the teachers, "seeing the usefulness of the schools and the orderliness of the Brothers who taught in them".[9]

Brother François' burial certificate[10] reads like a funeral oration, in praise of the deceased and his Institute: “In this year of Grace, 1755, on the 12th day of November, we, the undersigned, Pierre Pillas, Priest, Bachelor of the Sorbonne, pastor and Dean of Rethel-Mazarin, assisted by the entire clergy, buried

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[5] See above, pp. 59-65.

[6] See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 236-237.

[7] 1 According to the burial certificate found in Bethel by M.J. Lefrancq

[8] Blain, Vol. II, Abrégé, pp. 80-4

[9] Municipal Archives of Bethel, resolution of the 30th of April, 1729, communicated by M. Lefrancq.

[10] Also communicated by M. Lefrancq.

in the cemetery of this parish, at the top of the stairway and ten paces forward, near St.Martin's Gate, the venerable Brother François, superior and Director of the Christian Brothers of this city[11] who died suddenly yesterday at seven o'clock, at the age of 75 years. He had been preparing for death all his life; on the morning of his death he had received Communion in the parish. Unknown to men, but known to God alone, he always did his duty; humble of heart, penitential, austere, hard-working, vigilant and dedicated to the schools, he did all he could to regenerate youth and to train for the Lord a people inspired by His love and by a holy fear of Him. he was a friend of the venerable Brother Louis, the superior of the Christian Brothers sent by De La Salle, the Founder. All three men worked in this new school, which is the cradle of all the schools spread throughout France today."[12]

* *

Only a single city in the province of Champagne joined the Congregation's spiritual domain during the thirty-one years of Brother Timothy's generalate.[13] This was Mezières. Like Rethel, the ancient city on the Meuse formed part of the Duchy of Mazarin, and it was through no fault of the Duke, Cardinal Mazarin's heir and first benefactor of the tiny society of teachers assembled by De La Salle, that it did not have its Brothers's school at the beginning of the 18th century. Father Louis Joseph Argy, who was pastor of Mezières from 1721 until the Revolution (for more than sixty years!), has left an "account" of the origins and early days of the project. The document is so delightful, so thorough, and so beautifully throws light on events and sets the characters in motion that we need only quote these lively lines in order to be transported into the authentic climate of the period.[14]

A lady named Mlle Nicole Colas Velly..,resident of Braux-sur-Meuse, on the edge of the Ardennes, after having for an entire year been occupied with instructing and catechizing poor children...,having revealed to the Community of the Brothers of the Christian and Charitable Schools of St. Yon in Rouen that she would be delighted if the children in the town of Braux...could be taught by them and if to this end (the Brothers) would be willing to accept an endowment to establish two (of them) in Braux, her proposal having been appreciated by the said Community, the said lady immediately revealed her intentions to the principal inhabitants...who, rather than seizing such a favourable opportunity...(disdained) to consider it. 'We like your Brothers very much', the peasants replied, 'but as for us, we do not want to contribute anything. If you want a house where you can have a couple of classrooms, buy one or have one built; we don't want to give anything towards it; it is useless to talk to us about it'. Others added the following argument: 'If you bring the Brothers to Braux for the education of the young, it will be said that our village is much more important than it really is, and they will raise our taxes. And what will happen to the teacher we have?" This last argument seemed to have carried the day with a good number of the inhabitants...The teacher was a relative of some of those...who had influence in Braux...

The scene is a masterpiece. We are really being made a party to the deliberations of a village enclave. We detect the anxiety and mistrust of the villagers, who fear the unpleasant surprises of tax reapportionment and do not concede (which is understandable enough) that their magister should lose his job.

Mlle Velly, "baffled by this graceless rejection" by her fellow-townsmen, "was not long without consolation in her anguish".

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[11] The text adds 'for forty years', but this is an obvious exaggeration. In 1715, Brother Francis was Director of the residence school for "Free" pupils at St. Yon. He was still in Normandy in June of 1718. (See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 341, 345, 354.) His function as Director at Bethel began only a few months before the death of Brother Louis, whose burial certificate he signed.
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[12] Father Pillas seems to mean that Bethel possessed the first Christian Brothers' school, which is hardly a fair statement of the case (See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 124-127), but local patriotism influenced this oversimplification of the facts.

[13] Meaux, of course, was a part of Champagne. But in the 18th century this city was included in the region of Paris and not in that of Chalon.

[14] Father Argy's account, dated the 10th of November, 1734, was copied in the Municipal Archives of Mezieres by Brother Bajulian, Director of the school in that city, who left to the Motherhouse Archives (Hb t 4) the manuscript history of this school, written in 1863; cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 42-8.

Brother Barthélemy,[15] Director of the charity schools in Rheims, having come to Mezières at the order of his superiors on some business for his Community, and acquainting, informally, certain respectable people of this town about the school that was to be opened in Braux...these people gave him to understand that he would be much better off convincing the said Mlle Velly to offer he endowment to the City of Mezières, (where) such schools would be welcomed with better grace...

Informed by the Brother, the donor refused to forsake her original project until after she had explained her position "judiciously" to the people of her village, "and seen them persist in their obstinacy". That done, she left them. We assist at her departure for Mezières and the eager reception accorded her by the people of that city.

She took the boat that follows the meanderings of the River Meuse. Brother Barthélemy was there to see her off. He himself reached the city on foot (at least a three hours' walk), where he arrived "long before the lady". The Supervisors, whom the Brother alerted, met Nicole Velly at the landing and accompanied her "to the home of one of them", to which "the town's leaders hastened to pay her their tokens of respect and friendship." The inhabitants...assembled immediately at the city hall, accepted the endowment. They all praised effusively the zeal of this lady; and each one attempted to show her, by everything he did, the full measure of his gratitude. She accepted the generous offer of free housing, without having to pay any municipal taxes. As she asked to be lodged near the parish church, accordingly, she was given comfortable quarters near the church. So great was the joy of the devout foundress with Mezières' response to her praiseworthy project, that she did not know to whom to tell it. On one occasion she was heard exclaiming: “I thank You, Providential Lord, because You have indeed willed to grant a happy issue to my hopes”. For its part, Mezieres rejoiced to have within its walls a person who provided so well for the education of youth.

It should be noted that nearly a year passed between Mlle Velly's initial decision and the actual appropriation of her money for the city's children. In a contract dated the 21st of August, 1731, Brother Barthélemy, empowered by Brother Timothy, accepted the endowment in the presence of Chevalier and his associate, notaries in the Principality of Arches and Charleville. On the 26th of July, 1732, a resolution was passed by the assembly of the City of Mezières. It mentions the cooperation of "Mlle Nicole Colas du Velly, a lady from Haulme and other places", the lack of enthusiasm in Braux, and the making over of a gift to the advantage of Mezières. According to a settlement reached by Jean-François Colin, Agent-procurator, the city granted the Brothers free housing, with a garden, located in the St.Julian district. A third teacher would be added to the two who had already been supplied: his salary would be the responsibility of the local authorities, who would charge the expense (110 livres in silver "and two measures of wheat") against the income from the Hospital. The school would be opened on the 1st of January, 1733, "according to the good pleasure of His Highness the Archbishop Duke of Rheims".

The documents reporting the proceedings bear the signatures of Brother Barthélemy, Nicole Colas Velly and Leseur, the Mayor of Mezières.[16] Brother Timothy countersigned a copy on the 27th of August. And Prince Armand Jules Rohan added his agreement, on condition, however, that "nothing be taken for the Brothers from the income of the Hospital nor from any other church property".[17]

Returning, now, to Father Louis Joseph Argy's account, the events of July, 1732, occurred "during a vacancy in the pastorate". The previous pastor of Mezières, Louis Ostence, had died on the 1st of June; his successor did not replace him until the 22nd of November. But once he arrived, he joined in the enthusiasm for the project; and we see him playing an active role in its realization.

He became immediately aware of the educational situation: “Most of the boys...especially the sons of the common people, are indescribably ignorant of their Christian obligations. Most of them know neither how to read nor write. There is nothing more uncouth than the young among the lower classes: they do not even know how to greet an honest man in the streets.”

The outgoing tutor continued to teach pending his dismissal. Evidently, he did not seem to be up to the demands made upon him. Father Argy writes that “sometimes I was required to visit the school teacher...to restore order; everything there was in confusion. Everybody thought that they had forever to bring these poorly disciplined children to the point of Christian obedience.”

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[15] Michel Le Gendre, whom we have met as a capitulant in 1725. He died, still Director of Mezieres, on the 24th of December 1743.

[16] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 7, Mezieres file. Three copies of the resolution are included in this file

[17] Loc. cit.. copy certified by Brother Timothy.

"Happily", people "were disabused". And the author goes on to describe the metamorphosis:

"The schools having been readied and furnished with the consent of Brother Barthélemy, the Director...and at the city's expense, which came to more that 2,000 livres (for it spared nothing in carrying out the donor's intentions), the children moved in carelessly, proud and determined to treat the new teachers as they had the old ones...

"On the Sunday before the opening of the schools, in my homily, I spoke of these new institutions...On opening day there was a Solemn High Mass to ask the Lord for the necessary graces...And the parish turned out in large numbers. After Mass, I went to the schools where, rather than speaking with the Brothers in a very loud voice so that we could hear one another in the midst of children in tumult, I whispered to them as though I did not want to be heard by the children, who, surprised by our behavior, suddenly fell into a profound silence."

With the cooperation of the pastor, one of the fundamental rules of the Lasallian Management had been invoked: the teacher's composure imposes order on the pupils; the noise-level drops in proportion to an inflexible resolution in favor of silence; order is reestablished by gesture and brief commands and by replacing numerous, individual interventions by a general rule.[18]

"The aforesaid Brothers thus gradually taught the rules of their schools (to the children), who, in less than six days, were trained to do what was expected of them...Parents were delighted with the transformation...The magistrates were congratulated on all sides. The boys, who had no respect for holy places, became models of piety when in them.."

In order to make school in fact obligatory, Father Argy, the city officers and the Brothers depended upon one another. The pastor writes: "We took means to constrain those who were absolutely unmanageable and obstinate in refusing to take advantage (of the school). All I had to do was mention it, and the magistrates took action immediately."

There follows a splendid eulogy of the very dedicated mayor and supervisors, whose prudent and productive administration deserved to be regarded as a model for future generations. The account concludes with Mlle Velly's funeral: "The pious foundress...having witnessed for a year and more the great advantages of these schools...died on the 29th of June, 1734. Mezieres was no less sensitive after her death of the good she had done than it had been when she was alive...The entire city in a body attended her funeral. A solemn service was held for her and it could be seen by the epitaph that was placed at the grave how grateful this city was for the least benefit done on its behalf. This is why I felt obliged to inform posterity so as to involve it always in praying for the repose of her soul."

To funds coming from Mlle Velly there were added in 1733 "inheritances" located in Warcq and belonging "to François and Jane Blin", for the support of the Community in Mezieres. François Blin (or Blein) was Brother Ambrose, Director of the reformatory at St. Yon and, subsequently, Director of the school in Marseille. Before entering the Institute (in 1693), he was assistant to the Provost in Warcq. Jane was his sister. Both planned to contribute to the support of the new school, close to their native region. The Superior-general wrote Brother Barthélemy on the 31st of August: "Brother Ambrose...expressed a great desire to see this matter brought to a conclusion...He and I trust that you will take all possible precautions, so that his sister remains in control of her property during her lifetime and that she is wanting in nothing in case of illness or infirmity...I ask you to greet the splendid Mlle Blein on my behalf..."[19]

Surrounded thus by eager concerns, the school in Mezières seemed to be soundly "endowed", when Mlle Velly's heirs, the Lords of Brieulle, challenged the will that their relative drew up on the 23rd of November in favor of the Brothers and in confirmation of her previous gift. They based their case of invalidity on the grounds that the powers delegated by the Superior-general to the Director of Mezières to receive the inheritance bore no evidence of the formal consent of the St. Yon Community. Brother Timothy had no difficulty proving that Benedict XIII's Bull empowered him to administer the temporal affairs of the Institute with nothing more than the advice of his Assistants. Furthermore, on the 17th of January, 1738, he supplied the supporting witness of fifteen professed Brothers "living in the House of the Order at St. Yon".

He appealed the decision of the Rethel courts, which had found in favor of the Lords of Brieulle, to the Parlement of Paris, which having gone to the bottom of things, raised the perennial question of the "Letters patent". On the 1st of July, 1739, the court adopted a decision contrary to the one it had rendered

[18] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 486-489.

[19] Motherhouse Archives, Mezieres file, and manuscript history of the Community.

earlier in the St. Denis affair,[20] and declared that the Institute, until further notice, remained incompetent to acquire property, conditionally or unconditionally, outside of the jurisdiction of Rouen.

Brother Timothy then set about thinking up a way to defend against these quibbles. In the Mezières file, we read of a plan to obtain "Letters patent" that is not without interest. It contains a perfectly clear statement of the Institute's legal situation in 1739.

"The Brothers of the Christian Schools (the king is made to say) assert...that it is clear in the language of our ("Letters" of September 1724) that the object (of that decision) was to make St.Yon a general foundation for the entire kingdom and, consequently, that our intention was also to place that house in a position to receive gifts and legacies which would be made over to the Brothers for their support in whatever place in the kingdom to which they might be called to teach in charity schools and wherever might be situated the property which would be given or bequeathed to them; that such legacies or gifts do not belong to the individual schools, nor to the Brothers who are sent to teach in them, but to St.Yon alone, which receives all donations...and which educates candidates competent to fulfill the wishes of the donors."

However logical, this conclusion of the principle posited in 1724 being misconstrued by the courts, there was need to confirm and interpret the fundamental text. The king, then, should legalize the school at Mezières, Mlle. Velly's legacy, as well as all the institutions of the same sort already existing or to be open within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris; and he should grant to the Institute, for all the schools manned by the Brothers, the right to acquire real and personal property.

For reasons of which we are unaware the plan, unfortunately, proved inconsequential. The Velly affair went on for years, until it deservedly won a place among the most entangled and the most discouraging cases in the annals of the `Ancien Regime'. The record of the case, totally eight hundred pages, still exists in the municipal archives of Mezières. Finally, on the 4th of August, 1752, Parlement dismissed the case of the donor's heirs:[21]but the gift was bestowed on the City of Mezières, leaving it up to the city to provide for the support of the school and its teachers. The Parisian magistrates persisted in ignoring the legal existence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.[22]

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It is clear enough why the school on the Meuse has detained us for so long. Significant documents throw light on the state of mind of a people, on the incompetence of bureaucrats, slaves to obsolete methods, the successes of the Brothers called upon to prove their educational value, the role of a pastor sympathetic to the new Institute and, finally, the difficulties that legalistic formalism and Gallican mistrust raised against the free development of a Congregation approved by the Pope and the king and so superbly suited to spread religious and moral instruction along with the most necessary human knowledge.

The school in Metz (which was begun in about 1747 and dropped out of sight between 1779 and 1790)[23] can be of help to us only as a transition between the schools of the old French provinces and those that would arise out of the initiatives of King Stanislaus in the Duchy of Lorraine. It was said that Bishop Claude Saint Simon, as early as 1730, wanted to have the Brothers in the city on the Moselle. Some twenty years later they were introduced into a building that Bishop Henri Charles Cambout Coislin had constructed as a Junior Seminary. He assembled more than four hundred pupils, whose good behavior during church services "delighted" the faithful, according to Father Louyot, a priest in Metz. "The modesty of the teachers" was no less "impressive" than the piety of the children. Such spectacles "contributed" to the priestly vocation of the witness.[24]

These are all so many fragmentary and blurred memories. But leaving the kingdom of France for the Duchy which the Treaty of Vienna handed over to the lifelong sovereignty of Louis XV's Polish father-

[20] See above, pg. 222.

[21] Motherhouse Archives. The dates of the decision to appeal to the Privy Council and the king are left blank.

[22] 1 Motherhouse Archives; Mezieres file, based upon the decree of the 4th of August, 1752.

[23] It is mentioned in the statistics for 1779, but not for those of 1790

[24] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July, 1930, "les Freres des Ecoles chretiennes a Metz", pp. 244-6.

in-law, and ascending toward Nancy, we shall meet with an outstanding work, of tremendous scope, and concerning which information is both plentiful and precise.[25]

Replacing a beloved and lamented dynasty in Lorraine, King Stanislaus, through a natural generosity and in order to win over the hearts of his subjects, desired to propagate charitable institutions at the same time that he transformed his capitol into a marvelous cultural center. In so doing, he tilted toward France (the heir presumptive) a people who were destined by origin, language, location and religious faith to be united with the French people, but whom the inevitable loss of its independence and the immediate seizure of the Duchy and its central administration by the Intendant, "Chancellor" Chaumont Galaiziere, had turned bitter.

It was necessary to adopt the ways of the ancient dukes of Lorraine, to surpass them, and to attain better and greater things. This was precisely the purpose of the invitation extended in 1749 to the Christian Brothers, who as yet were unknown in the Duchy of Lorraine.

At the end of the 16th century Duke Charles III granted to a charitable lady of Nancy, named Anne Feriet, 18 acres of woodland, situated in Marainville (later, Maréville) in order to put up a building that would serve as a shelter for "the contagiously ill, the lepers and the plague-ridden among the poor", who "would be able to walk in the fresh air without making contact with healthy people". Maréville is a league's distance from Nancy. There is a hill some 1,020 feet high, with a crest crowned with greenery, in the form of an amphitheatre, with Maréville at its center. From these heights the valley of the Meurthe spreads out before one, as well as the capitol of Lorraine, today the mistress of the plain, extending beyond its ancient gates.[26]

In 1715, Anne Feriet's institution, after a hundred and some years of existence was hardly more than a memory. Duke Leopold had decided to use Maréville for the internment of beggars and tramps, as Louis XIV had done in Paris when he opened the Alms House. He renovated and enlarged the premises. And, at his urging the City of Nancy had to shoulder the immense expense of a new building, 270 feet long by 40 feet wide.

Then Jean Leduc, Leopold's valet, obtained from his prince, in spite of the protests of the City Council, the privilege of setting up a stocking factory on the site, the cheap labor for which would be supplied by the inmates. This exploitation in the strongest sense of the term ended in nothing but disgraceful embarrassment. At the beginning of Stanislaus' reign the City took over the control of the institution. Beginning in 1744 or 1745 it admitted people deprived of their freedom by "Lettres de cachet": sons of distinguished families involved in difficulties, suspicious adventurers, unfortunates stricken with mental disorders. The old asylum became a "lockup", a "prison". The supervisors also sought to re-establish the factory annex. To this end, on the 13th of August, 1748, in conjunction with a consortium of industrialists, they accepted an "agreement", which "Letters patent" on the 25th of the same month sanitized. Puiseux, the Director, was made responsible for coordinating the various activities.[27]

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[25] Two excellent articles on Mareville were published by Brother Paul Joseph in the Bulletin des Ecoles Chretiennes for March, 1908 (pp. 65-73) and for May, 1908 (pp. 129-141). The first one supplies information on sources. While referring to these articles, as well as to pp. 174-184 of Vol. II of the Annales of the Institute, we have also consulted: 1) The files in the Motherhouse Archives; 2) The Department Archives of Meurthe-et-Mosell (H, 2955, Memorial of entrants into the novitiate, Book B; 3) The Archives of the departmental establishment of Mareville (record of receipts and expenditures from 1768-1782); 4) Municipal Archives of Nancy, BB 26 (record of the resolutions of the City Council and of the police); 5) Collection of the Foundations of Institutions Supported by the King of Poland, Duke of Lorraine and of Bar, 1762 edition, published at Luneville by Messuy (copy in the Municipal Library of Nancy); 6) In the Memoire de la Societe des Sciences, lettres et arts de Nancy for the year 1847, pp. 329-450, the Memoire historique, statistique et medicate sur l'asile d'alienes de Mareville, by Dr. Th. Archambault, physician in charge of the institution; 7) in the Memoires de l'Academie de Stanislas, 1888, CXXXIX, 5th Series, Vol. VI, pp. 100-201, article by M. Maggiolo, "Les Ecoles de FAcademie de Nancy avant 1789"; 8) the Histoire de Nancy by Chr. Pfister, Vol. III (Paris and Nancy, Berger-Levrault, 1908). Dr. Hamel, Chief of Medicine, has kindly allowed us to visit the asylum and given us access to the Archives which are preserved there. And one of his associates, Dr. J. Dumont, has graciously placed at our disposal notes gathered by him in preparation for an historical and technical study. We shall return to this subject in the fourth part of the present volume, chap. iii, pp. 543 et sq.

[26] Th. Archambault, op. cit., pp. 329-30.

[27] Municipal Archives of Nancy, BB 26, resolution of the Chamber of the Council for the 14th of September, 1748.

The arrangement probably did not go beyond the talking stage. The King of Poland and his Chancellor, La Galaiziere, had something else in mind. They looked to the Brothers in St. Yon, who, with their reformatory, had so thoroughly lived up to President Pontcarré's expectations and continued to win the confidence of Louis XV's government, as wells as the magistrates and families. Would it be possible to induced members of the Congregation to come to Lorraine? Such a move could present important advantages: the Brothers would transform Maréville into a place like their own in Normandy, carefully administered, regulated and prosperous, where every effort would converge on the physical and moral health of the "inmates". At the same time, since these remarkable teachers, whose devotion was commended throughout France, maintained as the first objective of their Institute to teach the children of the common people tuition-free, it would be a perfect opportunity to have them teach poor boys in Nancy.

Thus, it came about that, on the 4th of July, M. Pierre, the prince's notary, presented to the assembled City Council a proposed contract...by which he averred that King (Stanislaus) is prepared to promote the introduction of the Brothers of the Christian Schools both at Nancy and at Maréville...To this end, His Majesty promises to deliver a sum of thirty-three thousand livres in French currency to the Brothers who, in order to accept it, require the City Council to turn over to them the outright ownership of the Maréville estate and pay them annually the income from the Feriet endowment, which, in any case, was not a great deal (450 livres in French currency). Further, they asked to be empowered to collect the sum of three hundred livres annually for board, room and supervision of each individual it would please His Majesty to send them under "Lettres de cachet"...

The opening of the Community in Nancy for tuition-free instruction was to take place under the following conditions: "a suitable residence" would be provided for the Brothers "in the new city"; the City Council would provide, "in perpetuity" (for) all repairs, except for those for which the tenant was liable. A sum of 4,200 livres, payable once only, would cover the costs of transportation and furnishings. The outfitting and furnishing of classrooms would always be the city's responsibility.

"The Chancellor" (the notary comments) "wrote at the bottom of the proposal that the Council must adopt an appropriate resolution." The people of Nancy were in no mood to accept such dictatorial directions without an argument.

The assembly opened by testifying with one voice its respectful acknowledgement of the king's continuous and kindly intentions for the advantage of the capital of his realm. It then went on to recall the fine words with which M. Galaiziere had once honored a deputation from the city government -- namely, "that he would always gladly accept and welcome criticism that (the city officials) directed at him in these cases".

The magistrates "with complete submission to the king's wishes and with the respect that they owed the Chancellor", would criticize:

"1) That the asylum in Maréville, as it actually stands, is in no way the responsibility of the City of Nancy. (For the year 1748) the board-and-room, some at the rate of 200 livres, others at the rate of 240 livres, the usual at the rate of 300 livres, all in the currency of Lorraine,[28] had been more than enough to compensate the city (for all normal expenditures). The Brothers of Charity, starting with an endowment of 33,000 livres, could keep the cost of room and board at 200 livres in French currency and still realize a rather large profit. (Such a rate must in any case be stipulated) with regard to those patients born or residing in Nancy and its suburbs.

2) That the income on the Feriet endowment has dropped to 800 local francs. The city, as a consequence, in this respect would be only committed to deputize the Brothers in its own rights and duties;

3) That since the institution in Maréville had been founded in order to provide shelter for the contagiously ill, it should remain for that purpose in perpetuity;

4) That the Council should be called upon to rule concerning the complaints of the Brothers against the pupils or the parents...against the Brothers."[29]

Chaumont Galaiziere informed the Supervisors, by return mail, that all discussion was superfluous. The contract, drawn up in agreement with Brother Exuperian, Brother Timothy's representative, was signed on the 29th of July. To ease the conscience of the people of Nancy, a sentence (actually a bit of rhetorical cosmetics) was introduced regarding the obligations created by "the will and

[28] A livre in Lorraine currency was 3/4 of a French livre.

[29] Municipal Archives of Nancy, BB 26, resolution of the 4th of July, 1749.

codicil of the Mme.Anne Feriet on the 4th of August, 1597 and the 25 of November, 1599": the new 1 2 proprietors of Maréville were to be held responsible "to fulfill or have fulfilled these obligations by whomever they thought suited". Neither plague-ridden nor leper showed up, so that the Brothers would have to care for the sick; and yet Nancy was obligated to pay the Brothers "500 livres in French currency" annually on the strength of the original agreement.

Maréville became a reformatory, a residence school for ordinary pupils and a novitiate. Complete freedom was granted for the admission of novices, as well as for "freely entering" residence pupils, and, indeed, for the "professed" whom the Brothers decided to care for in that institution. The board-and-room for those committed "by His Majesty's `lettres de cachet" remained fixed at 300 livres, not including clothing and medication. The supervision of the institution was the province of the "Procurator-general of the Sovereign Court of Lorraine and Barrois".

The second part of the same document deals with the tuition-free school. The institution called 'St. Jean's Hospital', situated opposite St. Charles' Hospital,[30] was to be handed over to the Brothers for their residence. A school was to be begun there; another one would be located "above St. Nicolas' Gate". Both of them would begin "the day after All Saints, 1749." Nobody would be admitted except he bore a certificate of poverty...handed out by the pastors and verified by the municipal officers.(Two years later, a new regulation would decree a rather broad tolerance; and families that could not be regarded as indigent sent their children to the schools, or they were admitted within the limitations of available space.) The Inspector of schools of the primatial church and the pastors of the City's three parishes in the 'new town' were to control, according to their privileges all discipline and teaching.[31] The City assumed the expenses outlined in the proposal of the 4th of July: it was exempt only from the maintenance of the Community residence and the replacement of "chairs, benches and desks".

King Stanislaus was to be given seven teachers for Maréville and the schools. (The importance of the reformatory would soon prove how ridiculously small was this number of Brothers; but, then, the contract was only proposing the minimum figure.) "An eighth Brother" was to teach "in St. Julian's Hospital in Nancy" (his pupils would be, especially, "the orphans of His Majesty's foundation") and the directors of the institution were to pay his superiors a wage of 300 livres for his services.[32]

On the 8th of August "Letters patent", approving the contract, guaranteed the Institute all civil rights in the Duchy of Lorraine. The "Letters" were registered on the 23rd of August by the sovereign Court and by the Bureau of Accounts.

With the monarch's goodwill and watchful patronage, the Brothers' institutions took root vigorously and enduringly. On the 19th of September Brother Anastasius,[33] Director, occupied Maréville. The notary describes him as proceeding to the "rites" of installation: the reference is to the closing and the opening of the main door, starting a fire in one of the fireplaces, and receiving a handful of earth and the branch of a tree and returning them.[34] These were symbolic acts; and while this beautiful estate was to be lost to the Brothers after only forty-three years of peaceful and prosperous occupancy, Lorraine itself, and the hearts of its people, remained faithful to the Brothers.

In Nancy the Director was Brother Exuperian, who had conducted the negotiations. He was an outstanding man, with a lively mind and imagination, tirelessly and impetuously active, sharp, firm, bellicose and a man who forced both his thought and his plans to their logical conclusions. We shall come upon him again involved in the affairs of Rouen and Rheims, and as Assistant to Brother Florence. He was already at the height of his powers when he began his work in Nancy. Born in Chartres, in St. Hilary's

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30 "In the western corner of St. John's and St. Benedict's Streets (once blocked by the schools), in a former stocking factory belonging to the period of Charles III, but become St. John's Hospital during the War of the Spanish Succession." (Pfister, op. cit.., Vol. III, pg. 756.)

31 It was only after 1777 that there was a Bishop in Nancy. The so-called "primatial" church then became the Cathedral. (Pfister, Vol. III, pg. 361)

32 Idem., Ibid., pg. 179, declaration of the King in 1750, Motherhouse Archives, HA q 8.

33 Collection of Foundations...Chap. XVI, pp. 89-93.

34 Ibid.., Chap. XVII, pp. 93-99.

parish, on the 3rd of April, 1708, Michel Foure entered the Institute on the 12th of September, 1732 and pronounced perpetual vows on the 8th of December, 1736.

This native of the Beauce ploughed straight and deep. Stanislaus Leczinski would say that the opening of the tuition-free school in his superb city of Nancy "corresponded completely to the public good that (I) had in mind".[35] In 1750, Maréville was put under the direction of Brother Exuperian; and his compatriot, Brother Anacletus, who was no less zealous, replaced him in the schools in Nancy. Such great success inspired the opening of a third school. This one was born of gifts made by three clerics: Jean Claude Bouzey, Dean-general of the primatial church, Father Antoine, Cantor, and Father Tervenus, Supervisor of schools. It was opened on the 1st of Mary, 1751, "above St. George's Gate".

The prince took this occasion to legislate, in concurrence with the Dean and the Brothers, a definitive regulation which is contained in his "Letters patent" of the 29th of March of the same year: nine Brothers will hereafter serve in the public schools, each school being divided into three classes. In the quarters, all furnished by the city, the Brothers were to teach the children in St. Julian's Hospital and those -- especially the poor -- in parishes of St. Sebastian, St. Roch and St. Nicholas. The King of Poland, Duke of Lorraine, was to pay the salaries. And the Brothers were to retain responsibility only for the furnishings in the primary classes.[36]

With the initial successes obtained in Nancy, it would have been surprising had Stanislaus not extended the benefits of the Brothers' teaching to his beloved city of Lunéville, where he ordinarily resided. The "Collection" of his foundations informs us that Christian Schools were begun there after a contract with Brother Exuperian had been signed on the 13th of March, 1750, and approved on the 16th by immediate "Letters patent". The Superior-general ratified it on the 21st. A comparison of these dates shows rather clearly that through the goodwill and generosity of the King of Lorraine, the Institute was not here experiencing any delays by writing-masters, resistance from officials or opposition from cities. The king established an endowment of 1,870 livres, promised to pay travel expenses and furnishings, and, finally, gave the Community "a garden situated on the road between Lunéville and Monsel, along with a house and dependent structures".[37] Among their pupils the Brothers were to have "the twelve children of the king's domestic servants".

The City Council hastened to remodel the schoolhouse that belonged to it. It expressed its gratitude for "the gracious attention of His Majesty".[38] Into his final years, Stanislaus would manifest a concern for the school in Lunéville: in a decree of 1756, he "endowed" a fourth teacher. And in 1759, in association with the Canons Regular of the Abbey, he made an "arrangement" that would facilitate the opening of a new class, whose teacher would be pain from the Canons' income.[39]

The old prince spoke movingly of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Writing in 1773 to the solicitor in Rheims, Brother Exuperian reported, not without a. justifiable pride, the royal assertion: Of all the institutions I have established.. none produced more good than the Brothers'.[40]

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The first half of the 18th century was coming to a close. De La Salle's disciples were now spread to more than eighty localities, large cities, small regional centers, suburbs of cities and market-towns of some importance. In 1747, Dole in the Jura was added to an already long list: Leonard Mesmay had the idea twelve years earlier of starting a school there, and he had asked the City Council's approval. Inquiries had been made among the Jesuits as to the orthodoxy of the St. Yon Congregation. But the undertaking was delayed, and had finally come to something only with Claude Charles Broch Hotelans who turned over to the Brothers a house which had been given to him by M. Mesmay. In it was established a novitiate, which

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[35] Resolution of the 14th of March, 1750, in Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 183.

[36] Collection of Foundations.. Joe. cit.

[37] 3 Quoted by Lucard, Vol. II pg. 184, according to the Municipal Archives of Rheims.

[38] We retain the circumflex accent, according to established practice, but natives disputed its use and ignored it in pronunciation.

[39] Bulletin de Ecoles chretiennes for October, 1926, "les Ecoles de Dole du Jure", pp. 314-316.

[40] 1 Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 190-1, according to the Municipal Archives of Belley.

made Dole, over a number of years, one of the Institute's "nurseries", although, to tell the truth, a somewhat less fruitful one.[41]

Related to the same period was the beginnings of the school in Belley, the capital of Le Bugey. The city had looked forward to the coming of the heralded teachers. The generosity of three benefactors, Bouillet, Aziret and Noiron, made the undertaking easy on the public treasury. The classes, under the direction of the competent teacher, Brother Honoré and his two associates, overflowed with pupils -- including children whose parents boarded them with families living in Belley in order to provide the benefits of such an excellent education. And, then, in February, 1750, a few weeks after the arrival of the Brothers, a crisis occurred, which proved inconsequential: the Supervisor of schools, Anthilde Rubez, Dean of the Cathedral, upon whom depended "the teachers in the elementary grades and the professors of humanities in the colleges", supported by the Bishop, informed the Brothers that they were forbidden to teach unless they had his authorization. Brother Honoré pacified him, and thereafter nothing stood in the way of the school's peaceful progress.[42]

It seems that it was by way of Dole that the French Brothers became known in, and were invited to Estavayer, on the eastern shore of Lake Neuchatel. In a meeting of the Communal Council on the 14th of November, 1749, the "noble Deputy Devevey" suggested inviting the Brothers to this city. "The Lord Counsellors,...delighted with this proposal", despatched Counsellor Cuassot to Fribourg "to obtain the permission of Their Excellencies" of the Canton and (that) of His Highness the Bishop of the Diocese. On the 15th of September, 1750, a "firm and lasting contract" was sent to Brother Genereaux, Director of the school in Dole. A gift of 2,000 ecus was made to the teachers in the institution by Counsellor Joseph Juat, "who worked to bring them". He went on to bequeath a like sum "to the Brothers and Sisters". The former Minimes' residence, called the "Motte-chatel", served as a dwelling for the Community at the same time that it provided classrooms on its ground floor. The city paid 600 francs in salary, in addition to 12 sacks of wheat, fire-wood, furniture and utensils. It reimbursed the travel expenses of the Brothers who were assigned to Estavayer; and those who had to leave their country in obedience to their Superiors received twelve francs to assist them on their return journey.[43]

The crossing of the Alps meant a new foothold outside of France. For the Institute, whose Catholicism was, by definition, without frontiers, the step was a very modest prelude to its universal mission. But it still had not yet filled all the territory of the motherland. While, Rouen, Paris, Rheims, Nancy, Orleans, Avignon and Marseille were great parade grounds, the Institute had not yet reached Bordeaux nor Toulouse. The whole of the southwestern region was unacquainted with the Brothers. Lyons, which had its own educational system and its own elementary schools in place since Charles Démia, did not open up to the Brothers of the Christian Schools before the Revolution had disrupted everything; and Alsace remained foreign territory to them. Even where they were active, there remained positions for them to occupy. We shall see that their numbers, while increasing up to the years 1740 and beyond, forced them to moderate their thrust. They possessed the spirit of sacrifice along with zeal and prudence; they did not shun difficulties; and they clung firmly to their posts at the cost of painful inconveniences. But their leaders did not want to risk them to no purpose. John Baptist de La Salle's plan was being realized: wherever a Brother's Community was assured of being able to live by its Rule and received the necessary minimal support, a tuition-free Christian school should be opened. When these conditions existed, the lack of available personnel alone justified postponement.

People living in the cities were invited to send male children to the Brothers' schools. Indeed, small boys crossed the threshold of the Brothers' classrooms in the hundreds. In the average city there were few male children from the families of the common people who escaped elementary and catechetical instruction once the sponsor of a school obtained the services of the "St. Yon Brothers". Even in the big cities (except for Paris, which was in fact too large) the Brothers succeeded in assuming control of most of the parochial schools. Beginnings were often difficult, what with the tiny, uncouth creatures whom people thought were beyond retrieving, as we have seen in Mens, Mezières, etc. In the absence of documentation, we can only imagine the initial contacts with noisy, turbulent bands, torn between curiosity and mistrust, who wished immediately to challenge the newcomers' composure, firmness and authority. Sooner or later,

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[41] Motherhouse Archives HA n 11, Estavayer file, various undated notes.

[42] See Vol. I of the present work, Part One, Chap. V.

[43] Motherhouse Archives HA n 11, Estavayer file, various undated notes.

the uproar subsided, and the mob of youngsters fell into disciplined groups. They stood erect and in silence; and they knelt or sat at a Brother's signal. The prayer was recited seriously, and the lesson told by one or another of them, and questions tossed off in rapid fire succession received acceptable answers. The Brothers in the mantles with the flowing sleeves accompanied long lines of their pupils to church. The children attended Mass with arms folded and a Rosary between their fingers; and in their external posture there was exhibited a sincere piety that was continually nourished by commentaries on the Gospels, by examinations of conscience and by liturgical explanations given on the Vigils of Sundays and Feasts.

The faithful were "edified", and pastors congratulated themselves on the transformation of their young parishioners. Parents regarded the methods used by the Brothers as surprising; and while some might complain about a stiff punishment inflicted on their offspring, most of them praised the devoted, courageous and indefatigable teacher who, through his energy, his reproofs and his example preserved a child in, or restored him to "the straight and narrow". The pupils themselves were unfailing in their gratitude. The evidence of Father Dubois, Canon in the Cathedral Church of Orleans, is valid for many others. He writes: Until 1760, I studied under the Christian Brothers in St. Euvertus...I shall never forget the particular concern that Brother Eucher.. had for me in my youngest years...[44]

Many an adolescent, inspired by the ideal set before him by his teachers, went on from their schools to one of the novitiates of the Congregation. Among these novices, there were some remarkable ones. We have already referred to Pierre Bihac in Carcassonne, who became Brother Macarius. François Mane, a boy of the same region, was accompanied in 1763, at the age of fifteen, to the novitiate in Avignon by his teacher, Brother Brice of Jesus. Fifty-nine years later, the novice had become the Superior-general under the name of Brother Guillaume de Jesus.[45] Louis Nicholas Le Clercq, born in Boulogne in 1745 and a pupil of the Brothers in his native city from 1756 to 1761, for six years sought a way to follow and, having found it, went directly to St. Yon. Remarkable for his entire Religious life, Blessed Brother Solomon, martyred in the Carmelite prison on the 2nd of September, 1792, gained the attention of the official Church.[46]

Once they had become fathers of families, former pupils were eager to send their sons to the school which had at one time taught them. And if they happened to be living in a city that was without the advantage of a Brother's school, they were quick to ask for one. In this way the Brothers' connections spread abroad, all the more rapidly as the leadership of the clergy, the government and the middle-class proved increasingly favorable to the education of the masses.

While it was unfortunately true that the countryside lacked such schools, so much so that illiteracy was a widespread phenomenon in rural areas, it must be acknowledged that one of the causes (and perhaps the chief cause) of this deficiency was the failure of the "teachers' seminaries" .[47] Within the educational complex envisaged by De La Salle, the section that was demolished by Nicholas Vuyart and Clement was never restored; that section, however, was something more than an annex. Indeed, viewing all possibilities, it was the integrating segment of the edifice, the wing that proved indispensable to the harmony of the whole. (We are considering it from an educational and social point of view only; since, from the religious point of view, the Congregation that Rome approved in 1725 was a perfect whole). Teachers' seminaries, or normal schools, where the administration and teaching would have been the work of the Brothers, would have trained teachers for villages, who would have, of course, lived lay and family lives; but who would have been educated on the purest form of Christianity and instilled with the best educational methods. The Institute might have placed at the disposal of the clergy, in the most insignificant parishes, extremely valuable collaborators at a time when morality was in decline and in a century inundated with rationalist propaganda. It would have tapped the talents of a large number of men, sincere enough and of

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[44] Motherhouse Archives HB t 5 Register of the Christian Brothers' school in Orleans. (Including an introduction by Father Dubois, dated the 1st of July, 1821.)

[45] Brother Theodocius of Jesus, in his Historique de la province meridionale believes that, of the 776 candidates received into the novitiate in Avignon between 1729 and 1791, a third came from Brothers' schools. The dioceses of Embrun ad Puy were the most productive in vocations of all the schools in the South of France. Embrun supplied 118 novices, the greater part of whom came from the Alpine valley of Queyras.

[46] Seen Bienheureux Salomon by Hyacinthe Chassagnon, Bishop of Autun, 1926 edition, a book that we shall be referring to from time to time in what follows

[47] See Vol. I of the present work, Part Two, chaps. II and IV.

unquestionable competence, who, reluctant to assume monastic obligations or (after an attempt in the novitiate, or indeed after a more prolonged effort in Community) or finally deciding against the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, continued to be nonetheless valuable teachers. For the want of "seminaries" like the ones initiated by the Founder following a new formula in Rheims, Paris and St. Denis, the countryside continued to be devoid of schools or went on recruiting their teachers randomly, sometimes among the local people who occupied their leisure during the winter teaching the "ABCs" to small peasants, sometimes from among the professionals whose qualifications were not always too sound, in spite of the diplomas they displayed, and whose knowledge, however gotten, was vulnerable and mechanical. There were teachers like the one in Mezières whose pitiful distress in front of his rioting pupils was noted by Father Argy; or like the former sergeant-major of the Bourbon regiment who, fifteen years after the Brothers left the place, set himself up in Le Croisic, where he was the cause of "much disappointment" to the city.[48]

The moral and intellectual progress achieved by the Christian Brothers' pupils was nowhere contested (except, of course, for reasons that can be imagined, in Huguenot territory). On the contrary, there were those who feared rather that the Brothers would share their learning too generously: we have already met with this mentality in Arles, and we shall have reason to indicate it again. On the whole, people liked "the good Brothers"; they were grateful to them for assuming the responsibility for poor "uncouth" and hitherto neglected children. The government considered itself lucky to be able to entrust its undesirables to them at St. Yon, Angers or at Maréville. And where residence schools, business schools and courses preparatory to the maritime professions were opened, people began to glimpse the possibilities of the foundations laid down by De La Salle.

Nevertheless, the Founder remained too little known and too little celebrated by the public. Hardly even now was his name mentioned with reverence. Canon Blain's book seems not to have gotten beyond the immediate family circle. It taught the Brothers a great deal about the origins of their Society and about the mind of their Founder. It was possible to glean from its abundant text the major themes of his special spirituality and the events that characterized his life and action. The Institute's influence had spread; but the power and the originality of the enterprise should have been better understood. Such probably was the purpose (at least as regards the account of events and the elucidation of a marvelous personality) of the anonymous author of the Historical Eulogy of John Baptist de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools,[49] published in 1740. The author believed that the reader would be greatly convenienced to discover in his abridgment of 'Father Blain's two volumes in quarto' the life of this worthy Founder free of all commonplaces spread throughout the book...

According to him the Brothers "published" (Blain's book) "for their own use only".[50] Unfortunately, the able and clear adaptation by the anonymous author in Rouen remained in manuscript. It was not until 1760 that the more successful effort of Father Garreau to make the name of "M. John Baptist de La Salle" better known to France was completed.[51] And, in 1785, Father Montis published a "Life of De La Salle", proposing the heroic priest as a model for the clergy.

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[48] Mother House Archives H A q 4 taken from the Municipal Archives of Le Croisic, Register BB

[49] See above, pp. 68.

[50] See Introduction, Vol. I of the present work, pp. vi.

[51] In his preface Father Garreau writes: The servant of God whose actions I am going to relate has the most legitimate claim upon the public's gratitude; and yet we scarcely know that he ever existed; the ever present results of his activities are inunense; we share in them every day practically without paying any attention. For more than sixty years poor youths in France have been instructed in their duties, and imparted valuable knowledge; they are trained in good morals; a large number of men have had the courage to dedicate themselves to their education; these men work ceaselessly to form perfect Christians and useful and virtuous citizens; and these tireless men are pretty nearly totally unknown. All the more is he unknown who first set them going and to whom we are all the more indebted. (pp. xliv-xlv). La Vie du Monsieur de La Salle, by J. C. Garreau was published in Rouen by Laurence Dumesnil (Brothers' printer), MDCCLX)

PART THREE

DIFFICULT TIMES

The Institute In the Critical Years Of the Eighteenth Century

CHAPTER ONE

The Defense of Spiritual and Temporal Freedoms: Rouen and Rheims (1745-1746)

After the spring forward, there was, if not a pause, at least a noticeable slowing down, which becomes evident between 1750 and 1777 in the decreased number of foundations. The gallant band of Brothers felt the need of getting their breath and restoring their energy. Its zeal had answered to the wishes of both religious and civil authorities as well as to the needs of the population. It wasn't cooling off: De La Salle's saintly spirit continued to inspire his best disciples. But these were not so numerous as to be able to accomplish every task. In spite of Brother Timothy's prudence difficulties arose through the rapid increase in the number of schools. This is how it seemed to Brother Irenée. A note in the archives shows that he was concerned about the religious and pedagogical formation of the young teachers, sent too quickly, in his view, to communities continually being opened.[1]

Between 1720 and 1730 the average number of admissions of postulants at Saint=Yon was 25 each year, with the highest figures in 1741 and 1742. The highest number was reached in 1741 with 45 names in the register. But this falls to 12 in 1751, nine in 1752 and in 1755 to 1757. There are about 15 each year between 1751-1770 before the numbers double between 1770 and 1776. On the other hand, very many novices or religious did not persevere. This was not the case (with only rare exceptions) for those finally professed. Those who leave or who were sent away are young people whose vocations did not stand up to trials. There were also among the Brothers with temporary vows the ill, the scrupulous and a few who proved unworthy. The proportion of those who left before death seems to be rather high. Of the twenty-six admitted to St. Yon in 1730, we know that fourteen did not persevere, eighteen out of twenty-six in 1740, and twenty-three out of thirty-three in 1745. In 1750, only four out of seventeen recruits failed to die in the Institute; but in 1760 the list shows that there were eleven departures out of nineteen, ten out of seventeen in 1765, and eighteen out of twenty-nine in 1770. Over forty years, the average of departures was more than fifty percent of the personnel. But there is nothing surprising in all of this. A congregation's recruitment takes place with the understanding that failures are part-and-parcel of the system. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The divine maxim is applicable in every century; and it is impossible for it not to be rigorously verified in the 18th century.

The book of "Perpetual vows, in the St. Yon-lez-Rouen Community from the 15th of August, 1725 to the 22nd of September, 1767",[2] helps us identify the names of 467 Christian Brothers who were definitively committed to the Institute. The Avignon register contains about a hundred names of vowed persons from 1728 to 1763. For these two centers there were fewer than six-hundred perpetually professed Brothers during the half-century beginning with the election of Brother Barthèlemy.[3] Setting aside the exceptional year of 1725,3 the largest number was reached at St. Yon in 1749 and 1766, with twenty-one professed; the smallest was that of 1739, when there were only two. Each year, from 1751 to 1767 there was an average of twelve.[4]

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1 Ms. 11222.

2 Motherhouse Archives, HA m 11.

3 Professed Brothers alive in 1725 had, by this time, all pronounced once more their perpetual vows after the reception of the Bull of Benedict XIII.

4 At Maréville the number of entrants from 1751 to 1790 was probably as high as 546, which averages out to 13 a year. Such, at least, is what may be deduced from the figures contained in the novitiate Register '13', begun only in 1787 (Departmental Archives of Meurthe-et-Moselle H 2355). Register 'A' (1751-1787) was destroyed in a fire at the institution in 1794. The Register of the Avignon novitiate, according to a finding of Brother Theodosius in his Historique de la province meridionale, includes 776 names of postulants for a period of sixty-two years. According to the supplementary pages in the St. Yon Register, the number of signatures at Dole remained under a hundred during the twenty years of the existence of that novitiate.

Many Brothers died prematurely. The record of burials at St.Yon, "The Obituary, 1728-1790"[5] provides the ages of 142 deceased Brothers and novices: 47 died before reaching thirty; fifty died between their thirtieth and sixtieth years. A third (or forty-five Brothers) resisted the trials, the privations and the labors that lie in store for the religious educator. Among these were Brothers who lived into their seventies and eighties. Brother Paul (Pierre Narra), Brother Dicacius (Pascal Moncrif), Brother Jean Jacquot, three contemporaries of the Founder, died at at 77, 76 and 80 years respectively. Brother Ambrose (François Blin) died in Marseille in 1756 at the age of 85; Brother Michael (Vincent Floquet) died in Marseille on the 10th of April, aged 81 years; Brother Anastasius (Antoine Paradis), also a member of the Lorraine Community, died on the 8th of April, 1774, at the age of 85. And Brother Sixtus, the last survivor of the first generation of Brothers, was 93 years old when he died in Marseille on the 11th of May, 1788.

The rather heavy wear-and-tear on personnel as well as the numerous defections thus acted like a very tight break on the Institute's progress. The statistics as of the 24th of August[6] show a total of 760 Brothers. The figure must surely be below that for the previous thirty years, during which the earlier years were less fruitful in vocations. All told (teaching Brothers, serving Brothers, Brothers with perpetual vows and Brothers with temporary vows), there were scarcely more than 600 at work at one time, not including the aged and the infirm, whose lives, as a rule, came to a close at St. Yon, Avignon or Maréville.

The figures are enough to explain why Superiors-general would henceforth show a lack of enthusiasm for opening new schools. They were inclined more to deepen than to work on the surface of the Brother's vocation, which required a dedication that was frequently akin to heroism. The age of Corneille was over and gone. The strength that had once inspired souls like Jane Chantal, Vincent de Paul, the Explorers, the Canadian apostles and martyrs and, indeed St. John Baptist de La Salle himself (in whom the Faith of the great Church reformers and builders of the Kingdom abided intact and was carried forward) the strength to support the world in the domain of the spirit and of the supernatural had subsided. That there were still heroes to be encountered in the realms of sanctity, as on the fields of battle, no one can deny. And they were all the more deserving, because they lived in an climate that was not very favorable to virtue. They had to insulate themselves and take up arms against the commonplace and the facile, and to stand in opposition to their contemporaries. Even among the volunteers in God's service, too many of them grovelled in the dust or stooped very low indeed in order more conveniently to quench their thirst for misery. There remained standing, perhaps, only Gideon's three-hundred. These were the ones who took charge, who occupied positions of trust, and who threw themselves into the breach, in order to take or defend key positions. Around this elite an army was forming.

Thus, we shall see that the leaders, during these times of faltering courage, were concerned to maintain the Institute at an above-average level. Among the oldest "Circulars" preserved in manuscript there is one dating from 1772 in which Brother Florence rebukes certain Directors who seemed to have lost interest in the spiritual and intellectual advancement of their Brothers, and of having occasioned or tolerated neglect and irregularity in their Communities.[7] Extreme vigilance was essential, since even monasteries and cloisters were no guarantee against worldly influences. More so than any other, teaching Religious are in contact with the "world": they must understand the environment in which their educational apostolate is practiced; and realize that pupils, parents, benefactors and school administrators and even the clergy introduce into the Community ideas, prejudices, maxims, interpretations of insignificant daily events and a language inspired, informed and influenced by the current philosophy.

But the new mentality reached hardly any depth within the Institute. The Lasallian tradition concealed a treasure of grace and merit that could not be quickly exhausted. Unlike a congregation unfaithful to its Rule, tainted by Jansenism and softened by worldly wealth, the Christian Brothers glowed like an austere and vigorous youth. It was not to experience decadence on the morning after its birth.

It was in its external development that the Institute was especially vulnerable. It needed material assistance -- those magnificent gifts and warm acts of thoughtfulness that restore courage in the dark hours. The cost of living was on the rise, slowly but continuously -- at first, after the collapse of the "Law System", and then, after Louis XV's long and sterile military campaigns and the disasters into which the colonial empire had stumbled. The incomes left by the founders of schools and the salaries agreed upon

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[5] Municipal Library of Rouen, ms. 857. Copy in Motherhouse Archives, HA m-2.

[6] 2 Motherhouse Archives, LI t U v. Included by Brother Lucard among the supporting documents in Vol. II of his Annales, pp. 720-24.

[7] Motherhouse Archives, Superior-generals Circulars, Circular for the 12th of December 1772, AA b 1. See below, pg. 464.

with cities for the support of the Brothers became inadequate. Appeals were made to the public generosity and changes were sought in primitive contracts. Such effort having little or no effect, the Brothers were obliged in some regions to accept resident pupils, whose tuitions were supposed to snatch the teachers from financial adversity. These lowly "residence schools" were set up in existing school buildings and had no independent facilities. According to all appearances, their pupils attended classes along with the other children. It became increasingly difficult to refuse to give supplementary instruction to children who provided the livelihood of the institution. In this way the teachers were induced to sacrifice much of their free time to resident pupils. A sort of malaise was setting in: religious exercises were quickly over and done with; and the education of all was suffering for being sacrificed to the special instruction given to the few. Hence the Institute, distinguishing between "full output" residence schools (approved by the superiors, assigned special teaches, and equipped with a system of studies) and risk operations, designed exclusively to earn income for the Community, energetically opposed the continuation of a large number of small residence schools.

Subsidization by civil authorities was miserly. Voluntary gifts were not so large that they permitted salaries to increase in proportion to expenses. There entered into official calculations, and into restraints upon personal liberality, a preoccupation with thrift, a fear of overburdening public expenditures or of defrauding heirs who were only moderately provided for. It was rather exceptional to meet with somebody like Madon Chateau-Blanc or Masson Mannerie. But there was also selfishness, indifference, distrust and hostility, whether sullen or openly declared. We have already indicated a large number of adversaries of popular Christian education. During the period which immediately preceded the French Revolution, they would become more numerous and they would systematize their attacks and their arguments. We shall have to take notice of Protestant and Jansenist attitudes, of the "legalists" and the "Philosophers", and the theorists of "secularized" education, liberated from the influence of Religious Congregations, and of morality that claimed, not absolute independence, but a greater necessity than dogma, and an ability to survive the dissolution of Faith.

And, unfortunately, at the moment it was being assaulted by its natural and irreconcilable enemies, the Brothers' Institute was not sure of its friends. Those from whom it should have been receiving steady, continuous and generous assistance were throwing up roadblocks, using mean-minded stalling tactics and unjustifiable accusations. They sought to enslave the Institute rather than use it for the good of youth and for the extension of the Kingdom of God. There were the well-intentioned prelates, the priests who let themselves be swept away by the desire to dominate, and the Catholic politicians who sought to intervene in its internal affairs, limit its rights, and deprive it of the resources that guaranteed its future and the liberties it had secured in the Church. Reading the accounts of so much tribulation and of so many difficulties overtaking men whom, one would think, were on the side of a holy cause, we relive the harshest moments of the Founder's life; we understand the frustrations and anxieties of Brother Claude and Brother Florence, peaceful and humble men who had to govern in the storm; and we can appreciate the apprehensiveness and bitterness of their Assistant, Brother Exuperian, who experienced many a heart-flutter and sometimes let himself be carried away by his pen.

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The year 1745 was the normal date for the sixth General Chapter, since its predecessor (the Chapter of 1734) had been assembled at an early date, as we have seen, in order that its sessions would coincide with the transfer of De La Salle's remains to the Chapel in St. Yon. This time, Brother Timothy decided to bring the Brothers together, not in Rouen, but in Rheims. Why? He stated the reason, apparently both plausible and legitimate: namely, because the Brothers of the Southern region asked to have their journey shortened and their expenses reduced by selecting a city, if not near their Communities, at least, east of Paris.[8] There certainly was another reason, both more veiled and more important. Article XV of the Bull stipulates that General Chapters should be "convoked in the place where the Superior-general lives". Would it be necessary to conclude that the head of the Institute might not choose, whether temporarily or definitively, any residence that seemed convenient to him, and, in particular, even decide to call an extraordinary and hasty convocation of the Assembly? Such an interpretation would seem to be abnormally restrictive.

Still, in order to be recognized, a power lodged in the structure of things required to be used. There were some Normand clergymen who were already contesting the power. According to them, the

[8] Motherhouse Archives BE y 2, Brother Timothy file, affidavits by Brothers Alexis, Germain, Exuperian and Raymond, dated the 16th of July, 1745.

Institute was tied to the Diocese of Rouen. In their view, St. Yon, which was the recipient of the "Letters patent", enjoyed not merely a factual priority but a superiority of right that was both inalienable and permanent; and, as a consequence, the Archbishop of Rouen, under whose authority the Motherhouse existed, should quite correctly exercise control over the entire Congregation (and first of all, over the Superior's decisions and the resolutions of the Chapters) with the right of sanction, which would extend to issuing commands and exercising the veto. This was a singularly exaggerated and sophistical interpretation of Article II of the Bull, which required (something quite self-evident) the consent of the Bishop and the recognition of his authority for the Brothers to be admitted into his diocese.

At the beginning of 1745, the situation, while not tense, continued to be troublesome; so much so that, prior to convoking the capitulary Assembly, Brother Timothy was contemplating a departure for himself and his Assistants without thought of returning. The idea of Rheims sprung naturally to mind. The Institute never quit looking toward the city of its origins.

We have explained why, after 1719, Normandy was preferred. But" if Rouen was threatening the vital interests of the Congregation, might not this be the moment for it to return to its birthplace? That was the question that the Superior-general was raising. It was the idea that controlled his actions and that was spelled out by his transfer of the site of the Chapter.

For twenty years the Community in Rheims had been progressing uninterruptedly with the support of Pierre de La Salle and his associates. In 1727, a garden had been acquired on the Rue Neuve. In 1728, the Mlles Mary Aimée and Elizabeth Drusson, and in 1730, Agnes Henry, widow of M. Habuet, by their generosity increased the capital of the enterprise.[9] After the deaths of Weyen and Clicquot, Pierre de La Salle and Matthew Serurier, by a deed dated the 8th of April, 1732, took on Gerard Thierrion, Chaplain at Notre Dame, and Simon Philibert de La Salle, Lord of Mure and of Etang, and lawyer in the presidium, as administrators and co-owners of the schools' endowment in real-estate.[10] The youngest of the Holy Founder's brothers died on the 26th of June, 1741; but the family continued to be represented in the association by Simon Philibert, the great-grandson of Lancelot de La Salle and Barbara Coquebert Montbret[11] and by James Fremyn, Lord Brnscourt, Pierre's son-in-law.[12] In May of 1738 one of the city's great benefactor's, the donor of the iron gates in the sanctuary of Notre Dame as well as the entrance to the Hospital and the man whose fortune enabled Rheims to engineer its sewer and water systems, Jean Godinot, Canon in the Cathedral Church, devoted the income from four farms to the foundation of tuition-free schools in St. Hilary's parish; and the Brothers were asked to teach the poor in St. Hilary's, St. Symphorian's and St. Andrew's, in a house at one time bequeathed to the diocese by Thierry Gonnel and remodelled by Godinot for its new purposes.[13]

From 1739 to 1743 five successive acquisitions expanded the boundary of the principle establishment on the Rue Neuve and Contray.[14] It was becoming clear that the Superior-general had vast plans. The proof of it lay in the permission sought by Brother Genereaux (Director of the Community in Rheims) from Archbishop Jules Rohan: "With great respect for the city where the Institute was born, the Superior...desires to make his residence there with his Assistants, to convoke General Chapters and to house retired Brothers...And since it is a duty for (the Brothers) to assist daily at Holy Mass, it would be very inconvenient for them to be obliged to leave the house in order to fulfill that devotion."As a consequence, the Brother Director sought authorization to open a chapel in the buildings on Rue Neuve. The petition must have been written, at the latest, during the early months of 1745, since on the 21st of May, Jean Domine, pastor of St. John's, assisted by Antoine Amé, pastor of St. Maurice's and Jean-Baptist

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[9] Motherhouse Archives BE y 2, Brother Timothy file, affidavits by Brothers Alexis, Germain, Exuperian and Raymond, dated the 16th of July, 1745.

[10] Notes and documents concerning the foundations of elementary instruction in Rheims, published by J.B. AmonId, Rheims, 1884.

[11] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January, 1925, pp. 51-54. Genealogy of the De La Salles

[12] Motherhouse Archives, Rheims file, deed dated the 10th of November, 1741; transfer of right by Pierre De La Salle to Fremyn Branscourt.

[13] Amould, op.cit. ., pp. 58-64; cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 73-4,

[14] Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 70 (following the Municipal Archives of Rheims and the house history.

Loreau, officiating priest in St. Stephen's, blessed the new place of worship.[15] Everything seemed to be in readiness for a great future.

Several Brothers, arrived for the Chapter, were present for this ceremony. The first meeting of the Assembly was held in Rheims on the 17th of May, on the Feast of the Ascension. In conformity with Article XIII of the Bull, there were thirty Capitulants, plus the Superior-general, the Assistants Irenée and Étienne (who had come to the end of their commissions and were re-elected) and the "Dean" of the Institute, the former Assistant, Brother Jean Jacquot. There were still among the members some Brothers who knew De La Salle in his old age: -- Brothers Hubert, Benedict, Clement, Michael and Sixtus. Brothers Raymond, Genereaux, and Exuperian were among the more remarkable minds of the following generation: we find them repeatedly in the most important positions. Once again, as with each link, so the entire chain proved solid. The older members and their eventual successors were inspired by a single wish -- to lose nothing of the teachings, customs and the liberties which constituted the Lasallian heritage.

As far back as the 27th of May the question of the transfer of the "Regime" had been raised, and the solution suggested, with the reservations dictated by prudence. His Highness Archbishop Armand Jules de Rohan-Guemene...granted permission to celebrate Holy Mass in the house's chapel, not only during retreats and the Assembly "in session", but also throughout the year, in perpetuity.

The Assembly took note of this permission, and recorded the reason: "In order that this house might become" both "an asylum for aged and infirm Brothers" and "a residence for dear Brother Superior-general and his Assistants, as well as for other officers". Still, "Providence" would have to supply the necessary funds. Thus, the house at St. Yon, "considerably burdened by the cost of living" since 1739, would find relief.[16] Beyond that, it would be necessary to negotiate the stipulations preliminary to the founding of any Community with the city of Rheims. It was a matter that could not be handled by the Capitulants, and we shall examine its sequel a little later on.

The Chapter was concerned with more immediate objectives. The Jansenist conspiracy continued to be formidable: to protect the Brothers' orthodoxy, it was decreed that each Community would procure a book by Father Patouiller, *The Jansenist Library*, which listed all condemned or suspected books. And, in particular, the use of the *Montpellier Catechism*, by Charles Joachim Colbert, was condemned because it contained Anti-Roman positions.

Defended from external dangers, the Congregation believed that it was being recalled to strict observance. The Chapter "acknowledged the...disorders caused by the residence schools existing within school buildings": hence, it "quite explicitly" enjoined Brothers Director to send away children admitted under such conditions prior to the end of the school year 1744-1745. There would be no more residence schools except in institutions approved by the Superior and provided with the necessary structures. "Outside of school hours" the Brothers "were not to teach children of school age, nor anybody else", in order to leave leisure for their exercises of Rule.[17]

Directors should recall that while, for the good of their subordinates, they were granted broad powers, they were to remain wholly in dependence upon, and under the control of, the major Superiors. So that the Institute might remain indivisible, hierarchical lines must remain unobstructed. "A list of things" of which Brothers Director must "given an account" was to be sent from the Motherhouse to all Communities. Temporal administration, educational work and Religious government, from Calais to Rome, from Brest to Nancy was to be preserved in vigorous unity, as De La Salle had wanted it.

For the "Brothers beyond Lyons", whom the slowness of communication left at such great distance from the Superior-general and the Assistants, it was urgent to have recourse to the counsel and orders of an authority that was being exercised on the spot. In particular, changes of personnel from one school to another could not be effected quickly unless the leader knew personally both the milieu and the Brothers. The Brother Director of Avignon, as delegated by the Superior and in virtue of a resolution of the Chapter would continue to be this intermediate authority whose decisions would have executive force.[18]

Such were the main points that occupied the Assembly of 1745. The sessions were concluded on the 3rd of June. Brothers Timothy, Irenée and Étienne returned to Normandy assured of the good spirit and

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[15] Motherhouse Archives, Hb t 3, Historique manuscrit du district de Reims, written about 1908 by Brother Abel. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 157.

[16] Chapter Register; quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 158. note #1.

[17] A special paragraph prescribed the use of "De La Salle's speller in the schools". This small book, which has been lost, was, therefore, not in use in all the schools at this time

[18] Chapitres generaux de l'Institut, Historiques et decisions, pp. 22-3.

obedience of the members of the Congregation, and hoping to resolve, in accordance with the wishes to the Capitulants, the question of the transfer of the central government.

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The horizon in Rouen was still gloomy. At St. Yon itself there was something of a cloud-gatherer at work, in the person of Brother Polycarp. He was an odd individual who it is surprising to find in an important position -- Prefect of the "free" residence pupils. He certainly had ability, the art of making the most of what he possessed, and, as Brother Lucard notes, he had "the appearance of obedience and zeal".[19] But, deep down, he was proud, fickle, malevolent and rancorous. The St. Yon register summarizes his curriculum vitae as follows: Brother Polycarp, called in the world Pierre Le François, from St. Nicholas parish in Rouen, born on the 19th of July, 1696. He entered the Society for the second time on the 5th of October, 1731. From the date of his entrance until June of 1745, he went by the name of François Daquin, rather than Pierre Le François, his true name. On the margin there is additional information: “Formerly Brother Alexandre. Dismissed from the Institute.”[20]

On the 8th of December, 1736, Brother Polycarp wrote the formula of his perpetual vows in the Vow Register and signed it: "Pierre François Daquin". Later, there was added, opposite the indication of defection: "Disruptive spirit, left the Institute with a dispensation from Rome in 1745".[21]

These few lines put us on our guard against the man. The business about names is shady enough: we are tempted to assume that it was undertaken to defuse inquiries at the moment of his second entrance in 1731. The new Brother Polycarp wished, perhaps sincerely, to shed (in whatever way) "the old man". But, in spite of everything, he lied. With a troubled conscience and a distorted personality, he returned to the Religious life. A wounded self-love and a disappointed ambition thrust him into the way of rebellion. He carried his complaints against his Superior to the politicians, the Parlement, the Intendant and to the Archbishop, accusing Brother Timothy of disobedience to civil and ecclesiastical authorities and of administrative mistakes, especially in the management of the reformatory. Denunciations and treacherous accusations were piling up on the desks of higher officials, who, generally, considered Polycarp a dubious and dangerous character.[22] But he continued to harass them by his insistence. Public malice gave currency to rumors concerning the alleged enrichment of St. Yon at the expense of the people entrusted to the Brothers by the king's orders. Contracts drawn up with the relatives of insane persons for the protection of these unfortunates probably provided the pretext for these calumnies. It will be recalled that Brother Irenée himself, a man of God, was blamed when he was obliged to see to the hospitalization of his own brother, Nicholas.[23] Actually, tuitions were modest: John Baptist Machuel, a printer in Rouen and the future publisher of Canon Blain's book, committed his son, Salvador ("whose mind was deranged") to St. Yon in 1726, and annually paid the sum of 128 livres for food, heat, laundry and clothing for the boy.[24] The inhabitants of the St. Sever District, unrefined and suspicious, routinely spread stories about inmates: a common practice in regions having prisons or "lunatic asylums" in the neighborhood. Further, "laborers, gardeners, coal-car pushers and workers" imagined that the Brothers constituted unfair competition by taking on some manual work for the third parties; and, in 1763, they sent a petition to this effect to the Procurator-general of the Parlement of Normandy.[25]

With Brother Polycarp's intrigues added to this babble, the officials decided to refer the matter to the crown. And on the 21st of June, 1745, the Minister Argenson wrote "from the Camp at Tournai" to the Archbishop of Rouen: “They declare, Sir, that great abuse is practiced in the Community of St. Yon...If there is any reality to the facts, religion is very much concerned that a remedy be found. Your prudence will suggest to you the most appropriate means for you to get at the truth. You will be good enough to put

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[19] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 162.

[20] Register of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, 1684-1790, in the Motherhouse Archives, HA m. 13, pg. 35. Peter Le Francois's first admission to, and his first departure from, the Institute probably occurred before 1718; he is not listed under the name of Brother Alexander in the Register (drawn up at that date). In October, 1718, there was an "Alexander Quenay" who became a Brother of the Christian Schools while retaining his baptismal name as his Religious name; this "Brother Alexander" died on the 29th of October, 1746 in the Community of Mens.

[21] Register, pg. 118.

[22] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, Series D, 538, correspondence and memoranda on the subject of Brother Polycarp's complaints

[23] See above, pp. 156

[24] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, Chartrier Belbeuf, B, 13.

[25] Contract dated the 23rd of May, 1726, provided by Canon Farcy in his book, le Manoir de Saint-Yon, pg. 124.

me in a position to inform the king, and, at the same time, to send me your advice concerning the lines of authority in case you believe it necessary to reestablish good order in that institution..”[26]

Both the friends of the Institute and the Brothers were overwhelmed. Hubert Joseph Binet, priest in Rouen, who, as preacher and confessor, collaborated in the work of St. Yon, wrote on the 25th of July to the Superior-general that he was "surprised as he was scandalized to hear of the unjust complaints of the Judas" of the Congregation.[27] On the same date Polycarp, exposed, was about to leave the religious family in which, in Father Binet's words, "by an excessive indulgence", he had been kept too long and which he had damaged as much as he could.

Twenty-four hours after the priest's vigorous protest, Brothers Alexis, Director of Boulogne, Germain, Director of Calais, Exuperian, Director of St. Omer and Raymond, former Director addressed a "testimonial" intended for the Archbishop's eyes. Their gesture tended principally to clear Brother Timothy from the accusations regarding the independence he was supposed to have displayed with respect to the diocesan authority. They learned with sadness (they wrote) that individuals in our house at St. Yon had prejudiced the Vicars-general of Rouen against the Institute.The holding of the Chapter in Rheims was the principal pretext for the assertion that the Superior of the Brothers had "wished to evade ecclesiastical jurisdiction". The four witnesses declared that, in this matter, there was nothing that was not permitted by the Bull. They praised the "conduct" and "government" of their leader, wise, discreet, regular, "a father to his family". They "hoped" therefore that their "first Superior" (i.e., in this case, the higher clergy in Rouen) "would do justice" to their Society and, first of all, to "the Most Honored Brother Superior-general". In testimony whereof they signed, at Boulogne, the 26th of July, 1745, the document we have just examined.[28]

However, the Archbishop refused to abandon the inquiry. He was obliged to intervene both on his own authority and in virtue of the charge he had received from the king. Nicolas Saulx-Tavannes, next-to-last primate of Normandy under the "Ancien Regime", Peer of France, and Grand Chaplain to the Queen was a Lord of a very noble breed, haughty, princely, stately and who held court in his chateau "Gaillon", with its beautiful apartments, magnificent gardens and well-provided stables. He meant to visit the lowly Brothers in the trappings of his power and impose his law upon them.

On the 30th of July, 1745, he informed his dear sons, the Superior-general, Assistants, Visitors, Superiors, Directors and Brothers of the Christian Schools, founded in the St. Sever District, that on Monday, the second day of the month of August next, he would come to their house...in order to begin his Archiepiscopal visitation, both spiritual and temporal...In the course of this visit, he would listen to them in general, and to each one in particular...He would hear gently and attentively complaints and advice...concerning the relaxation of Rules or the abuses which might have crept in. He recommended to them to have nothing in view except what they believed to be most pleasing to God and must contribute to the good of their Institute. Brother Superior-general was invited to assemble his Brothers "in chapter", to read them the present order, so that they might be disposed to receive (the prelate) with the propriety which befitted his Archiepiscopal dignity.[29]

The reception was one that Archbishop Tavannes might have wished; it gave him a quite favorable impression of the good order of the house, the direction of the residents and the piety of the teachers; as we shall have presently to record. The Archbishop, however, under pressure from the people around him, did not intend that the entire matter be dropped with his *satisfecit*. It seemed to be a good opportunity to assert the Congregation's complete dependence upon the See of Rouen.

Such was the object of an Archiepiscopal order dated the 17th of August, 1745. Having arranged a few matters of detail in its two opening articles (the time for the High Mass on Sundays in the Brothers' chapel and the ceremony to be followed on the day when the parochial procession of the Blessed Sacrament entered the gardens at St. Yon) it prescribed for the Brothers "who were unable to apply

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27 Letter quoted by Brother Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 163-4, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine.

28 Motherhouse Archives, BE y 2, Brother Timothy file; cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 162-3. For the reasons given for convoking the Chapter in Rheims, see above, pp. 297.

29 Motherhouse Archives, Brother Timothy file, BB y 2, Copy of Argenson's letter.

themselves to mental prayer...vocal prayers" or the recitation of the Rosary. It abolished all dietary differences between abstinences of Rule and Church abstinences.

Article V was one further instance of the prelate's meddling: Those Brothers who desire to appeal to us or to our Vicars-general and consult us on their spiritual practices may write to us directly, or to our Vicars-general without the superior of the Community being able to see their letters or our replies...And the strange Article VI showed clearly where this appetite to legislate individual cases over the head of the leaders of the Congregation was tending, as if, in spite of the Bull of 1725, the Ordinary of the diocese must arbitrate, as a court of last resort, the conflicts that arise between a Brother and the Superior to whom he has promised obedience. Archbishop Tavannes, conjuring up the matter concerning Brother Polycarp, imposed the presence of this undesirable individual upon the Institute: The Brother Superior will give him an 'obedience' for one of the provincial schools, which he believes to be less difficult.

Suddenly, the thread of the conspiracy emerged. And behind the regulations and formal commands there appeared the underhanded activity of the informer, who had reached to the point of throwing up a barrier of mistrust between the Archbishop's office and the Brothers' administration. Again, Article VII established a complete bookkeeping procedure for the gathering of revenues and the cost of tuitions. Control, of course, would remain with the Superior-general; the document did not go so far as to question his wisdom or his scrupulous honesty. But it restricted his powers and suggested guidelines for temporal administration.

Articles VIII and IX provided a sort of triumph for the local adversaries of the Institute. It had been said that the Brothers, during the General Chapter, had contrived by every means to elude their duties of fidelity and obedience to the Archbishop of Rouen. And hostile people found the most evident "proof" of this supposed rebellion in the edition of the "Rules and Constitutions of the Institute", printed in 1726 by Antony Le Prevost. This little work, between page i and page viii contains "a quotation from the Bull of Our Holy Father Pope Benedict XIII". Only the clause "That they obey the Superior-general whom shall have elected" was preserved from the second article of the Roman document; while the reference to the authority of the Bishops was replaced by dots.

The omission was sufficiently justified, since the 1726 edition was intended to provide only a summary of the Bull as it correlated with the principal rules. It was easy to consult the integral text, registered by Parlement and well known to the canonists. But an effort was being made on the strength of a line of text, to bring Brother Timothy to trial. Worsening his crime, there was discovered in the Rule of Government, still in manuscript, the words which in fact dated from 1717 and came from an edition worked over by De La Salle himself: For the direction of the schools, the Brothers shall be under the ordinary guidance of the Bishops of each place.

The sentence meant that Christian education would remain, of course, the Church's education, regulated, controlled and approved by legitimate pastors: -- something which in no way excluded the obligation incumbent on each Brother to act as an obedient member of the diocese at the same time as a faithful parishioner. To interpret this innocent assertion maliciously it took a Brother Polycarp whispering into the welcoming ears of some of the Vicars-general.

The order signed by Archbishop Tavannes seemed to support the detractor's claim. Quite imperiously, it invited "the Brother Superior": immediately to have the Bull printed in its entirety (and) to send copies to the individual schools to be substituted for the extract...(Art. VIII) And then, to correct all the manuscript copies of the Rule of Management and Government...to the 5th chapter.

The new edition was to read as follows: “The Brothers will be under the dependence of the Brother Superior-general elected by them and the guidance and authority of the diocesan bishops of the places where they are established.” In this way there would be no misunderstanding (concluded the prelate) as to the extent of episcopal authority.

Finally, Article X gave off the whiff of pure Gallicanism. Neglecting the solemn approbation of the Holy See, it demanded that "The Rules and Constitutions" be presented to the Archbishop of Rouen for a fresh examination. Archbishop Tavannes condescended to agree to allow them to be "in effect" only while he was examining them. "They shall be complied with temporarily" .[30]

The Archiepiscopal signature was hardly dry on this curious document before the man who was responsible for it announced its forwarding to Brother Timothy in language that was full of graciousness and that spared neither merited praise nor the sentiments of the most lively sympathy. The cover-letter was dated the 13th of August:

[30] Ibid., loc. cit.

"Matters that concern me at the moment not permitting me, my dear Brother, to go to St. Yon myself, I have entrusted one of my Vicars-general, Father Terisse, to assemble your Community and read you the order I have issued in consequence of my visitation to your house; I have no doubt that people will conform exactly. I have strongly recommended to Father Terisse that he indicate to you how much I was edified by the discipline and the regularity that reigns in your Community. I know all the good things that you do in the schools that are confided to you and how useful you are to the public. Such useful institutions cannot be sustained except by the strict subordination that must exist between your Brothers and their Superiors and the Directors of each house. I do not doubt that on every occasion you take appropriate measures to maintain it; and you can count on my help and protection. I believe I owe them to your zeal and your good intentions. I ask to be remembered in your prayers and beg you not to doubt of my good opinion of you."[31]

There were no illusions about the contents of the order. On the other hand, the prelate insisted on the "subordination" of the Brothers to their Superiors and Directors. Are we to believe that this letter expressed his personal opinion and was so phrased as to restrict the effects of the text drawn up by secretaries in the Archbishop's office? After this discreet notice, Brother Timothy was probably less surprised when "on the twentieth of August, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, François Christopher Terisse" addressed the Brothers of St. Yon in a brief discourse on "the results that might be gleaned from the (Archbishop's) visit"; and he had the order read by Father Jacques François Bouchard, whom he brought along with him "as his secretary". A brief reply was made to the Vicar-general to the effect that His Highness' order would be fulfilled.[32] The Bull was published integrally -a matter that offered no difficulty.[33] Judging by the passage introduced into Chapter VI, there was certainly a modification of one of the paragraphs of the Rule of Government when it was updated in 1777:[34] The Brothers of this Institute shall live in dependence upon, and in obedience to, the Brother Superior-general whom they shall have elected and they shall be established in dioceses where they shall be admitted with the consent of the Bishops and under their authority.[35]But Institute structures remained intact and its administration autonomous: and Brother Polycarp had no other recourse than to ask Rome for a dispensation from his vows.

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Accused and threatened with investigations, Brother Timothy did not bend. His conscience was clear and his claims were sound. At St. Yon the Archbishop had not found the "abuses" that had been imagined by public rumor, asserted by false witnesses and proclaimed all the way to Versailles. Members of the higher clergy, dissatisfied with the Institute, had not pushed their opposition to the limit, while Archbishop Tavannes subscribed to their views without being resolved to take any decisive action. Nevertheless, the order of the 12th of August remained in force. It could be (and did become) a weapon in the hands of those who, contrary to the wishes of the Holy See, sought to reduce De La Salle's Society to the ranks of a diocesan Congregation. A transfer from Rouen, then, remained a distinct possibility.

In anticipation of the move to Rheims two pieces of property were purchased in that city in 1745 on Rue Contray and on Rue Barbatre.[36] The Archbishop's sympathy could be counted upon. Two letters from people who surrounded Archbishop Rohan provided the evidence; but, at the same time, they pointed to obstacles that arose elsewhere. One of them was addressed to the Mayor of Rheims and the other to the

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[31] Ibid., loc. cit. This letter was printed: there is a copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Cf. Lucard, who, erroneously, dates the letter the 20th of August, 1745, Vol. II, Annales, pp. 164-5; Brother Lucard is silent concerning the order of the 12th, which obliges him to "work around" the Archbishop's letter.

[32] 2 Ibid., loc. cit.

[33] The Avignon edition of the Rule, printed by John Neal in 1768, contains only the "Letters patent" of 1725, ordering the registration of the Bull of Benedict XIII, along with the "Letters patent" of September, 1724. In his Vie du Venerable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle (Toulouse, 1852), Father Salvan says that there was knowledge of the 1745 edition. We have been unable to find a copy. It was perhaps intended to satisfy the demands of the Archbishop of Rouen. However, we shall see that in 1767 Brother Claude would present the 1726 edition to Bishop Rochefoucauld.

[34] See below, Part Four, pg. 457

[35] There is a perceptible difference between this way putting the matter and the one that the order of 1745 sought to impose. Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 70, note #1. National Archives, L, 963.

[36] Historique manuscrit. cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 160.

Councilman, Simon Philibert de La Salle L'Etang who, as a member of the Holy Founder's family and president of the civil society for the "Christian Schools", embraced the project.

"I am replying to the letter that you and the Gentleman on the City Council wrote me", a spokesman for the Archbishop wrote on the 16th of April, 1746.

The problem was for the authorities in Rheims to be in agreement before the Brothers would ask for "Letters patent" which would legalize the proposed foundation. The ecclesiastical authority presented the city officials with considerations that suggested good sense, impartiality and sensitivity: I found enclosed (with your letter) a statement of conditions without which you believe that the "Letters patent" should not be sought. It is right and prudent, in the present circumstances, to take appropriate measures to anticipate relaxation and to maintain among the School Brothers the spirit of their Institute, as well as zeal and fervor in the performance of their duty. But, on the other hand, allow me to say that there would be something harsh in imposing upon them conditions that are too burdensome and humiliating...and one runs the risk of inspiring distaste by proposing them. There is reason to believe that the Brothers in Rheims would not accept them; but, assuming that they would, there is no doubt that St. Yon would be opposed and that it would prefer to abandon special "Letters patent" for Rheims and, as it has done up to the present, be satisfied with the general "Letters patent" that it has for the entire kingdom. Furthermore, such conditions might raise doubts at Court whether the School Brothers are as highly regarded as they have the right to be.[37]

The archbishop took the same viewpoint in a letter of 2nd May to M.de L'Étang: "The new remarks you make with regard to the Brothers convince me more and more of the zeal that inspires you to prolong the advantages which have been up to now withdrawn with reference to their schools in the city of Rheims. My ideas are the same as yours and it is for this reason that I wish the good they do to continue. I feel that too onerous or humiliating conditions for the Brothers need to be avoided so that the good they achieve in their schools should not b e changed."[38]

However, in his impatient optimism, L'Étang flattered himself that he could find a solution that would satisfy everybody. On the 26th of April, he wrote to Brother Timothy: "You can come and live with your Assistants in your institution in Rheims; and I can assure you that the Gentlemen of the Council, along with our entire city, will be satisfied, since that house is the cradle of your Congregation and it is situated in the city of the birthplace of your Holy Founder."[39]

The Superior-general had yet to examine the stipulations whose effect the Archbishop's office feared and he must have been greatly edified at the first reading.

In its essential the municipal document reads as follows: "Assuming that the property that the Brothers own or shall own will be destined, through the donor's intentions, for the tuition-free education of the children of Rheims, that city, through "Letters patent" will be declared the real owner. In the circumstance in which the Brothers should abandon the education of youth, they shall be summoned, at the behest of the king's procurator, the city lawyer, to return to their duty and teach their classes at fixed times; and once those times have passed, and their negligence or their abandonment of the schools has been established in an assembly of the City Council...the Brother shall have forfeited, without any further recourse, all rights to which they might have laid claim to the properties acquired for their advantage..".

So much for the first article. The other nine were inspired by the same spirit. From the Superior they demanded at least 16 Brothers for classes and then rigorously limited the scope of their teaching. For the rest, financial preoccupations outweighed educational considerations. It was settled that the Institute was to supply a signed declaration from the entitled owners of all the property (the Brothers) possessed in Rheims), stating that these properties were designated for the tuition-free schools of the city. No new property could be acquired without notice of it being given to the municipality; otherwise, that property "shall be awarded to the Alms House". "When the Brothers shall have...6,000 livres of income", they would not be able to increase their resources without the consent of the mayor and the supervisors. And, yet, "under no pretext" should they solicit help from municipal funds.

The Superiors-general...and the Brothers of St. Yon (Art. VIII) would undertake never to acquire any property, whether by legacy or gift, or by any deed whatsoever, from any person living in Rheims

[37] M. Leveque Pouilly, Deputy-general of the Presidium. But the document, (which we are unable to find at Rheims), like the preceding letter whose arguments and language it borrows, does indeed seem to be inspired by the Archbishop's office

[38] Lucard, Annales, taken from the municipal archives of Rheims

[39] Historique manuscript – Cf.Lucard

without the consent of the city, and acquisitions made without (this) consent, having to be deemed as done in violation of the contract would be (like important growth in capital) awarded to the Alms House.

Conveyances of property, transfers, annuities from mortgages would be valid only at the good pleasure of the Gentlemen of Rheims. Finally, supervision would be exercised over the maintenance and repair of the school buildings.[40]

Thus, the city absorbed the rights but assumed none of the responsibilities. Properties acquired by De La Salle or his relatives passed into the public domain, and, on any day, the Institute might lose the use of them. The Brothers would constantly experience upon their every move the burden of a minute, uneasy and (in the words of one of their defenders) completely humiliating control. It was a curious way of acknowledging the services rendered which, however, no one dreamed of denying. But Rheims had not layed aside the mistrust and the contempt it had long ago shown the disciples of its remarkable son. Their successors obtained scarcely a curt mention in the accounts of the local historians. In the region of their origin and in spite of the support of the De La Salle family, they remained "the poor Brothers unknown and little regarded", as the Founder had predicted.[41] The middle-class in Rheims in 1746 spoke the same language as in 1730, when its mayor protested to the Intendant a Brothers' request that sought an exemption from taxes on gifts: “We flatter ourselves, Sir, that you, by your authority, did not put those people in a position to triumph over us.”[42]

Even L'Étang himself had not shaken off the prejudices of his fellow-citizens. As the Brothers's advocate in the city, he set himself up, obviously with the best of intentions (to conciliate hostile parties) as the city's advocate with the Superior-general. And he pleaded the city's cause in rather unfortunate terms. Sending Brother Timothy the city's memorandum and endeavoring to get him to concede the most rigorous exactions in the name of the public good, he concluded: “If, notwithstanding all that I have just said, your Council stiffens at this article (Art. VIII, which opposed free gifts from benefactors), I assure you that you shall have misrepresented it, because it must be understood that its purpose is to make use of all indirect ways to enrich the house in Rheims.”

Was the Motherhouse of a Congregation seeking every means to enrich itself when it defended its own patrimony, insisted on administering its own affairs and demanded the right to acquire and keep the properties necessary for the support of its novices and retired personnel? The Brothers could not give countenance to the belief that their behavior was dictated by sordid self-interest. They caused to be written (probably by a lawyer or a cleric of their acquaintance) a "Short Essay on the (City's) Stipulations, a Brief by the Brothers of the Christian Schools".

The author writes: “After having attentively read and reread the (text) that you sent me, I assure you, my dear Brother, that I have been increasingly surprised by the provisions it contains. They offer you a service, but on condition of fashioning your chains and reducing you to the status of slaves. Look yourself whether I am mistaken in arguing the provisions in question...The qualities of slaves are to cease to be their own men, to have nothing of their own, to work only for their masters, to be in such a great dependence upon them that they can do nothing except by their orders, and finally, to be always in fear of being sent away from their homes and die wretchedly when they become feeble, infirm and old. Now, that is pretty close to what they are asking of you.”[43]

This statement summarized in forceful language the consequences that must be foreseen if the business were taken any farther. Since the City Council was unyielding, so was Brother Timothy. In Rouen, the exercise of his rights was theoretically in dispute; and he had to fear some abuse of power on the part of the Archbishop's office; but practically his leadership up until then had not met with any serious obstacle. At Rheims, while the religious authority seemed well disposed, the local civic officials were preparing to enslave the Institute materially and remove all hope of settling comfortably a headquarters with sufficient funds and provided with a novitiate and open to Brothers in their old-age. Since the granting of new "Letters patent" was subject to a favorable judgment on the part of the City Corporation, it would have to be thought superfluous to pursue negotiations the results of which would be, contrary to the "Regime's" expectations, detrimental to the schools in Rheims.

This effort, undertaken in 1746, seems to have had no consequence other than to bring about the dissolution of the Society responsible for the temporal affairs of the schools. L'Étang and his associates

[40] Historique du District du Rheims Archives Maison Mère

[41] The author of the Historique manuscrit...makes these shrewd remarks.

[42] Quoted by Albert Babeau, la Province sous l'Ancien Regime, Vol. II, pg. 309.

[43] Document supplied by Historique manuscrit.

were, perhaps, persuaded of the futility of their role the moment they considered a transfer of property in favor of either the city or the Brothers. After talks were broken off, people abided by the *modus vivendi* which was set forth in the document of 1776: real estate was administered commonly "by a relative of the Founder, benefactors and the 'Regime' of the Institute". [44] The final division of their property remained in abeyance until "Letters patent" were obtained for the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris. "Properties given or acquired before 1749 for the maintenance of the Brothers who teach in the schools" were always considered "revertible to various pious works", in the case of the disappearance of the Christian Brothers' schools from the city of Rheims.[45]

The status quo was maintained at St. Yon for another twenty-five years.

[44] Lucard, Annales

[45] Petition of the Deputy for the inhabitants and the Gentlemen of the City Council to the King, 25th of November, 1776, in Arnould, op. cit., pp. 124-7. We note again an intervention of the De La Salle family in 1759. On the 31st of May of that year, according to Miss Masson's study, Miss Theresa Godinot sold "a house situated on the Rue Neuve contiguous to one belonging to the Christian Brothers", to Father John Francis de La Salle, Doctor in Theology, Canon of the metropolitan church and former Rector of the University, grandson of Simon de La Salle and Grand-cousin of the Founder of the Institute. The Canon declared on the 26th of June that the price of the purchase was given him by the Brothers in Rheims. He was acting therefore as an intermediary, since the Brothers in Rheims were not legally recognized.
3 National Archives, L, 963, statement of the income for the Rheims Community (in 1792).

CHAPTER TWO

Brothers Claude and Florence at St. Yon

"Timothy, keep the faith." St. John Baptist de La Salle might have repeated St. Paul's command to his second successor. After the. brief generalate of Brother Barthèlemy, William Samson-Bazin had the time, the strength of will and the necessary scope of intellect to transform the tiny Society of 1720 into a large Congregation, sure of the present and, in the course of things, called upon to spread as distantly and as durably as Catholicism itself. It would be the transformation of a seed into a huge tree -- without altering its nature, through the unfolding of its own internal finality. Like Barthèlemy, Timothy had assimilated the thought and had modelled himself on the action of the Founder. He nourished his Brothers on the spiritual doctrine especially prepared by De La Salle for their use; and he constantly watched over the observation of the Rule and the deployment of educational methods. On the mid-eighteenth century horizon, humanly speaking, he occupied a more important place than did his master during the final years of the reign of Louis XIV. The Papal Bull and the "Letters patent", obtained through his efforts, religious vows pronounced on his initiative, over sixty schools opened in the North, South, East and West of the kingdom, a novitiate begun in Avignon, besides the novitiate at St. Yon and another opened in Dole prior to the one that was about to be founded in Maréville, the stabilization of the institution in Rome, along with the introduction of the Brothers to Ferrara and to Estavayer, beyond the French frontiers -- all of this work genuinely merited for Brother Timothy the title of a "great Superior" and, in a way, the reputation for being the "Second Founder".

In 1751, although he had not yet reached his seventieth year, after a half -century of tireless activity, Brother Timothy was beginning to age. Many of his colleagues were dead. In 1742, alone Brother Thomas, the longtime Procurator, Brother Antoine (Jean Partois), the former secretary to De La Salle, and Brother André the perennial Director of the Schools in Laon had all left the scene. The loss of Brother Irenée (on the 3rd of October, 1747) was especially grievous to Brother Timothy, for whom the saintly Religious was friend, close collaborator and his most cherished consultant. It was at this time that Brother Étienne became first Assistant.[46] The second Assistant was Brother Daniel (Antoine Rodier), who had opened the school in Aix-en-Provence and later became Director of St. Yon. His election was declared by a commission appointed by the Superior-general after a count of the votes sent in by the Directors and a few of the professed Brothers who had been nominated by reason of their seniority.

With Brother Daniel the generation of those who had not known De La Salle had reached the top-levels of the hierarchy. Brother Timothy could begin to think about taking his place with the "pioneers" who were in retirement and enjoying the reputation of "faithful servants". The distressing events in Rouen and Rheims had wounded him deeply. For three years more he struggled, ruling quietly and lucidly and observing his Rule without relaxation. But, in May of 1751, he fell gravely ill, and his incomplete recovery left him unable thoroughly to fulfill his task.

He decided to call a Chapter to select his successor. When the Assembly met on the 1st of August, he submitted his resignation. The Capitulants asked for time "to reflect on the matter before God". On the following day the old man made the following statement: Since my infirmities have clearly increased since my last illness and I am obviously in no condition to fulfill my responsibilities as Superior, I think I should submit my resignation to the Brothers assembled in a body during the Retreat they are making; because, apart from the physical infirmity which prevents me from walking, my mental lapses are still more urgent reason for me to do so. These two reasons give me hope that my petition will be heeded, for the best interests of the Institute.[47]

The Brothers were obliged to concur. Their Superior was at the extreme limit of his strength. He had, in fact, only five months to live, and, as might have been imagined, he used the time devoutly in preparation for the great leave-taking. His certification of interment read as follows:
On this day, January 8th, in the year 1752, was interred in the vault under the choir in the church at St. Yon, by me, Francis Bracquehaye, priest and confessor in the same house, the body of the later William

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[46] The Motherhouse Archives BD p possesses a document in Brother Stephen's handwriting, dated the 21st of November, 1742, attesting that he was cured "around 1731" of an ulcer on the nose after having invoked the intercession of J.B. de La Salle.

[47] Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, Brother Timothy file, BE y 2.

Samson-Bazin, called Brother Timothy, professed Religious and Superior-general of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a native of the parish of St. Severinus in Paris, who died yesterday, at the age of about sixty-nine years, after having received the Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. In testimony whereof we, along with the witnesses hereinafter named, have signed: Bracquehaye, Priest, Br. Claude, Sup., Br. Celestine, sacristan.2

Brother Timothy's remains were interred alongside those of the Founder and Brother Irenée. On the 3rd of August, 1751, Brother Claude (Jean Pierre Nivet) was elected Superior-general. We have written above of his birth, his family, his rather late entrance into the Congregation and the influence exercised on him by Brother Irenée.3 For the second time a former Director in Avignon took control of the government of the Christian Brothers. He was a man of robust faith and solid courage, strongly attached to the traditions of his Institute, quite resolved to maintain the Brothers in simplicity of life and within the sphere (actually quite extensive) of the activities proper to Religious who must remain primarily teachers of the common people. Many and bold undertakings were not to be expected of him: neither the times nor the circumstances encouraged them, and neither did the age of the new leader (who was sixty-one when he was chosen) nor,[48] of course, did his character. He came from the rural, lower-middle class and from a region of peaceful vistas. Until he was thirty-seven years of age he lived in Chatillon-sur-Loing; and five years after entering the Congregation he received his "obedience" as Director of the novitiate in Avignon, where his life glided by in the City of the Popes among the young men he trained to Christian virtue and the educational apostolate and among the Brothers of the South of France whom he counselled, supervised and strengthened for difficult times and fortified by annual Retreats as well as by Retreats in preparation for the pronouncement of vows. His was a quiet manner and modest, with an intelligent and gentle face, a large forehead, framed by graying hair; his eyes were lively and wide open; and his face was oval-shaped, rather plain, and where both time and concern had etched deep furrows.[49]

His immediate aides were Brother Étienne, confirmed by the Chapter of 1751 as the first Assistant, and Brother Raymond, elected by the same assembly to replace Brother Daniel. And, then, beginning on the 3rd of August, 1752, Brother Genereux, in the second year of the generalate, succeeded Brother Étienne, who had become too infirm to perform his duties.

Brother Raymond (Jean François Genart) was born on September 19th, 1700, in the parish of Lerzy, in the diocese of Laon. Entering the Institute on the 4th of April, 1723, he pronounced his triennial vows on the 21st of September, 1728, in the presence of Brother Timothy, and his perpetual vows at St. Yon on the 15th of August, 1731.[50] In 1744, nominated to head the School of Commerce in Boulogne,[51] it was in that city in the following year that, with his confreres Alexis, Germain and Exuperian, he signed the filial and fervent testimonial in favor of Brother Timothy's stewardship.[52] He was Director of the Boulogne Community when the General Chapter was convoked.[53]

Jean Baptist de Saint, another northerner, from the parish of Capellevieille, in the diocese of Boulogne, also spent some time in Avignon. Born on the 1st of July, 1705, admitted as a postulant on the 15th of October, 1729, and become Brother Genereux on the 21st of September, 1721, he committed himself for three years, in the presence of the venerable Brother Gabriel Drolin, who had been deputized for this purpose by the Superior-general, in the principal Community in the South of France. He was perpetually professed at. St. Yon on the 8th of December, 1734. We have seen that he was placed in charge of the schools in Rheims, and, in that capacity, obtained from the Archbishop the right to open a chapel in the house on the Rue Neuve. A splendid Religious, he had assumed the difficult task of Procurator-general and, at the same time, directed the professed Brothers at St. Yon,[54] when the votes of the Directors and Senior Brothers nominated him to the post of Assistant.

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[48] Motherhouse Archives, CCf p A, Capitualary Register A. Quoted by Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg.2

[49] According to a portrait preserved in the Motherhouse

[50] Motherhouse Archives, Ha m. 17, Avignon Vow Book, pg. 6 and HA m 11, St. Yon Vow Book, pg. 61.

[51] See Bishop Chassagnon, Le Bienheureux Salomon, pg. 69.

[52] See above, pg. 304.

[53] Brother Raymond resigned in 1767 and died at St. You on the 13th of November,1779. His body, buried in the crypt at St. Yon on the following day, was transported in 1895 to the Bon Secours Cemetery, along with the bodies of Brothers Irenée, Timothy and Claude

[54] Motherhouse Archives, Avignon Vow Book, pg. 20 and St. Yon Vow Book, pg. 100.

The Chapter of 1751 was a large one. Besides the former Superior-general and his successor, the two functioning Assistants, and Brothers Jean and Daniel, who had previously filled those posts, it included forty-nine members come from all points of the nation. The growth of the Institute was the reason why it was thought necessary to exceed the figure anticipated by Article XIII of the Bull, which had been regarded as a minimum. Besides, Article III stipulated that the Superior-general was to be elected by the Directors of the principal houses, without any limitation as to numbers. And it was for this purpose that the Chapter had been convoked. However, it did not break up without examining the overall situation.

Basically, two problems occupied the attention of the Capitulants during the eight days of meetings. First there was the contract drawn up in 1749 with King Stanilaus: "On the proposal...made to establish a novitiate at Mareville" agreement was "unanimous...regarding the sympathy" of his Majesty and regarding the support "he offered the Brothers, and regarding also the wishes of the Lord Chancellor of Lorraine and the generosity of Count John Claude Bouzey."[55] The first novice entered Mareville on16th of October, 1751: his name was Pierre Picard, who became Brother Philip of Jesus .[56]

And then the question of residence schools, already raised at the previous Chapter, came up once again for discussion. It was absolutely necessary to avoid dissipation of effort and eliminate anything that might obstruct the primordial role of tuition-free schools. It was decided that there would be residence schools at St. Yon, Marseille, Mirepoix, Die, Montpellier, St. Omer, Montargis, Angers and Maréville only.

This meant the maintenance of those institutions that were already operative, secure and reasonably flourishing. We shall have to study the history and the regulations of the most celebrated of these, which did not disappear until the catastrophe of 1792. "The Very Dear Brother Superior was free" to authorize new residence schools when he thought it prudent.

Among other decisions in 1751, one revealed the difference that had occurred in a half-century concerning the material conditions of life. Around 1700 it was thought that an annual salary of 150 livres would assure the food and maintenance of a schoolteacher. Henceforth, a strict minimum 250 livres would be required. If this sum were not guaranteed by "founders", "no Brothers would be supplied".

With this Chapter is also associated an initiative involving the Institute's iconography. The old seal that had authenticated some of the official documents showed St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, with the words: The Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Communities, as well as the Motherhouse, had taken up its use. It was decided that "the Institute's seal would be a shining silver star on an azure shield", inscribed with the devise: *Signum fidei*. (To recall, through this "sign", that "the spirit of faith" is the fundamental virtue of the Congregation) "The Directors (were) explicitly forbidden to copy it, since this seal was to be for the exclusive use of the Regime".

A final point remained to be decided, a problem to be solved: would the Assembly that had been called extraordinarily to accept Brother Timothy's resignation be numbered in the series provided for in Article XIII of the Bull, so that the next "decennial" Chapter would be held in 1761? Or would it be regarded as a supplementary Chapter and, counting the intervals as had been done since the great Assembly of 1725, would the Capitulants be called back in 1755? Since these meetings were expensive as well as the occasion of a lot of hard work, and since their frequency was apt to introduce uncertainties into the regular schedules of schools and Communities, the most liberal interpretation prevailed: "there would be no General Chapter before 1761", unless, of course, something happened of a nature to demand an earlier convocation.

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The 8th General Chapter was indeed assembled between the 8th and the 13th of July, 1761, toward the end of the 10th year of Brother Claude's generalate. We shall mention it only in passing, since its role was a modest one and the difficulties that the Superior had to face did not arise until well after the work of this Assembly. Brother Claude who was seventy-one years of age would have preferred to retire; but the forty-five Capitulants refused to accept his resignation; and they reappointed his Assistants, Brothers Raymond and Genereux. Their principal decree bears witness to the concern that the Institute cherished of continuing to be worthy of its educational mission. The Brothers Visitor were enjoined to "make a serious examination" of candidates for vows both as regards behavior as well as "knowledge and competence". There were to be inquiries concerning study programs and especially concerning catechism. Furthermore, an inquiry was to be undertaken of future professed Brothers in the Community in which they lived as well as in the neighboring Communities.

[55] Capitulary Register

[56] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 269.

In John Baptist de La Salle's Collection the Brothers learned that they must not "discriminate between the particular duties of (their) state and those which refer to (their) salvation and perfection",[57] and, in the Meditations for Time of Retreat, that "God would begin by making them answer for the souls of their pupils before making them answer for their own" .[58] Thus, their entire religious consciousness was involved in the daily task. If they were indifferent, they would fail of their purpose. If one of them, by chance, was about to fail, the close solidarity which bound all members of a faculty would ordinarily be enough to keep him on his feet and enable him to cross the dangerous threshold of boredom and discouragement. There was the Brothers' example, prayer and advice and the Director's council. The hierarchy introduced by the Founder, on the model of the Jesuits, prevented the splintering or relaxation of forces.

The "decisions of the Chapters" that the Assembly of 1761 had prescribed to be read in the Communities twice a year, "in January and during Pentecost", reminded the humblest teacher struggling in some far-off town, and frequently reduced to the severest conditions of existence, that his work and his poverty complied with his Congregation's Rule and that his merits made one with those of "his dear Father", John Baptist de La Salle, that his isolation was not abandonment and that, whether living or dead, he would continue to be assisted by the "suffrages" of a great spiritual family.

Externally, another action affected the moral, religious and professional life of the Brothers. It did not supersede but it shored up their desire for edification and progress. We refer to public opinion, of the ever-present scrutiny that the clergy, public officials and the populace devoted to the schools of the Institute. The Brothers in their Communities could not, like monks behind their high abbey walls, think of themselves as wholly autonomous and responsible only to God for their actions and their conduct. In contact with "the world", they owed the world good example. In a way, parents and pupils were their judges. Pupils' attitudes and language were a sort of sanction: -- chastisement for the faithless "mentor", but reward for the man who was conscientious and dedicated. We know about the admiration which Christian Brothers' teaching ordinarily inspired, the results achieved not only in collective discipline, but in each of the souls of the children trained to work, obedience, piety and purity. The Brothers (as Ernest Arnould said with respect to the elementary education in Rheims) "introduced and left profound impressions and ineradicable convictions in the hearts of their scholars".[59] The cities, no matter how ill-disposed they may have been, for reasons of self-interest or out of mistrust of Religious Congregations) almost without exception witnessed to the educational competence of the teachers who came from St. Yon.

As for supervision by bishops and pastors, it was not just an empty word. The heads of dioceses maintained their immemorial rights over scholastic institutions. Over the Congregation founded by De La Salle they exercised a legitimate authority formally recognized by the Bull of Approbation.[60] In many founding contracts we have seen bishops preoccupied with the orthodoxy of the Brothers called into their dioceses whether by themselves or by some ecclesiastical or lay benefactor. While some of them showed a tendency to overstep their powers by interfering in the internal organization and the temporal affairs of Communities, the trouble they caused the Superiors at least had as its redeeming factor the keeping of the Brothers on their toes and inspiring them to redouble their efforts with the view of a strict observance of a Rule that the Brothers were accused of misunderstanding. Some pastors, too, entertained prejudices that they were forced to give up when, inspecting their parochial schools, they joined in prayer, or questioned the children on the catechism or when, in church and in the confessional, they became aware of the changes accomplished, often with surprising suddenness, in the faith and morals of their flock.

Everything, then, cooperated to keep the Institute on the straight and narrow path marked out for it by its Founder and to preserve it from the temptations of the times. And we can well imagine what these might have been in a period when many Christian consciences were beginning to cloud over, when Religious and priests (without going so far as infidelity or scandal) were discharging their sacred obligations in a

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[57] Collection of Various Short Treatises, "Reflections on Their State and Employment".

[58] Thirteenth Meditation, second point.

[59] Arnould, op.cit., pg. 1.

[60] At Chartres the Bishop went so far as to call himself the "Superior-general and Procurator" of the Brothers in the parishes of St. Hilary and St. Maurice. ("Bull. de la Societe archeologique d'Eure-et-Loir", Vol. III, pg. 36, for the year 1874, article by Lucien Merlet.)

perfunctory way, tasting of the delights of the easy life and displaying forbearance for the concealed or avowed adversaries of the Church.

The king himself had contributed decisively to the deepest concerns of the Lasallian family with his demands concerning the reformatory at St. Yon. The administration of this institution continued to be a genuine cross for the Brothers. In virtue of one of Louis XV's orders, the only people to be imprisoned there were those confined under "lettres de cachet" and, therefore, the most undesirable of residents. They were dissolute, corrupt, and unbalanced persons who had been unable to adapt to their social or familial environments, who resisted their confinement and contrived every sort of trick to give their guardians the slip. Scenes of violence accompanied internment; threats (several times followed by the beginnings of an assault) were made against the Brothers' lives. There were escapes, sometimes hectic, like the one in 1752 by a prisoner named "Johann", who was pursued by Brothers Leonard and Roman into the neighborhood of St.Sever; there he stirred up a mob which, calling for the gallows for his pursuers, hurled rocks and slightly wounded Brother Roman; meanwhile the prisoner made good his escape.[61]

Bishop Tavannes' visit to St. Yon in 1745 put an end to the first enquiry ordered by the government. But the inevitable incidents which occurred in the reformatory gave renewed vigor to the outcry against the institution. And, on June 22nd, 1756, the king appointed an ecclesiastical and civil commission presided over by Geoffry Pontcarre "for the purpose of examining the conditions of the institution and of the Community and the abuses that might have been introduced into them". The president of the commission, a very good friend of the Brothers, declared that it was quite unnecessary to set the judicial apparatus in motion to establish a truth that was quite obvious: the administration of the reformatory, like the "free" residence school, was "widely recognized to be deserving of praise".[62]

However, the first President's health was an excuse for not calling meetings of the commission. A few months later Pontcarre resigned his functions, leaving intact, like his father, a reputation for integrity, kindliness, broad knowledge and eminent wisdom. He died in Paris in 1766 "after a long and painful illness".[63] Armand Thomas Hue Miromesnil, the future Bearer of the Seal, succeeded Pontcarré in that illustrious parlementary dynasty in Rouen.

The Institute could expect a benevolent impartiality from the new "head man" -- something that was to become immediately clear, since Miromesnil, in spite of his predecessor's "dismissal" of the case, was obliged to reopen the inquiry on instructions from Versailles. A second royal decree, handed down by the Privy Council on July 1st, 1758, "reactivated" the commission, which now included Cardinal-Archbishop Tavannes, the Intendant of the region, the Dean of the Counsellors to the Parlement of Normandy and the Procurator-general. The government had been persisting in the belief that "public confidence" in St. Yon needed reassurance: it was important that "such a useful institution" be soundly "governed" and that "abuses" (if there were any) be rooted out. For these purposes the commissioners "studied the laws and regulations", questioned the Brothers and "transmitted" to them the "whatever grievance" might turn up in the course of their investigation. The Archbishop and the magistrates were given two years to prepare their report "concerning what they believed suitable for the well-being and advantage of the institution in question".[64]

It appears that no such report was ever written. The king had recommended the most discreet sort of action possible in order not to compromise (by too much noise) the reputation of people to whom he continued to send prisoners. We are inclined to believe that Louis XV's Ministers were easily satisfied with the commissioners' counsel, which was completely supportive of the reformatory's administration.[65]

There was peace until 1766, when the outrageous conduct of one of the head guards, Brother Mesmin, stirred up a full-blown riot. The Entrance Register indicates that Louis Bertrand Le Begue (Brother Mesmin), born in Raimbovalle in the diocese of Boulogne, on the 23rd of September, 1729 and professed on the 22nd of September 1758, "deserved to be imprisoned by the king's orders", under circumstances that we shall presently describe. He was a very odd Brother; for, while he was harsh with some of the inmates,

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[61] Lucard, Vol, II, pp. 210-11, according to the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Canon Farcy in his book le Manoir de Saint-Yon, pp. 138-9, calls the prisoner "Jouanne".

[62] Ibid., pg. 290, according to the Motherhouse Archives.

[63] Precis des trame de l'Academie royale de Rouen, Vol. III, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 297.

[64] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 358. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[65] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 291

he was singularly indulgent with others. He was charged with having been an accomplice in an escape, of having accepted money and of drinking in taverns in the company of eight prisoners. His Director's forbearance was perhaps excessive. Boasting of protection in high places, this scheming individual was considered so powerful that no one dared to interfere with him.

On the 5th of December, 1766, the prisoners learned that Miromesnil was planning to come and inspect the institution. Those among them who were critical of Brother Mesmin believed that he had denounced them to the First President. They were furious with him and demanded that he be fired. But the senior guard fled; and, with this, the prisoners seized his confreres, stole their keys and opened the doors to twenty-eight escapees. The Constabulary, under the command of Major Cambon, had to be called out. Even Miromesnil had to be summoned at eleven o'clock at night He succeeded in forcing most of the mutineers to return to their cells. But disorder broke out again on the morning of the 6th. The reformatory was occupied by the military for forty-eight hours. Once the leaders of the outbreak were identified, they were thrown into the dungeon; and, belatedly, the erring Brother was dismissed.[66]

This incident, the authenticity of which is vouched for by the Superior-general himself, certainly indicates a sort of loosening of the reins of discipline. It is probable that the principle cause for it resided in the character itself of the reformatory, where the Brothers had only a delegated authority and where they were obliged to pay attention to the directives of politicians and the wishes and the pleadings of people powerful at court, without being totally free to modify practices or customs or to change personnel, any more than they were free to select the inmates. They assumed a thankless, difficult and, at times, crushing task; and, ever on the alert for the stratagems and the pranks of their prisoners, always under the sword of complaint and denunciation, and under the threat of inquiries that could weaken their influence, they awaited decisions made by others, that were slow in coming or launched at an inconvenient moment. But their merit was no whit diminished thereby. Having chased a few blacksheep that infested this nauseous environment, they succeeded in reestablishing order, and they won the gratitude of their severest critics. Far from being discouraged at having been momentarily suspected, throughout the accusations, the suspicions and the sudden severity of the royal power, they found only occasions for acting with complete detachment.

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Their major problems reached them from another source. For twenty years the higher officials among the Rouen clergy had been relentless toward the Brothers. This offensive, the prelude to which we have observed at a very early date in the episcopacy of Archbishop Tavannes, was to be resumed and conducted in depth under the aegis of his successor, Dominique Rochefoucauld. It did not stop even after the Superior of the Institute was obliged to break off relations with Rouen and retire to Paris. It survived in after-skirmishes and rear-guard actions. This struggle from beginning to end was crucial in the history of the Institute during the 18th century; it unsettled Brother Timothy's last years; it weighed upon the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence. In large measure, it absorbed the energies of these Superiors; and, by inducing them to leave Normandy, it altered the geographical posture of the Institute, by shifting it from what had been its center for a half-century. It is incumbent upon the historian, as a consequence, to explain the circumstances of this struggle in some detail.

An Archbishop of Rouen associated his name with these events, although, in fact, he did not direct them. Dominique Rochefoucauld (to whom the Brothers continued to be dedicated) was a prelate with a gentle character and lofty intentions, who led a life that was consistent with his calling. Belonging to a rural branch of an illustrious family, the eldest of eleven children of the Rochefoucauld-Langheacs, which seemed to have been forgotten in their village of St. Chely, in the gorges of the Tarn, the future Archbishop had caught the attention of Bishop Choiseul-Beaupre of Mende. His piety pointed him the direction of the priesthood, and his noble lineage guaranteed him a rapid and brilliant career in the French church. At St. Sulpice and at the Sorbonne he had received a solid, clerical formation. And then, like so many other young curates of distinguished families, he entered into an episcopal "succession" without ever having served in the ranks. He became the Vicar-general to one of his relatives, Cardinal Rochefoucauld, the Archbishop of Brouges. At the age of thirty four he became Archbishop of Albi, where he saw the Christian Brothers at work, as he had seen them earlier in Mende, Paris and Bourges. He supported them and loved them. And so, when, in 1759, he was transferred to the See of Rouen after the death of Cardinal Tavannes, the Institute could only rejoice.

[66] Canon Farcy, op. cit., pp. 140-1. The author got his information from a letter of Brother Claude to the Intendant of the region. (Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine)

Dominique Rochefoucauld was named Cardinal and, in 1787, he presided over the Provincial Assembly in Normandy; and in 1789 he attended the Estates General. In the Constituent Assembly the clergy selected him as their leader. In spite of these highly visible roles, he had no gift for politics, not even the qualities of a good administrator. He was respected for being a virtuous priest, a charitable and devout pastor. People were less inclined to trust the scope of his mind, his judgment or his resolution. It was notorious that his Vicars-generals exercised "an irresistible influence" over him. Compliant, optimistic and believing that humanity was totally constructed on his own model, he allowed "these Gentlemen" to do "pretty nearly as they pleased". Each of them acted as master of his Archdeanery: "It was...seven or eight dioceses cut out of a single one." However, a sort of unity existed, because "soaring over all the others was the one who was called 'the confidential Vicar-general."[67]

In 1767, one of these co-partners in the Archiepiscopal authority and distributors of benefices, superiorships of local communities, administrators of church property and judgeships in canon law and theological issues was Father Marescot. He dreamed of conquering the Brothers at St. Yon. It was probably the unfortunate events that had occurred during the previous year at the reformatory that had given him the pretext he needed to persuade Archbishop Rochefoucauld to repeat Nicholas Tavannes' inquiry.

On the 11th of April the Archbishop informed Brother Claude that, on the 24th of that month, at about 8 o'clock in the morning he would visit the chapel and the Community, and that in the course of his visitation, he would have to see the Constitutions and the regulations concerning the governance of the institution as well as the accounts of receipts and expenditures.

"On the day indicated, which was Friday in Easter Week", he came to St. Yon, in pontifical vestments, accompanied by Father Goyon, the Archdeacon-general, and Father Marescot, the Archdeacon of Eu, "acting on this occasion as secretary".

He assisted at Mass and, with his own hands, gave Benediction "with the sacred ciborium". And then for a period of four hours he proceeded meticulously with an inspection and interrogation, the written report of which still survives:

We inspected the tabernacle (and) found it excellent; the sacred ciborium, silver-plated interior, very clean; the main altar in the Roman style, decorated with relics, candle-holders, all very neat; the Brothers' choir, furnished with very beautiful stalls and appropriate paintings; two small altars, very well situated and suitably decorated; a beautiful iron grill which separates the sanctuary from the nave; the rest of the church, extreme cleanliness; the cemetery, closed and locked tight. From there we entered the sacristy, which we found very beautiful...very clean and commodious. We noted there a quantity of all sorts of linens, ornaments, books and sacred vessels...silver...consisting of two chalices with goldplated interiors...an ostensorium...a cross...two cruettes...a lamp...and a chest with the Holy Oils...all in silver.

An examination of four reliquaries that were shown to us...we found them in order...as were the mortuary records. From there, we went to the chapel of the Sodality (of the Blessed Virgin)...to the prisoners' chapel, and to the one for the use of the "free" resident pupils, which we found in good and duecondition...supplied with things necessary for the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

Along the way, the Archiepiscopal procession noted (in the sacristy of the chapel for the Sodalists) "a curiously constructed confessional" : it was used by the inmates and did not allow them to see other people who might be waiting in the room.

The Brothers, "professed and novices", were then assembled "in the great lower hall". The Archbishop "expressed his satisfaction with their good conduct and their regularity in fulfilling their duties"; and he made some "general remarks that he thought appropriate".

After this thoroughly paternal talk, the Community withdrew; only the Superior-general, his Assistants and the Procurator-general remained with Archbishop Rochefoucauld and his Vicars-general. The Brothers, at the prelate's request, handed over the book of their Constitutions, printed in Rouen at (Le) Prevost's, in 1726, a decree and regulation of Archbishop Tavannes...given on the 12th of August, 1745, and their financial account books...

The Brothers were then required to answer a series of questions. Did they not have "general accounts" for each year? They said they had not. "Independently of the ordinary services", are there "informal instructions for the Brothers and the residents on Sundays?" "For the older residents (i.e., those in the reformatory) there is no other instruction on Sundays and Feast Days, except a sermon after dinner", when there is one; "for the Brothers, the Superior or someone in his place gives an instruction every Sunday ..."

[67] Father Sicard, op.cit., according to the Memoires of Father Baston, Vol. IL See also in the same book, pp. 22-3, 174 note #3, 180-1.

Do the Brothers have 'retreats during the year' and 'extraordinary confessors' sometimes coming into the Community? "There is only one confessor...the chaplain". As for retreats, "they want to have them very much, and they do so when they can"; they sometimes have to do without.

With that, the report concludes and is signed: "Dominic, Archbishop of Rouen, Marescot, Vicar-general, secretary of the group" .[68]

The visitation took place without incident; and the inquiry was full of priestly benignity, as in the days of Archbishop Tavannes. But, as in 1745, the order was to come later. It was dated the 1st of May, 1767.[69] First of all, it set forth a group of quite justifiable recommendations, which revealed the prelates' religious concerns: for ease and progress in the spiritual life at St. Yon there must be more sermons, more retreats and outside confessors to whom penitents may have recourse in complete freedom from time-to-time; and confessionals must be so arranged as to guarantee complete peace of mind for every category of resident.

Father Marescot's purposes became clear in the following articles: The Brother Superior and the Community (Art. VI) will be responsible for informing us, or, in our absence, our Vicars-general, of the holding of a General Chapter at least three months before its opening, in order to confer with us concerning the matters that they wish and desire to treat of in the Chapter; and in the case in which some of the articles of their Constitutions seem to them to be in need of explanation, they shall appeal to us in order that they may receive suitable instructions on the matter in question.

Article VII went even farther: A special register will be kept containing all the decisions made and to be made in General Chapters for the general governance of the Congregation, which decisions shall be presented to us as the end of each General Chapter, to be approved by us, should such be the case; and we declare them without any force or authority until approved by us.

To this ruthless grab at the spiritual governance there was added a control over the Institute's temporal affairs. This was the purpose of Article VIII. Every year " a general ledger" was to be "drawn up by the Brother Superior and his Assistants" and "presented" to the Archbishop "a month more or less after its preparation, to be approved" (or sent back with comments) by the Ordinary of the diocese or his Vicars-general.

The decree of the 12 of August, 1745, (with respect of which Article IX was supposed to refer the Brothers) had fallen quite short of these encroachments. This time the purpose of the Bull was negated. De La Salle's Institute had been reduced by Dominique Rochefoucauld and his advisers to the status of a simple diocesan congregation, just as once before a pastor at St. Sulpice thought to deal with it as a small parochial congregation. No letter came from the Archbishop to soften the force of the blow. On the contrary, on the 9th of May, at three o'clock in the afternoon...Adam Charles Esmangard, priest, doctor in theology, Archdeacon at the Grand-Caux of the Church in Rouen, Vicar-general of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend...Primate of Normandy, stood at the entrance to St. Yon in order to notify Brother Claude of His Excellency's wishes. He was assisted by the Archbishop's secretary, Father Robert Lesueur.

The gentlemen received the deferential welcome called for by the situation. The Brothers, immediately assembled, heard the reading of the decree of the 1st of May, 1767. But when Adam Charles Esmangard asked for the "book that was supposed to contain the decisions and regulations made at the General Chapters, so that the present decree could be transcribed into it", the aged Superior "in the presence of the Community and with its council, simply refused to comply: The Register...of the General Chapters concerns the Institute as a whole; while the orders of Our Lords the Archbishops of Rouen have to do only with our house at St. Yon.

The Christian Brothers "asked for time to make their respectful representations" to Archbishop Rochefoucauld. Not only would they ask him to agree to record his decisions "in a special book intended exclusively for these purposes"; but, besides, they wanted to explain why some of the articles in the decree of the 1st of May made compliance difficult. Indeed, Brother Claude could neither disobey the Pope in order to obey the Archbishop, nor could he lend himself to the dissolution of the work that had been entrusted to him. And while the Vicar-general insisted, the Superior "persisted", as did "his Community". Fathers Esmangard and Lesueur were reconciled to allow the Brothers "to make a verbatim copy" of the decree so as to be in a position to draw up their defense. Having in their own eyes failed in their mission, the priests had to retreat, while at the same time saving the appearances. At the bottom of the report, which

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[68] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 537. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[69] Ibid., same file.

was drawn up "at about six o'clock in the evening", the signatures of Brothers Clause, Raymond and Genereux were lined up along with those of the prelates' two envoys.[70]

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For an old man of seventy-seven years the anxiety was very great indeed, and the responsibility was very heavy. Even before Dominic Rochefoucauld's move, the Superior-general had decided to resign. There still remained four years on the ten-year term that had begun with the Chapter of 1761. But it was too long to wait. An assembly was immediately called to St. Yon. It came together on the 17th of May[71] (exactly eight days after the great rebuff administered to the Archdeacon) and numbered fifty-seven Brothers.

Since the day was a Sunday, the 17th was taken up in religious services and prayer. On the next day the Capitulants listened to Brother Claude as he explained the reasons for his decision: "The Institute's many-sided activity" demanded a young leader "with great powers for intellectual work" and "much activity". The most pressing interests of the Institute were at stake. It was up to the Brothers to choose one from amongst their number whose age might "allow them to hope that for a long time to come they would not have" to proceed to a "new election" .[72]

Events, indeed, spoke loudly enough. While expressing its regrets and its gratitude to the good Superior who had quietly guided, and always edified, the Brothers, the Assembly did not hesitate to "acknowledge" that "the weight of work" was "beyond his strength". In order to face a sensitive situation, the "Regime" had to be regenerated. A Superior at the height of his powers, called (according to what was anticipated for him) to rule, perhaps, until the end of the century, would have the room and the necessary energy to overcome obstacles. Some men and some difficulties would probably disappear before he did. He himself would rely upon the younger generations of Brothers. And if he succeeded in cutting through the inextricable knots, perhaps he would also know how, at the right moment, to perform the bold and saving gesture.

Brother Florence (Jean Boubel) was elected on the 19th of May, 1767. He was forty-two years of age. He was born in Lorraine on the 31st of January, 1725, at Paroy, in the diocese of Metz.[73] He and his elder brother, Brother Jean de La Croixs (Diez Boubel)[74] entered the Institute on the same day, the 25th of April, 1743. They were young men from a beautiful Christian family, with warm and faithful hearts. Brother Florence pronounced his perpetual vows at the Motherhouse on the 2nd of February, 1750: the vow book contains his vow formula in autograph, with its tidy hand-writing, the filled downstrokes and his signature with the elegant flourishes. In the same way, his facial features [75] possessed, over all, both firmness and delicacy; spare, with sharp edges; the nose was long and straight, the lips thin; the look penetrating and spiritual, under rather strong eyebrows and a majestic forehead. Certainly, the new Superior, in his carriage and his looks, possessed something of that ease and nobility that belongs to people who are pleasantly and sincerely serious, and exquisitely wise; he inspired sympathy, confidence and respect. Singled out early by Brother Timothy and Brother Claude, after only one year of perpetual vows, he became the Director of novices at St. Yon, and, in this capacity, took his seat at the Chapter of 1751. Thereafter, we find him as the Director of the Parisian house of the Holy Spirit, at the head, therefore, of the important Community of St. Sulpice. On the 8th of November, 1754, the Superior and the Assistants selected him as their general and special Procurator, granting him the power to rule, manage and administer all the property, income and business arrangements...of the Institute, to...receive all the funds due to the Institute... in the form of tuitions, gifts of the king, house rentals, arrears of annual income of the French clergy, of the City of Paris, of religious and secular communities...; to pay annual incomes and sums due; to have necessary

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[70] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[71] Which was not Ascension Thursday, regardless of what Brother Lucard writes, Vol. II, pg. 299. In 1767, Easter fell on the 19th of April

[72] Capitualary Register, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 299-300.

[73] Entrance Register, ms. 11122.

[74] Brother John of the Cross, born on the 3rd of May, 1721, died at St. Yon on the 17th of June, 1789 (ms. 11122).

[75] According to a portrait preserved at the Motherhouse.

reparations made to property, and to supervise buildings; to sue, to bring action, and to defend in all cases at law.[76]
In all of this he continued to function as Director; and his signature attached to the acts of the Chapter of 1761 was followed by the title of Director of the Community of the Holy Spirit. Finally, while continuing as Procurator, he was summoned to Rouen to take over the directorship of the tuition-free schools.[77] During a period of twenty years his career had been remarkably full.

There can be no doubt but what he possessed, and to a very high degree, the spirit of De La Salle, to which one document among others, witnesses: it is precious because it is an original letter preserved in the Motherhouse Archives,[78] and because it was a letter sent to Brother Solomon who, in 1768, was a young teacher at the school in Rennes. His Superior had written to him from St.Yon to thank him for his New Year's greetings and to support him with his counsel. He recommends that he "form good habits and improve his practices...; this is the only true way of being happy and of doing good in one's vocation". He exhorted the Brother to be united to God, to "continue to be, in the midst of his Brothers, as the sweet aroma of Jesus Christ". Let Brother Solomon avoid familiarities with his pupils, and let him not be discouraged: "It is impossible to do good without opposition and difficulties".

Brother Florence was an educator, an administrator and an excellent religious. Later on, we shall have occasion to describe his remarkable conduct during the Revolution, at a time when a light (a very discreet one) would encircle the former leader, who had voluntarily returned to obscurity. His generalate, by that time a distant memory, would take on, during those times of courageous profession of faith and of suffering, an unanticipated splendor, and, if need be, receive its ultimate vindication. The Superior never took exception to work, nor did he retreat from the field. Clearsighted and correct, wise and supernatural, as well from 1767 to 1777 as he was during the long years that would remain to him to live. When he ceased to be the guide to his flock, it was not for the want of energy; but, wounded in heart and soul, he thought that a new blueprint and a new personality had, in the course of the struggle, become indispensable, and he passed the command on to a greater strategist.

The Capitulants had given him aides whom he believed most capable of lending him assistance. It was better that Brothers Raymond and Genereux had resigned at the same time as Brother Claude. They, too, had grown old. They had been members of the Regime, the one for sixteen years and the other for fifteen. Brother Genereux was ill when the General Chapter assembled and was unable to take part in its deliberations.[79] In an effort to put an end to the conflict created by the Archbishop, a triumvirate was formed that would be beyond the reach of bias or censure.

The first Assistant was Brother Exuperian, whom we have seen in action in Nancy and in St. Omer. Installed as Procurator-general prior to Brother Florence,[80] in 1767, he was the Director of the Community in Meaux. At fifty-nine years of age, he had lost none of his courage and fire. And, remaining ever youthful, he retained these qualities to an excess. Spirited conversation and too dogmatic assertions occasionally undermined his best efforts to be diplomatic. His unquestioned intelligence and virtue brought him to the attention of the Brothers and compelled respect from his critics.

His colleague, Brother Anacletus, conceded nothing to him in dedication and breadth of mind. At one time he had quite successfully followed Brother Exuperian in the schools in Nancy; and he had just finished, as Director, guiding the Community in Belley. From a number of points of view the two men (who were both natives of Chartres) were quite dissimilar. Brother Anacletus (Gabriel Valle), born on the 27th of November, 1721, in the parish of St. Andrew[81] might have given lessons on matters of restraint and

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[76] National Archives, S. 7046-47; copy of the document notarized in Rouen on the 8th of November, 1754, before Le Bailly and Bouzy.

[77] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 301, note#1, according to one of Le Bailly's documents

[78] Brother Florence's file, BE y 4.

[79] Brother Genereux became Director of the Community in Orleans and in that capacity took part in the Chapter of 1777. At that time he was seventy-two years old. The Registers in the Motherhouse mention neither the place nor the date of his death

[80] National Archives, S, 7046-47. Document dated the 3rd of April, 1753.

[81] As we noted above, Brother Exuperian was from St. Hilary's parish in Chartres. Brother Claude's internment certificate a copy of which exists in his file, Motherhouse Archives, BE y 3.

moderation to his older colleague. As a consequence he contributed to balance the triumvirate. But while there was excess of ardor with one of them, there was a deficiency of resolution with the other. The second Assistant was excessively diffident. On several occasions Anacletus submitted his resignation. In 1772, the Superior-general thought that he should inform the Brothers-elector of these repeated instances; which he did while declaring that in his judgment Brother Anacletus was perfectly capable of fulfilling his obligations and that this was doubtlessly the opinion of "the Body of the Institute" The resignation was rejected by a huge majority of the sixty-six electors.[82]

The deliberations of the Chapter of 1767, which is considered the ninth General Chapter, took only three days. It was content to regulate a matter concerning prayers for deceased Brothers and the sending of notices concerning the dead to the Communities. After the election of the members of the Regime, the Capitulants' great preoccupation was to confront the possible consequences of Father Marescot's intrigues. In principle, the necessity of establishing the central government of the Institute elsewhere than in Rouen was adopted. But the moment for making the transfer we left to the judgment of the Superior-general.

In extreme old age, Brother Claude continued to live for another eight years at St. Yon. He was peaceful, but, with decaying faculties, the former Superior no longer took any part in the counsels and the activities of the Society.

In the year 1775, on the 26th of October, the body of Pierre Nivet, called Brother Claude, a professed Religious and Superior-general of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, native of the parish of Chatillon-sur-Loing, diocese of Sens, who died the previous night, at the age of eighty-five years, after having received the Sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and Extreme Unction (was) interred in the crypt under the choir in the church of St. Yon by Francis Nigault, Chaplain, in the presence of Brother Armand of Jesus, Director and Brother Corentine, Sacristan -- the signatories of the document that placed the period to Brother Claude's earthly existence.[83]

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No incident during the year 1768 revealed that the Archbishop of Rouen would persist in his unfavorable attitude toward the Brothers. To judge by one of Brother Exuperian's letters[84] which we shall examine presently there seems to have been a lull in events, which was traceable to the posture of "respectful submission" adopted by the new Regime. There can be no doubt but what the Chapter registers were not surrendered -- anything else would have been tantamount to subscribing to genuine tyranny. But there were no written protests against the decree. In that year, the Superior, in the course of reediting the "Common Rule", took the simple precaution of including the "Letters patent of 1724 and 1725",[85] which defined, in accordance with the legislation of the kingdom, the civil and religious status of the Congregation. It was a very gentle reminder. Brother Florence had certainly acquainted Archbishop Rochefoucauld with the fact of his election; and since the Chapter of 1767 had made no other major decision, this step alone might have temporarily satisfied the Archbishop's demands. Time, one might have hoped, would improve the situation, provided that silence lent a hand to time. Patience and silence had once before triumphed, after the alarm of 1745; and for Archbishop Tavannes to perpetrate a second offense (however, inconsequential), he required orders from the Privy Council in 1756 and 1758 that opened the doors of St. Yon to the Commissioners.

But this time, calculations had failed to count on Father Masecot's tenacity. "Toward the end of 1769", the Vicar-general received a visit from Brother Hilary, who believed he had a complaint to lodge against his Superiors. This young man (born in Rheims on the 6th of October, 1743 and entered the Institute on the 4th of September, 1760)[86] had not been admitted to final vows. Disappointed, he meant to break off immediately from the Society which, to his way of thinking, did not do him justice. But he was still bound by his triennial vows until Trinity Sunday, 1770. The Brother appealed to Father Marescot for "a dispensation". "There is nothing difficult about that; I will see to it myself", replied the priest, who gave the applicant "a petition form to be sent to the Archbishop, who at the moment was at Gaillon" The title of

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[82] The Circular Letter of July 22, 1772, a copy of which exists in Brother Florence's file in the Motherhouse Archives, BE y 4

[83] Note attached to the aforementioned copy

[84] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Balbeuf sources, B 13, letter of 30th of June, 1771, to Archbishop Rochefoucauld.

[85] These documents gave the force of law to the Bull of Benedict XIII

[86] His name "in the world" was Jean Baptist Noel. Entrance Register.

this document was in itself instructive: "To the Archbishop of Rouen, the first Superior of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools..." [87]

Dominique Rochefoucauld consented to his Vicar-general's proposals and signed the order releasing Brother Hilary from his vows and "commuting them to the recitation of the Seven Penitential Psalms twice a week until 'thrifty Sunday".[88]

The door was opened, and two other Brothers at St. Yon hastened to follow. Brother Leonard (Peter Guillian Blain), born on the 11th of August, 1746, in the parish of St. Denis in the diocese of Arras, and entered the novitiate on the 17th of January, 1763, ("left with a dispensation from the Archbishop on the 6th of April, 1770"). The Register adds that he had neither health nor talent. On the 11th of June it was Brother Fidelis' turn; he had been James Gontier from the parish of Notre Dame, in Barnay, in the diocese of Lisieux, who was born on the 11th of November, 1741 and entered the novitiate on the 23rd of November, 1763. The Archiepiscopal intervention is mentioned in his case as well; and alongside is written a sentence that falls like a meat-cleaver: "This must stop". [89]

Three departures in six months: -- as Brother Exuperian wrote,[90] there was reason to be alarmed. Would the Institute be at the mercy of its enemies in Rouen? Would an Archbishop offer a quick and easy way out whenever young Brothers were troubled by passing temptations? The three he had just released had no reasons for a dispensation and, according to their places of birth and baptism, did not even belong to his diocese.[91] Father Marescot's plans were materializing: the premises posed in the decree of May 1767 were moving toward their logical conclusion. The Brothers would have to learn that by themselves they were nothing (not even whey they relied upon to laws of the State and the wishes of the Holy See) and that their organization, their religious existence, depended upon the consent of a Vicar-general representing Dominic Rochefoucauld, their "first Superior".

Against these extraordinary assumptions, one had to be armed with the Law. In 1770, Brother Florence appealed to three esteemed Canonists, Mey, Camus and Piales. He had them file two "reports", one in connection with the question of the dispensation from vows, and the other with the question of the decree of 1767. These lawyers wrote (and signed on the 12th of January,1771, in Paris) two "legal opinions" that eventually found their way into the "Common Rule".[92]

The first opinion established that "the Pope alone" had the right "to dispense Brothers of the Christian Schools from their vows". The meaning of Articles IX and X of the Bull of Approbation was perfectly clear: The Founder of the Brothers' Order (wished) doubtless in order to make dispensations exceptional, that they not be granted by anyone but the Pope. At the same time, in order that the Holy See not be beguiled by false representations, he wished that these dispensations be asked for and granted only for serious reasons, judged to be such by the plurality of votes in the General Chapter.

In this respect, at any rate, the Brothers, as a consequence, were not "subject to the bishops", who admitted them into their dioceses "on condition of observing the Bull", which was the Institute's charter. From that moment the Bishops themselves became the guarantors of the Bull's integral observance. From the fundamental text it was possible to deduce that the Superior-general of the Order no longer had the right of granting dispensations...The Chapter did not dispense, but it decided on the factuality of the reasons set forth in the petition. Strictly speaking, the only power that the head of the Congregation could legitimately exercise would be, during the interval between Chapters, to authorize Brothers to solicit from Rome a release from their commitments.

Finally, the three Canonists concluded to the moral responsibility of Brothers released from their vows without a sufficient inquiry on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, to the invalidity of dispensations obtained by "the false representations" of reasons, and to the double culpability of the unfortunate

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[87] Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Reply to comments and remarks addressed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools concerning difficulties having to do with the Archbishop of Rouen's decree of the 1st of May, 1767, thirty-two pages, unsigned, 1772, pg. 3.

[88] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 538.

[89] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 13. Entrance Register

[90] Letter of the 30th of June, 1771.

[91] Ibid D.

[92] In Brother Florence's file (Motherhouse Archives) there is an old copy of the second "legal opinion" that also gives the date as January 12th, 1771

individual who "would willingly commit a fault" in order to create for oneself a grounds for dispensations.[93] They were included in the edition that bears the date of 1768; but because of the date on which they were written, they must have been printed at a later date. Brother Exuperian's letter proves that the initiative with "the enlightened doctors" and the "famous lawyers" wasn't undertaken until 1770..

The errors and the accumulation of abuses in Archbishop Rochefoucauld's order appear in the same vivid light to the reader of the second "legal opinion". Mey, Camus and Piales, referring here again to the Bull, set forth the twofold limits of the problem: The various houses of the Brothers of the Christian Schools form a Congregation governed by its Superior-general; the individual houses are at the same time subject to the authority of the diocesan bishops.

By intentionally ignoring one of the "givens" the prelate's counsellors were grossly mistaken. Each particular house's submission creates no right for any bishop over the Order itself or over the houses which are not founded in his diocese. The questions that are dealt with in General Chapters are not special to St. Yon...And it is only over (this) house that the Archbishop of Rouen has rights of inspection as over a member of his diocese, but not over the Order...The Order has a government determined by the Bull of Benedict XIII; and the Archbishop...is not called upon in any way to take part in it. It is on his own initiative, then, that he insists that what is done in the Chapters be presented to him...and demands the presentation of Chapter decisions so that he can confirm them. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, having been authorized by ecclesiastical and secular power, forms a legitimate Body in the State. But a Body has essentially the faculty of making statutes and regulations to police its members. The Brothers...assembled, following the law of their Institute, have therefore the faculty of freely making such statutes. The Bull that establishes them does not subject them to seeking confirmation from the Archbishop of Rouen. To oblige them to do so would be to impose upon them a new yoke contrary to their own rights.

The "legal opinion" then responded to the claim based upon the residence of the Superior-general in the Rouen diocese and the presumed obligation that the Bull imposed upon him always to call General Chapters where he had his residence: Even if the Superior...lives in the diocese of Rouen, this is no reason for the Archbishop to assume...rights that he does not have. But, besides this, the Superior-general is free to change his residence and to situate it where he pleases and, as a consequence, to call a General Chapter wherever he pleases. It is evident from a reading of Article 15 of the Bull that it is solely for the convenience of the Superior general that it is stated that the Chapter will be called in the place where he resides: if he wishes to go elsewhere, an arrangement which was written exclusively in his favor must not be used as an argument against him. Moreover, in order to avoid every difficulty and satisfy even the letter of the Rule, the Superior-general may, sometime before the Chapter, move into the house in which he planned to convoke it, but he may not return thereafter to the place in which he had previously dwelt.

There was an equally clear refutation of "the 8th article of the order" which made a claim for the Archbishop's right to control the Institute's temporal affairs. According to the Rule, confirmed by Rome, the financial statements of the Communities must be made to the Visitors. "Diocesan bishops are not called upon in any way in this matter...By its nature and of itself, their authority extends to spiritual matters only..."

The Gentlemen in Rouen were locked into the following dilemma: If we think of St. Yon as a lay establishment, it is a fixed maxim with us that the bishops have no rights over the temporal affairs of these operations. But if we liken St. Yon to a monastery, it can be so likened only to monasteries that are joined together as a Congregation, since, according to the Bull of Benedict XIII, all the houses of the Order are subject to a single Superior-general. But it is certain that, with monasteries that are organized as Congregations, financial statements are made to the Superior-general only, and not to bishops. A final paragraph of a more restricted scope shows that in spite of his "last word" on the 1st of May, 1767, Archbishop Rochefoucauld could not invoke the precedent of Cardinal Tavannes, who was forced to get an

[93] On the question of dispensations (as well as that of the renewal of triennial vows) there exists in the Motherhouse Archives and in the special Archives of the Brother Procurator-general to the Holy See a number of documents that should be examined. Between 1772 and 1777, Brother Dositheus, Director of "Trinita dei Monti" and Procurator-general in Rome, drew up a "Plan for Petitions" with the view of securing: 1) "Dispensations will not be granted to Brothers of the Christian Schools except through petitions presented by their Procurator-general in the Court of Rome, or with his approval; 2)That in the briefs of dispensation it be enjoined upon the Ordinaries to whom they are addressed to notify the Superiors-general, in a formal statement, that dispensed subjects have been relieved of their vows." (Archives of the Procurator-general, File I, Document 8.).

order from the king in order "to gain information concerning the condition of things at St. Yon and the statutes and regulations in force there..." Thus, in the past "the Archbishops of Rouen" did not think that the fact alone of their being the Ordinary gave them the right indifferently over everything having to do with St. Yon, and still less with what had to do with the whole Order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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No matter how Gallican at the depths of their souls these canonists were, to whom Brother Florence applied, they could not, in the face of the text submitted to them, do anything but disavow the pretensions of the Rouen clergy and emphasize the direct relation between the Institute and the Holy See. How would the Superior and his Assistants use the legal document with which they had armed themselves? If the Archbishop refused to yield, would they have to think about a lawsuit? Such as solution was repugnant to De La Salle's disciples: their Founder had been several times dragged into the courts, although personally he never wished to take the initiative in a legal action against his adversaries. And, further, under the circumstances, it would be necessary to hail the abuses of ecclesiastical authority into the civil courts. Respectful of the hierarchy, the Brothers would never go to that extreme. Besides, at the moment the nation was in the midst of a political crisis: Chancellor Maupeou had been firing the judges who had been reacting against the king; and the magistrates who had replaced them were unpopular, suspect and violently attacked. In defiance of a public opinion already hostile to "monks" and only seven years after the suppression of the French Jesuits, the courts of law were no place for a Religious Congregation. In the middle of the mire, it was not just sensitivity and Christian abnegation, but simple human wisdom that dictated that one gently and quietly beat out the surest path possible without splattering the mud.

About May of 1771, Brother Superior left Rouen for Paris,[94] and joined the Community of the Holy Spirit on Rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs. The facilities were extremely cramped: the house was almost totally occupied by Brothers working in Paris; and it had only a single garden for all of the house's annexes. The space and the conveniences of St. Yon had to be sacrificed. It was hoped that the situation was temporary and that an end to it would not be long in coming. What was important (to have escaped the immediate grasp of the primate of Normandy) had been achieved.

The first Assistant, Brother Exuperian, was given the responsibility of announcing Brother Florence's departure to Archbishop Rochefoucauld. It was at this point, on the 30th of June, that the Assistant wrote the famous letter, to which we have alluded on several occasions. Having just returned from a long and troublesome journey, I have nothing more urgent to do than to assure Your Highness of my continuing profound respect and to inform him, in the bitterness of my soul, of our resolve to yield to circumstances and to flee the persecution that the gentlest of prelates, persuaded by a few of his Vicars-general, conducts against us.

The Brother goes on to recall the various aspects of a very sad story: the order, "the work" of those gentlemen, which "tends to nothing less than the dissolution and total destruction" of the Institute; the "submission" of the persecuted, confident (regardless of what they have suffered) in the goodness of the man who had once been their protector in his days at Albi; the cruel "surprise" of the year 1770 and the three young men released from their vows, "snatched" from the Community of St. Yon, as though it were a "vain and dangerous" association.

Then we opened our eyes, and, terrified, we saw the precipice into which we had nearly fallen; we looked around for charitable people who would lend a helping hand to save the Institute...We have had the consolation of finding warm and sympathetic fathers among the diocesan bishops, for whom we teach school; we have discovered enlightened doctors to guide us and famous lawyers to defend the rights of the Institute whose government has been entrusted to us.

Nevertheless, the Superiors decided to assert these rights with moderation, in a conciliatory, peaceful and humble spirit.

Among the means (the jurists) proposed...the Brothers preferred those which were most deferential to the prelates whom the Brothers loved. The reason why they had "planned to hold their Chapter elsewhere than In Normandy was, especially "to save" the Capitulants "from beyond Paris and Lyons some of their travel-fatigue and expenses". Their "enemies" declared that they "would pursue them everywhere"; whereas, the

[94] Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pg. 306) writes "March". We are adopting the date given by Brother Paul Joseph, in his Essai surlaMaison'Mere. It accords better with Brother Exuperian's letter to Archbishop Rochefoucauld.

Brothers defended themselves against these threats by simply pointing to the Bull of Benedict XIII, the "Letters patent" and the "Legal opinions" of the Canonists.

"Meanwhile", the Superior-general "had moved his residence"; Brother Exuperian "was preparing to follow him", not without "having besought" the Archbishop "to take St. Yon and the poor Brothers who inhabit it under his protection".

This was the *alea jacta est*, or, better (with St. John Baptist de La Salle as its model) the total abandonment to Providence, to wherever it pleased God to lead his faithful people. Like their Founder who moved from Princess Street to the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Brothers obeyed literally the Gospel injunction, Cum autem persequentur vos in civitate ista, fugite in aliam. (Matt.x,24) Since 1767, Rouen had been ista civitas. Obviously, it was not a bloody persecution, not even a banishment of the Brothers, who remained on at St. Yon as teachers to their resident pupils and as guards and (as far as possible) reformers of the king's prisoners. And in the city in which Father Barré had founded his schools, experimented with his methods, where Nicholas Roland had gone to learn about holiness and education, and from whence Madame Maillefer had sent Adrian Nyel to the Canon of Rheims, the Lasallian Institute continued as the directors of popular education. The Brothers were wanting neither in hardships nor in humiliations, since such tests were in constant supply. But it made no difference: Rouen had been the place selected by the Founder, the dwelling place of his most fruitful years and the arena of his happy death. It would be for the future his burial place, and the "holy city" of his followers. With all their heart they were united to Rouen, and it took the Revolution to drive them out of it temporarily. However, the Superiors' departure, realized in 1771 was final. Mile, until further notice, the "Letters patent" guaranteed legal existence to the entire Congregation, and although the Brothers of the Christian Schools would always be known throughout the kingdom as the "St. Yon Brothers", Rouen was no longer, and would never become again, the seat of the Motherhouse.

CHAPTER TWO

Brothers Claude and Florence at St. Yon

"Timothy, keep the faith." St. John Baptist de La Salle might have repeated St. Paul's command to his second successor. After the. brief generalate of Brother Barthélemy, Guillaume Samson-Bazin had the time, the strength of will and the necessary scope of intellect to transform the tiny Society of 1720 into a large Congregation, sure of the present and, in the course of things, called upon to spread as distantly and as durably as Catholicism itself. It would be the transformation of a seed into a huge tree -- without altering its nature, through the unfolding of its own internal finality. Like Barthélemy, Timothy had assimilated the thought and had modelled himself on the action of the Founder. He nourished his Brothers on the spiritual doctrine especially prepared by De La Salle for their use; and he constantly watched over the observance of the Rule and the deployment of educational methods. On the mid-eighteenth century horizon, humanly speaking, he occupied a more important place than did his master during the final years of the reign of Louis XIV. The Papal Bull and the "Letters patent", obtained through his efforts, religious vows pronounced on his initiative, over sixty schools opened in the North, South, East and West of the kingdom, a novitiate begun in Avignon, besides the novitiate at St. Yon and another opened in Dole prior to the one that was about to be founded in Maréville, the stabilization of the institution in Rome, along with the introduction of the Brothers to Ferrara and to Estavayer, beyond the French frontiers -- all of this work genuinely merited for Brother Timothy the title of a "great Superior" and, in a way, the reputation for being the "Second Founder".

In 1751, although he had not yet reached his seventieth year, after a half -century of tireless activity, Brother Timothy was beginning to age. Many of his colleagues were dead. In 1742, alone Brother Thomas, the longtime Procurator, Brother Antoine (Jean Partois), the former secretary to De La Salle, and Brother André the perennial Director of the Schools in Laon had all left the scene. The loss of Brother Irenée (on the 3rd of October, 1747) was especially grievous to Brother Timothy, for whom the saintly Religious was friend, close collaborator and his most cherished consultant. It was at this time that Brother Étienne became first Assistant.[1] The second Assistant was Brother Daniel (Antoine Rodier), who had opened the school in Aix-en-Provence and later became Director of St. Yon. His election was declared by a commission appointed by the Superior-general after a count of the votes sent in by the Directors and a few of the professed Brothers who had been nominated by reason of their seniority.

With Brother Daniel the generation of those who had not known De La Salle had reached the top-levels of the hierarchy. Brother Timothy could begin to think about taking his place with the "pioneers" who were in retirement and enjoying the reputation of "faithful servants". The distressing events in Rouen and Rheims had wounded him deeply. For three years more he struggled, ruling quietly and lucidly and observing his Rule without relaxation. But, in May of 1751, he fell gravely ill, and his incomplete recovery left him unable thoroughly to fulfill his task.

He decided to call a Chapter to select his successor. When the Assembly met on the 1st of August, he submitted his resignation. The Capitulants asked for time "to reflect on the matter before God". On the following day the old man made the following statement: “Since my infirmities have clearly increased since my last illness and I am obviously in no condition to fulfill my responsibilities as Superior, I think I should submit my resignation to the Brothers assembled in a body during the Retreat they are making; because, apart from the physical infirmity which prevents me from walking, my mental lapses are still more urgent reason for me to do so. These two reasons give me hope that my petition will be heeded, for the best interests of the Institute.”[2]

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[1] The Motherhouse Archives BD posesses a document in Brother Étienne's handwriting, dated the 21st of November, 1742, attesting that he was cured "around 1731" of an ulcer on the nose after having invoked the intercession of J.B. de La Salle.

[2] Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, Brother Timothy file, BE y 2.

The Brothers were obliged to concur. Their Superior was at the extreme limit of his strength. He had, in fact, only five months to live, and, as might have been imagined, he used the time devoutly in preparation for the great leave-taking. His certification of interment read as follows: “On this day, January 8th, in the year 1752, was interred in the vault under the choir in the church at St. Yon, by me, François Bracquehaye, priest and confessor in the same house, the body of the later Guillaume Samson-Bazin, called Brother Timothy, professed Religious and Superior-general of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a native of the parish of St. Severinus in Paris, who died yesterday, at the age of about sixty-nine years, after having received the Holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. In testimony whereof we, along with the witnesses hereinafter named, have signed: Bracquehaye, Priest, Br. Claude, Sup., Br. Celestine, sacristan.”

Brother Timothy's remains were interred alongside those of the Founder and Brother Irenée. On the 3rd of August, 1751, Brother Claude (Jean Pierre Nivet) was elected Superior-general. We have written above of his birth, his family, his rather late entrance into the Congregation and the influence exercised on him by Brother Irenée. For the second time a former Director in Avignon took control of the government of the Christian Brothers. He was a man of robust faith and solid courage, strongly attached to the traditions of his Institute, quite resolved to maintain the Brothers in simplicity of life and within the sphere (actually quite extensive) of the activities proper to Religious who must remain primarily teachers of the common people. Many and bold undertakings were not to be expected of him: neither the times nor the circumstances encouraged them, and neither did the age of the new leader (who was sixty-one when he was chosen) nor,[3] of course, did his character. He came from the rural, lower-middle class and from a region of peaceful vistas. Until he was thirty-seven years of age he lived in Chatillon-sur-Loing; and five years after entering the Congregation he received his "obedience" as Director of the novitiate in Avignon, where his life glided by in the City of the Popes among the young men he trained to Christian virtue and the educational apostolate and among the Brothers of the South of France whom he counselled, supervised and strengthened for difficult times and fortified by annual Retreats as well as by Retreats in preparation for the pronouncement of vows. His was a quiet manner and modest, with an intelligent and gentle face, a large forehead, framed by greying hair; his eyes were lively and wide open; and his face was oval-shaped, rather plain, and where both time and concern had etched deep furrows.[4]

His immediate aides were Brother Étienne, confirmed by the Chapter of 1751 as the first Assistant, and Brother Raymond, elected by the same assembly to replace Brother Daniel. And, then, beginning on the 3rd of August, 1752, Brother Genereux, in the second year of the generalate, succeeded Brother Étienne, who had become too infirm to perform his duties.

Brother Raymond (Jean François Genart) was born on September 19th, 1700, in the parish of Lerzy, in the diocese of Laon. Entering the Institute on the 4th of April, 1723, he pronounced his triennial vows on the 21st of September, 1728, in the presence of Brother Timothy, and his perpetual vows at St. Yon on the 15th of August, 1731.[5] In 1744, nominated to head the School of Commerce in Boulogne,[6] it was in that city in the following year that, with his confreres Alexis, Germain and Exuperian, he signed the filial and fervent testimonial in favor of Brother Timothy's stewardship.[7] He was Director of the Boulogne Community when the General Chapter was convoked.[8]

Jean-Baptist de Saint, another northerner, from the parish of Capellevieille, in the diocese of Boulogne, also spent some time in Avignon. Born on the 1st of July, 1705, admitted as a postulant on the 15th of October, 1729, and become Brother Genereux on the 21st of September, 1721, he committed himself for three years, in the presence of the venerable Brother Gabriel Drolin, who had been deputized for this purpose by the Superior-general, in the principal Community in the South of France. He was perpetually professed at. St. Yon on the 8th of December, 1734. We have seen that he was placed in charge of the schools in Rheims, and, in that capacity, obtained from the Archbishop the right to open a chapel in

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[3] Motherhouse Archives, CCf p A, Capitualary Register A. Quoted by Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg.2

[4] According to a portrait preserved in the Motherhouse

[5] Motherhouse Archives, Ha m. 17, Avignon Vow Book, pg. 6 and HA m 11, St. Yon Vow Book, pg. 61.

[6] See Bishop Chassagnon, Le Bienheureux Salomon, pg. 69.

[7] See above, pg. 304.

[8] Brother Raymond resigned in 1767 and died at St. You on the 13th of November,1779. His body, buried in the crypt at St. Yon on the following day, was transported in 1895 to the Bon Secours Cemetery, along with the bodies of Brothers Irenée, Timothy and Claude

the house on the Rue Neuve. A splendid Religious, he had assumed the difficult task of Procurator-general and, at the same time, directed the professed Brothers at St. Yon,[9] when the votes of the Directors and Senior Brothers nominated him to the post of Assistant.

The Chapter of 1751 was a large one. Besides the former Superior-general and his successor, the two functioning Assistants, and Brothers Jean and Daniel, who had previously filled those posts, it included forty-nine members come from all points of the nation. The growth of the Institute was the reason why it was thought necessary to exceed the figure anticipated by Article XIII of the Bull, which had been regarded as a minimum. Besides, Article III stipulated that the Superior-general was to be elected by the Directors of the principal houses, without any limitation as to numbers. And it was for this purpose that the Chapter had been convoked. However, it did not break up without examining the overall situation.

Basically, two problems occupied the attention of the Capitulants during the eight days of meetings. First there was the contract drawn up in 1749 with King Stanislaus: "On the proposal...made to establish a novitiate at Maréville" agreement was "unanimous...regarding the sympathy" of his Majesty and regarding the support "he offered the Brothers, and regarding also the wishes of the Lord Chancellor of Lorraine and the generosity of Count Jean Claude Bouzey."[10] The first novice entered Maréville on16th of October, 1751: his name was Pierre Picard, who became Brother Philippe of Jesus .[11]

And then the question of residence schools, already raised at the previous Chapter, came up once again for discussion. It was absolutely necessary to avoid dissipation of effort and eliminate anything that might obstruct the primordial role of tuition-free schools. It was decided that there would be residence schools at St. Yon, Marseille, Mirepoix, Die, Montpellier, St. Omer, Montargis, Angers and Maréville only.This meant the maintenance of those institutions that were already operative, secure and reasonably flourishing. We shall have to study the history and the regulations of the most celebrated of these, which did not disappear until the catastrophe of 1792. "The Very Dear Brother Superior was free" to authorize new residence schools when he thought it prudent.

Among other decisions in 1751, one revealed the difference that had occurred in a half-century concerning the material conditions of life. Around 1700 it was thought that an annual salary of 150 livres would assure the food and maintenance of a schoolteacher. Henceforth, a strict minimum 250 livres would be required. If this sum were not guaranteed by "founders", "no Brothers would be supplied".

With this Chapter is also associated an initiative involving the Institute's iconography. The old seal that had authenticated some of the official documents showed St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, with the words: The Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Communities, as well as the Motherhouse, had taken up its use. It was decided that "the Institute's seal would be a shining silver star on an azure shield", inscribed with the devise: *Signum fidei*. (To recall, through this "sign", that "the spirit of faith" is the fundamental virtue of the Congregation) "The Directors (were) explicitly forbidden to copy it, since this seal was to be for the exclusive use of the Regime".

A final point remained to be decided, a problem to be solved: would the Assembly that had been called extraordinarily to accept Brother Timothy's resignation be numbered in the series provided for in Article XIII of the Bull, so that the next "decennial" Chapter would be held in 1761? Or would it be regarded as a supplementary Chapter and, counting the intervals as had been done since the great Assembly of 1725, would the Capitulants be called back in 1755? Since these meetings were expensive as well as the occasion of a lot of hard work, and since their frequency was apt to introduce uncertainties into the regular schedules of schools and Communities, the most liberal interpretation prevailed: "there would be no General Chapter before 1761", unless, of course, something happened of a nature to demand an earlier convocation.

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The 8th General Chapter was indeed assembled between the 8th and the 13th of July, 1761, toward the end of the 10th year of Brother Claude's generalate. We shall mention it only in passing, since its role was a modest one and the difficulties that the Superior had to face did not arise until well after the work of this Assembly. Brother Claude who was seventy-one years of age would have preferred to retire; but the forty-five Capitulants refused to accept his resignation; and they reappointed his Assistants, Brothers Raymond and Genereux. Their principal decree bears witness to the concern that the Institute cherished of continuing to be worthy of its educational mission. The Brothers Visitor were enjoined to

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[9] Motherhouse Archives, Avignon Vow Book, pg. 20 and St. Yon Vow Book, pg. 100.

[10] Capitulary Register

[11] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 269.

"make a serious examination" of candidates for vows both as regards behavior as well as "knowledge and competence". There were to be inquiries concerning study programs and especially concerning catechism. Furthermore, an inquiry was to be undertaken of future professed Brothers in the Community in which they lived as well as in the neighboring Communities.

In John Baptist de La Salle's *Collection* the Brothers learned that they must not "discriminate between the particular duties of (their) state and those which refer to (their) salvation and perfection",[12] and, in the *Meditations for Time of Retreat*, that "God would begin by making them answer for the souls of their pupils before making them answer for their own" .[13] Thus, their entire religious consciousness was involved in the daily task. If they were indifferent, they would fail of their purpose. If one of them, by chance, was about to fail, the close solidarity which bound all members of a faculty would ordinarily be enough to keep him on his feet and enable him to cross the dangerous threshold of boredom and discouragement. There was the Brothers' example, prayer and advice and the Director's council. The hierarchy introduced by the Founder, on the model of the Jesuits, prevented the splintering or relaxation of forces.

The "decisions of the Chapters" that the Assembly of 1761 had prescribed to be read in the Communities twice a year, "in January and during Pentecost", reminded the humblest teacher struggling in some far-off town, and frequently reduced to the severest conditions of existence, that his work and his poverty complied with his Congregation's Rule and that his merits made one with those of "his dear Father", John Baptist de La Salle, that his isolation was not abandonment and that, whether living or dead, he would continue to be assisted by the "suffrages" of a great spiritual family.

Externally, another action affected the moral, religious and professional life of the Brothers. It did not supersede but it shored up their desire for edification and progress. We refer to public opinion, of the ever-present scrutiny that the clergy, public officials and the populace devoted to the schools of the Institute. The Brothers in their Communities could not, like monks behind their high abbey walls, think of themselves as wholly autonomous and responsible only to God for their actions and their conduct. In contact with "the world", they owed the world good example. In a way, parents and pupils were their judges. Pupils' attitudes and language were a sort of sanction: -- chastisement for the faithless "mentor", but reward for the man who was conscientious and dedicated. We know about the admiration which Christian Brothers' teaching ordinarily inspired, the results achieved not only in collective discipline, but in each of the souls of the children trained to work, obedience, piety and purity. The Brothers (as Ernest Arnould said with respect to the elementary education in Rheims) "introduced and left profound impressions and ineradicable convictions in the hearts of their scholars".[14] The cities, no matter how ill-disposed they may have been, for reasons of self-interest or out of mistrust of Religious Congregations) almost without exception witnessed to the educational competence of the teachers who came from St. Yon.

As for supervision by bishops and pastors, it was not just an empty word. The heads of dioceses maintained their immemorial rights over scholastic institutions. Over the Congregation founded by De La Salle they exercised a legitimate authority formally recognized by the Bull of Approbation.[15] In many founding contracts we have seen bishops preoccupied with the orthodoxy of the Brothers called into their dioceses whether by themselves or by some ecclesiastical or lay benefactor. While some of them showed a tendency to overstep their powers by interfering in the internal organization and the temporal affairs of Communities, the trouble they caused the Superiors at least had as its redeeming factor the keeping of the Brothers on their toes and inspiring them to redouble their efforts with the view of a strict observance of a Rule that the Brothers were accused of misunderstanding. Some pastors, too, entertained prejudices that they were forced to give up when, inspecting their parochial schools, they joined in prayer, or questioned the children on the catechism or when, in church and in the confessional, they became aware of the changes accomplished, often with surprising suddenness, in the faith and morals of their flock.

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[12] Collection of Various Short Treatises, "Reflections on Their State and Employment".

[13] Thirteenth Meditation, second point.

[14] Arnould, op.cit., pg. 1.

[15] At Chartres the Bishop went so far as to call himself the "Superior-general and Procurator" of the Brothers in the parishes of St. Hilary and St. Maurice. ("Bull. de la Societe archeologique d'Eure-et-Loir", Vol. III, pg. 36, for the year 1874, article by Lucien Merlet.)

Everything, then, cooperated to keep the Institute on the straight and narrow path marked out for it by its Founder and to preserve it from the temptations of the times. And we can well imagine what these might have been in a period when many Christian consciences were beginning to cloud over, when Religious and priests (without going so far as infidelity or scandal) were discharging their sacred obligations in a perfunctory way, tasting of the delights of the easy life and displaying forbearance for the concealed or avowed adversaries of the Church.

The king himself had contributed decisively to the deepest concerns of the Lasallian family with his demands concerning the reformatory at St. Yon. The administration of this institution continued to be a genuine cross for the Brothers. In virtue of one of Louis XV's orders, the only people to be imprisoned there were those confined under "lettres de cachet" and, therefore, the most undesirable of residents. They were dissolute, corrupt, and unbalanced persons who had been unable to adapt to their social or familial environments, who resisted their confinement and contrived every sort of trick to give their guardians the slip. Scenes of violence accompanied internment; threats (several times followed by the beginnings of an assault) were made against the Brothers' lives. There were escapes, sometimes hectic, like the one in 1752 by a prisoner named "Johann", who was pursued by Brothers Leonard and Roman into the neighborhood of St.Sever; there he stirred up a mob which, calling for the gallows for his pursuers, hurled rocks and slightly wounded Brother Roman; meanwhile the prisoner made good his escape.[16]

Bishop Tavannes' visit to St. Yon in 1745 put an end to the first enquiry ordered by the government. But the inevitable incidents which occurred in the reformatory gave renewed vigor to the outcry against the institution. And, on June 22nd, 1756, the king appointed an ecclesiastical and civil commission presided over by Geoffroy Pontcarré "for the purpose of examining the conditions of the institution and of the Community and the abuses that might have been introduced into them". The president of the commission, a very good friend of the Brothers, declared that it was quite unnecessary to set the judicial apparatus in motion to establish a truth that was quite obvious: the administration of the reformatory, like the "free" residence school, was "widely recognized to be deserving of praise".[17]

However, the first President's health was an excuse for not calling meetings of the commission. A few months later Pontcarré resigned his functions, leaving intact, like his father, a reputation for integrity, kindliness, broad knowledge and eminent wisdom. He died in Paris in 1766 "after a long and painful illness".[18] Armand Thomas Hue Miromesnil, the future Bearer of the Seal, succeeded Pontcarré in that illustrious parlementary dynasty in Rouen.

The Institute could expect a benevolent impartiality from the new "head man" -- something that was to become immediately clear, since Miromesnil, in spite of his predecessor's "dismissal" of the case, was obliged to reopen the inquiry on instructions from Versailles. A second royal decree, handed down by the Privy Council on July 1st, 1758, "reactivated" the commission, which now included Cardinal-Archbishop Tavannes, the Intendant of the region, the Dean of the Counsellors to the Parlement of Normandy and the Procurator-general. The government had been persisting in the belief that "public confidence" in St. Yon needed reassurance: it was important that "such a useful institution" be soundly "governed" and that "abuses" (if there were any) be rooted out. For these purposes the commissioners "studied the laws and regulations", questioned the Brothers and "transmitted" to them the "whatever grievance" might turn up in the course of their investigation. The Archbishop and the magistrates were given two years to prepare their report "concerning what they believed suitable for the well-being and advantage of the institution in question".[19]

It appears that no such report was ever written. The king had recommended the most discreet sort of action possible in order not to compromise (by too much noise) the reputation of people to whom he continued to send prisoners. We are inclined to believe that Louis XV's Ministers were easily satisfied with the commissioners' counsel, which was completely supportive of the reformatory's administration.[20]

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[16] Lucard, Vol, II, pp. 210-11, according to the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Canon Farcy in his book le Manoir de Saint-Yon, pp. 138-9, calls the prisoner "Jouanne".

[17] Ibid., pg. 290, according to the Motherhouse Archives.

[18] Precis des trame de l'Academie royale de Rouen, Vol. III, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 297.

[19] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 358. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[20] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 291

There was peace until 1766, when the outrageous conduct of one of the head guards, Brother Mesmin, stirred up a full-blown riot. The Entrance Register indicates that Louis Bertrand Le Begue (Brother Mesmin), born in Raimbovalle in the diocese of Boulogne, on the 23rd of September, 1729 and professed on the 22nd of September 1758, "deserved to be imprisoned by the king's orders", under circumstances that we shall presently describe. He was a very odd Brother; for, while he was harsh with some of the inmates, he was singularly indulgent with others. He was charged with having been an accomplice in an escape, of having accepted money and of drinking in taverns in the company of eight prisoners. His Director's forbearance was perhaps excessive. Boasting of protection in high places, this scheming individual was considered so powerful that no one dared to interfere with him.

On the 5th of December, 1766, the prisoners learned that Miromesnil was planning to come and inspect the institution. Those among them who were critical of Brother Mesmin believed that he had denounced them to the First President. They were furious with him and demanded that he be fired. But the senior guard fled; and, with this, the prisoners seized his confreres, stole their keys and opened the doors to twenty-eight escapees. The Constabulary, under the command of Major Cambon, had to be called out. Even Miromesnil had to be summoned at eleven o'clock at night He succeeded in forcing most of the mutineers to return to their cells. But disorder broke out again on the morning of the 6th. The reformatory was occupied by the military for forty-eight hours. Once the leaders of the outbreak were identified, they were thrown into the dungeon; and, belatedly, the erring Brother was dismissed.[21]

This incident, the authenticity of which is vouched for by the Superior-general himself, certainly indicates a sort of loosening of the reins of discipline. It is probable that the principal cause for it resided in the character itself of the reformatory, where the Brothers had only a delegated authority and where they were obliged to pay attention to the directives of politicians and the wishes and the pleadings of people powerful at court, without being totally free to modify practices or customs or to change personnel, any more than they were free to select the inmates. They assumed a thankless, difficult and, at times, crushing task; and, ever on the alert for the stratagems and the pranks of their prisoners, always under the sword of complaint and denunciation, and under the threat of inquiries that could weaken their influence, they awaited decisions made by others, that were slow in coming or launched at an inconvenient moment. But their merit was no whit diminished thereby. Having chased a few blacksheep that infested this nauseous environment, they succeeded in re-establishing order, and they won the gratitude of their severest critics. Far from being discouraged at having been momentarily suspected, throughout the accusations, the suspicions and the sudden severity of the royal power, they found only occasions for acting with complete detachment.

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Their major problems reached them from another source. For twenty years the higher officials among the Rouen clergy had been relentless toward the Brothers. This offensive, the prelude to which we have observed at a very early date in the episcopacy of Archbishop Tavannes, was to be resumed and conducted in depth under the aegis of his successor, Dominique Rochefoucauld. It did not stop even after the Superior of the Institute was obliged to break off relations with Rouen and retire to Paris. It survived in after-skirmishes and rear-guard actions. This struggle from beginning to end was crucial in the history of the Institute during the 18th century; it unsettled Brother Timothy's last years; it weighed upon the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence. In large measure, it absorbed the energies of these Superiors; and, by inducing them to leave Normandy, it altered the geographical posture of the Institute, by shifting it from what had been its center for a half-century. It is incumbent upon the historian, as a consequence, to explain the circumstances of this struggle in some detail.

An Archbishop of Rouen associated his name with these events, although, in fact, he did not direct them. Dominique Rochefoucauld (to whom the Brothers continued to be dedicated) was a prelate with a gentle character and lofty intentions, who led a life that was consistent with his calling. Belonging to a rural branch of an illustrious family, the eldest of eleven children of the Rochefoucauld-Langheacs, which seemed to have been forgotten in their village of St. Chely, in the gorges of the Tarn, the future Archbishop had caught the attention of Bishop Choiseul-Beaupre of Mende. His piety pointed him the direction of the priesthood, and his noble lineage guaranteed him a rapid and brilliant career in the French church. At St. Sulpice and at the Sorbonne he had received a solid, clerical formation. And then, like so many other young curates of distinguished families, he entered into an episcopal "succession" without ever having served in the ranks. He became the Vicar-general to one of his relatives, Cardinal Rochefoucauld,

[21] Canon Farcy, op. cit., pp. 140-1. The author got his information from a letter of Brother Claude to the Intendant of the region. (Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine)

the Archbishop of Bourges. At the age of thirty four he became Archbishop of Albi, where he saw the Christian Brothers at work, as he had seen them earlier in Mende, Paris and Bourges. He supported them and loved them. And so, when, in 1759, he was transferred to the See of Rouen after the death of Cardinal Tavannes, the Institute could only rejoice.

Dominique Rochefoucauld was named Cardinal and, in 1787, he presided over the Provincial Assembly in Normandy; and in 1789 he attended the Estates General. In the Constituent Assembly the clergy selected him as their leader. In spite of these highly visible roles, he had no gift for politics, not even the qualities of a good administrator. He was respected for being a virtuous priest, a charitable and devout pastor. People were less inclined to trust the scope of his mind, his judgment or his resolution. It was notorious that his Vicars-generals exercised "an irresistible influence" over him. Compliant, optimistic and believing that humanity was totally constructed on his own model, he allowed "these Gentlemen" to do "pretty nearly as they pleased". Each of them acted as master of his Archdeanery: "It was...seven or eight dioceses cut out of a single one." However, a sort of unity existed, because "soaring over all the others was the one who was called 'the confidential Vicar-general."[22]

In 1767, one of these co-partners in the Archiepiscopal authority and distributors of benefices, superiorships of local communities, administrators of church property and judgeships in canon law and theological issues was Father Marescot. He dreamed of conquering the Brothers at St. Yon. It was probably the unfortunate events that had occurred during the previous year at the reformatory that had given him the pretext he needed to persuade Archbishop Rochefoucauld to repeat Nicolas Tavannes' inquiry.

On the 11th of April the Archbishop informed Brother Claude that, on the 24th of that month, at about 8 o'clock in the morning he would visit the chapel and the Community, and that in the course of his visitation, he would have to see the Constitutions and the regulations concerning the governance of the institution as well as the accounts of receipts and expenditures.

"On the day indicated, which was Friday in Easter Week", he came to St. Yon, in pontifical vestments, accompanied by Father Goyon, the Archdeacon-general, and Father Marescot, the Archdeacon of Eu, "acting on this occasion as secretary".

He assisted at Mass and, with his own hands, gave Benediction "with the sacred ciborium". And then for a period of four hours he proceeded meticulously with an inspection and interrogation, the written report of which still survives:

“We inspected the tabernacle (and) found it excellent; the sacred ciborium, silver-plated interior, very clean; the main altar in the Roman style, decorated with relics, candle-holders, all very neat; the Brothers' choir, furnished with very beautiful stalls and appropriate paintings; two small altars, very well situated and suitably decorated; a beautiful iron grill which separates the sanctuary from the nave; the rest of the church, extreme cleanliness; the cemetery, closed and locked tight. From there we entered the sacristy, which we found very beautiful...very clean and commodious. We noted there a quantity of all sorts of linens, ornaments, books and sacred vessels...silver...consisting of two chalices with goldplated interiors...an ostensorium...a cross...two cruettes...a lamp...and a chest with the Holy Oils...all in silver.

An examination of four reliquaries that were shown to us...we found them in order...as were the mortuary records. From there, we went to the chapel of the Sodality (of the Blessed Virgin)...to the prisoners' chapel, and to the one for the use of the "free" resident pupils, which we found in good and duecondition...supplied with things necessary for the celebration of the sacred mysteries.”

Along the way, the Archiepiscopal procession noted (in the sacristy of the chapel for the Sodalists) "a curiously constructed confessional": it was used by the inmates and did not allow them to see other people who might be waiting in the room.

The Brothers, "professed and novices", were then assembled "in the great lower hall". The Archbishop "expressed his satisfaction with their good conduct and their regularity in fulfilling their duties"; and he made some "general remarks that he thought appropriate".

After this thoroughly paternal talk, the Community withdrew; only the Superior-general, his Assistants and the Procurator-general remained with Archbishop Rochefoucauld and his Vicars-general. The Brothers, at the prelate's request, handed over the book of their Constitutions, printed in Rouen at (Le) Prévost's, in 1726, a decree and regulation of Archbishop Tavannes...given on the 12th of August, 1745, and their financial account books...

[22] Father Sicard, op.cit., according to the Memoires of Father Baston, Vol. IL See also in the same book, pp. 22-3, 174 note #3, 180-1.

The Brothers were then required to answer a series of questions. Did they not have "general accounts" for each year? They said they had not. "Independently of the ordinary services", are there "informal instructions for the Brothers and the residents on Sundays?" "For the older residents (i.e., those in the reformatory) there is no other instruction on Sundays and Feast Days, except a sermon after dinner", when there is one; "for the Brothers, the Superior or someone in his place gives an instruction every Sunday ..."

Do the Brothers have 'retreats during the year' and 'extraordinary confessors' sometimes coming into the Community? "There is only one confessor...the chaplain". As for retreats, "they want to have them very much, and they do so when they can"; they sometimes have to do without.

With that, the report concludes and is signed: "Dominique, Archbishop of Rouen, Marescot, Vicar-general, secretary of the group" .[23]

The visitation took place without incident; and the inquiry was full of priestly benignity, as in the days of Archbishop Tavannes. But, as in 1745, the order was to come later. It was dated the 1st of May, 1767.[24] First of all, it set forth a group of quite justifiable recommendations, which revealed the prelates' religious concerns: for ease and progress in the spiritual life at St. Yon there must be more sermons, more retreats and outside confessors to whom penitents may have recourse in complete freedom from time-to-time; and confessionals must be so arranged as to guarantee complete peace of mind for every category of resident.

Father Marescot's purposes became clear in the following articles: “The Brother Superior and the Community (Art. VI) will be responsible for informing us, or, in our absence, our Vicars-general, of the holding of a General Chapter at least three months before its opening, in order to confer with us concerning the matters that they wish and desire to treat of in the Chapter; and in the case in which some of the articles of their Constitutions seem to them to be in need of explanation, they shall appeal to us in order that they may receive suitable instructions on the matter in question”.

Article VII went even farther: “A special register will be kept containing all the decisions made and to be made in General Chapters for the general governance of the Congregation, which decisions shall be presented to us as the end of each General Chapter, to be approved by us, should such be the case; and we declare them without any force or authority until approved by us.”

To this ruthless grab at the spiritual governance there was added a control over the Institute's temporal affairs. This was the purpose of Article VIII. Every year " a general ledger" was to be "drawn up by the Brother Superior and his Assistants" and "presented" to the Archbishop "a month more or less after its preparation, to be approved" (or sent back with comments) by the Ordinary of the diocese or his Vicars-general.

The decree of the 12 of August, 1745, (with respect of which Article IX was supposed to refer the Brothers) had fallen quite short of these encroachments. This time the purpose of the Bull was negated. De La Salle's Institute had been reduced by Dominique Rochefoucauld and his advisers to the status of a simple diocesan congregation, just as once before a pastor at St. Sulpice thought to deal with it as a small parochial congregation. No letter came from the Archbishop to soften the force of the blow. On the contrary, on the 9th of May, at three o'clock in the afternoon...Adam Charles Esmangard, priest, doctor in theology, Archdeacon at the Grand-Caux of the Church in Rouen, Vicar-general of the Most Illustrious and Most Reverend...Primate of Normandy, stood at the entrance to St. Yon in order to notify Brother Claude of His Excellency's wishes. He was assisted by the Archbishop's secretary, Father Robert Lesueur.

The gentlemen received the deferential welcome called for by the situation. The Brothers, immediately assembled, heard the reading of the decree of the 1st of May, 1767. But when Adam Charles Esmangard asked for the "book that was supposed to contain the decisions and regulations made at the General Chapters, so that the present decree could be transcribed into it", the aged Superior "in the presence of the Community and with its council, simply refused to comply: “The Register...of the General Chapters concerns the Institute as a whole; while the orders of Our Lords the Archbishops of Rouen have to do only with our house at St. Yon.”

The Christian Brothers "asked for time to make their respectful representations" to Archbishop Rochefoucauld. Not only would they ask him to agree to record his decisions "in a special book intended exclusively for these purposes"; but, besides, they wanted to explain why some of the articles in the decree

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[23] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 537. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[24] Ibid., same file.

of the 1st of May made compliance difficult. Indeed, Brother Claude could neither disobey the Pope in order to obey the Archbishop, nor could he lend himself to the dissolution of the work that had been entrusted to him. And while the Vicar-general insisted, the Superior "persisted", as did "his Community". Fathers Esmangard and Lesueur were reconciled to allow the Brothers "to make a verbatim copy" of the decree so as to be in a position to draw up their defense. Having in their own eyes failed in their mission, the priests had to retreat, while at the same time saving the appearances. At the bottom of the report, which was drawn up "at about six o'clock in the evening", the signatures of Brothers Clause, Raymond and Genereux were lined up along with those of the prelates' two envoys.[25]

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For an old man of seventy-seven years the anxiety was very great indeed, and the responsibility was very heavy. Even before Dominique Rochefoucauld's move, the Superior-general had decided to resign. There still remained four years on the ten-year term that had begun with the Chapter of 1761. But it was too long to wait. An assembly was immediately called to St. Yon. It came together on the 17th of May[26] (exactly eight days after the great rebuff administered to the Archdeacon) and numbered fifty-seven Brothers.

Since the day was a Sunday, the 17th was taken up in religious services and prayer. On the next day the Capitulants listened to Brother Claude as he explained the reasons for his decision: "The Institute's many-sided activity" demanded a young leader "with great powers for intellectual work" and "much activity". The most pressing interests of the Institute were at stake. It was up to the Brothers to choose one from amongst their number whose age might "allow them to hope that for a long time to come they would not have" to proceed to a "new election".[27]

Events, indeed, spoke loudly enough. While expressing its regrets and its gratitude to the good Superior who had quietly guided, and always edified, the Brothers, the Assembly did not hesitate to "acknowledge" that "the weight of work" was "beyond his strength". In order to face a sensitive situation, the "Regime" had to be regenerated. A Superior at the height of his powers, called (according to what was anticipated for him) to rule, perhaps, until the end of the century, would have the room and the necessary energy to overcome obstacles. Some men and some difficulties would probably disappear before he did. He himself would rely upon the younger generations of Brothers. And if he succeeded in cutting through the inextricable knots, perhaps he would also know how, at the right moment, to perform the bold and saving gesture.

Brother Florence (Jean Boubel) was elected on the 19th of May, 1767. He was forty-two years of age. He was born in Lorraine on the 31st of January, 1725, at Paroy, in the diocese of Metz.[28] He and his elder brother, Brother Jean de La Croix (Diez Boubel)[29] entered the Institute on the same day, the 25th of April, 1743. They were young men from a beautiful Christian family, with warm and faithful hearts. Brother Florence pronounced his perpetual vows at the Motherhouse on the 2nd of February, 1750: the vow book contains his vow formula in autograph, with its tidy hand-writing, the filled downstrokes and his signature with the elegant flourishes. In the same way, his facial features [30] possessed, over all, both firmness and delicacy; spare, with sharp edges; the nose was long and straight, the lips thin; the look penetrating and spiritual, under rather strong eyebrows and a majestic forehead. Certainly, the new Superior, in his carriage and his looks, possessed something of that ease and nobility that belongs to people who are pleasantly and sincerely serious, and exquisitely wise; he inspired sympathy, confidence and respect. Singled out early by Brother Timothy and Brother Claude, after only one year of perpetual vows,

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[25] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Copy in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2.

[26] Which was not Ascension Thursday, regardless of what Brother Lucard writes, Vol. II, pg. 299. In 1767, Easter fell on the 19th of April

[27] Capitualary Register, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 299-300.

[28] Entrance Register, ms. 11122.

[29] Brother John of the Cross, born on the 3rd of May, 1721, died at St. Yon on the 17th of June, 1789 (ms. 11122).

[30] According to a portrait preserved at the Motherhouse.

he became the Director of novices at St. Yon, and, in this capacity, took his seat at the Chapter of 1751. Thereafter, we find him as the Director of the Parisian house of the Holy Spirit, at the head, therefore, of the important Community of St. Sulpice. On the 8th of November, 1754, the Superior and the Assistants selected him as their general and special Procurator, granting him the power to rule, manage and administer all the property, income and business arrangements...of the Institute, to...receive all the funds due to the Institute... in the form of tuitions, gifts of the king, house rentals, arrears of annual income of the French clergy, of the City of Paris, of religious and secular communities...; to pay annual incomes and sums due; to have necessary reparations made to property, and to supervise buildings; to sue, to bring action, and to defend in all cases at law.[31]

In all of this he continued to function as Director; and his signature attached to the acts of the Chapter of 1761 was followed by the title of Director of the Community of the Holy Spirit. Finally, while continuing as Procurator, he was summoned to Rouen to take over the directorship of the tuition-free schools.[32] During a period of twenty years his career had been remarkably full.

There can be no doubt but what he possessed, and to a very high degree, the spirit of De La Salle, to which one document among others, witnesses: it is precious because it is an original letter preserved in the Motherhouse Archives,[33] and because it was a letter sent to Brother Solomon who, in 1768, was a young teacher at the school in Rennes. His Superior had written to him from St.Yon to thank him for his New Year's greetings and to support him with his counsel. He recommends that he "form good habits and improve his practices...; this is the only true way of being happy and of doing good in one's vocation". He exhorted the Brother to be united to God, to "continue to be, in the midst of his Brothers, as the sweet aroma of Jesus Christ". Let Brother Solomon avoid familiarities with his pupils, and let him not be discouraged: "It is impossible to do good without opposition and difficulties".

Brother Florence was an educator, an administrator and an excellent religious. Later on, we shall have occasion to describe his remarkable conduct during the Revolution, at a time when a light (a very discreet one) would encircle the former leader, who had voluntarily returned to obscurity. His generalate, by that time a distant memory, would take on, during those times of courageous profession of faith and of suffering, an unanticipated splendor, and, if need be, receive its ultimate vindication. The Superior never took exception to work, nor did he retreat from the field. Clear sighted and correct, wise and supernatural, as well from 1767 to 1777 as he was during the long years that would remain to him to live. When he ceased to be the guide to his flock, it was not for the want of energy; but, wounded in heart and soul, he thought that a new blueprint and a new personality had, in the course of the struggle, become indispensable, and he passed the command on to a greater strategist.

The Capitulants had given him aides whom he believed most capable of lending him assistance. It was better that Brothers Raymond and Genereux had resigned at the same time as Brother Claude. They, too, had grown old. They had been members of the Regime, the one for sixteen years and the other for fifteen. Brother Genereux was ill when the General Chapter assembled and was unable to take part in its deliberations.[34] In an effort to put an end to the conflict created by the Archbishop, a triumvirate was formed that would be beyond the reach of bias or censure.

The first Assistant was Brother Exuperian, whom we have seen in action in Nancy and in St. Omer. Installed as Procurator-general prior to Brother Florence,[35] in 1767, he was the Director of the Community in Meaux. At fifty-nine years of age, he had lost none of his courage and fire. And, remaining ever youthful, he retained these qualities to an excess. Spirited conversation and too dogmatic assertions occasionally undermined his best efforts to be diplomatic. His unquestioned intelligence and virtue brought him to the attention of the Brothers and compelled respect from his critics.

His colleague, Brother Anaclet, conceded nothing to him in dedication and breadth of mind. At one time he had quite successfully followed Brother Exuperian in the schools in Nancy; and he had just

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[31] National Archives, S. 7046-47; copy of the document notarized in Rouen on the 8th of November, 1754, before Le Bailly and Bouzy.

[32] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 301, note#1, according to one of Le Bailly's documents

[33] Brother Florence's file, BE y 4.

[34] Brother Genereux became Director of the Community in Orleans and in that capacity took part in the Chapter of 1777. At that time he was seventy-two years old. The Registers in the Motherhouse mention neither the place nor the date of his death

[35] National Archives, S, 7046-47. Document dated the 3rd of April, 1753.

finished, as Director, guiding the Community in Belley. From a number of points of view the two men (who were both natives of Chartres) were quite dissimilar. Brother Anaclet (Gabriel Valle), born on the 27th of November, 1721, in the parish of St. André[36] might have given lessons on matters of restraint and moderation to his older colleague. As a consequence he contributed to balance the triumvirate. But while there was excess of ardor with one of them, there was a deficiency of resolution with the other. The second Assistant was excessively diffident. On several occasions Anaclet submitted his resignation. In 1772, the Superior-general thought that he should inform the Brothers-elector of these repeated instances; which he did while declaring that in his judgment Brother Anaclet was perfectly capable of fulfilling his obligations and that this was doubtlessly the opinion of "the Body of the Institute" The resignation was rejected by a huge majority of the sixty-six electors.[37]

The deliberations of the Chapter of 1767, which is considered the ninth General Chapter, took only three days. It was content to regulate a matter concerning prayers for deceased Brothers and the sending of notices concerning the dead to the Communities. After the election of the members of the Regime, the Capitulants' great preoccupation was to confront the possible consequences of Father Marescot's intrigues. In principle, the necessity of establishing the central government of the Institute elsewhere than in Rouen was adopted. But the moment for making the transfer we left to the judgment of the Superior-general.

In extreme old age, Brother Claude continued to live for another eight years at St. Yon. He was peaceful, but, with decaying faculties, the former Superior no longer took any part in the counsels and the activities of the Society.

In the year 1775, on the 26th of October, the body of Pierre Nivet, called Brother Claude, a professed Religious and Superior-general of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, native of the parish of Chatillon-sur-Loing, diocese of Sens, who died the previous night, at the age of eighty-five years, after having received the Sacraments of Penance, the Eucharist and Extreme Unction (was) interred in the crypt under the choir in the church of St. Yon by Francis Nigault, Chaplain, in the presence of Brother Armand of Jesus, Director and Brother Corentine, Sacristan -- the signatories of the document that placed the period to Brother Claude's earthly existence.[38]

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No incident during the year 1768 revealed that the Archbishop of Rouen would persist in his unfavorable attitude toward the Brothers. To judge by one of Brother Exuperian's letters[39] which we shall examine presently there seems to have been a lull in events, which was traceable to the posture of "respectful submission" adopted by the new Regime. There can be no doubt but what the Chapter registers were not surrendered -- anything else would have been tantamount to subscribing to genuine tyranny. But there were no written protests against the decree. In that year, the Superior, in the course of reediting the "Common Rule", took the simple precaution of including the "Letters patent of 1724 and 1725",[40] which defined, in accordance with the legislation of the kingdom, the civil and religious status of the Congregation. It was a very gentle reminder. Brother Florence had certainly acquainted Archbishop Rochefoucauld with the fact of his election; and since the Chapter of 1767 had made no other major decision, this step alone might have temporarily satisfied the Archbishop's demands. Time, one might have hoped, would improve the situation, provided that silence lent a hand to time. Patience and silence had once before triumphed, after the alarm of 1745; and for Archbishop Tavannes to perpetrate a second offense (however, inconsequential), he required orders from the Privy Council in 1756 and 1758 that opened the doors of St. Yon to the Commissioners.

But this time, calculations had failed to count on Father Masecot's tenacity. "Toward the end of 1769", the Vicar-general received a visit from Brother Hilaire, who believed he had a complaint to lodge

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[36] As we noted above, Brother Exuperian was from St. Hilary's parish in Chartres. Brother Claude's internment certificate a copy of which exists in his file, Motherhouse Archives, BE y 3.

[37] The Circular Letter of July 22, 1772, a copy of which exists in Brother Florence's file in the Motherhouse Archives, BE y 4

[38] Note attached to the aforementioned copy

[39] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine. Balbeuf sources, B 13, letter of 30th of June, 1771, to Archbishop Rochefoucauld.

[40] These documents gave the force of law to the Bull of Benedict XIII

against his Superiors. This young man (born in Rheims on the 6th of October, 1743 and entered the Institute on the 4th of September, 1760)[41] had not been admitted to final vows. Disappointed, he meant to break off immediately from the Society which, to his way of thinking, did not do him justice. But he was still bound by his triennial vows until Trinity Sunday, 1770. The Brother appealed to Father Marescot for "a dispensation". "There is nothing difficult about that; I will see to it myself", replied the priest, who gave the applicant "a petition form to be sent to the Archbishop, who at the moment was at Gaillon" The title of this document was in itself instructive: "To the Archbishop of Rouen, the first Superior of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools..." [42]

Dominique Rochefoucauld consented to his Vicar-general's proposals and signed the order releasing Brother Hilaire from his vows and "commuting them to the recitation of the Seven Penitential Psalms twice a week until 'thrifty Sunday".[43]

The door was opened, and two other Brothers at St. Yon hastened to follow. Brother Leonard (Pierre Guillian Blain), born on the 11th of August, 1746, in the parish of St. Denis in the diocese of Arras, and entered the novitiate on the 17th of January, 1763, ("left with a dispensation from the Archbishop on the 6th of April, 1770"). The Register adds that he had neither health nor talent. On the 11th of June it was Brother Fidelis' turn; he had been Jacques Gontier from the parish of Notre Dame, in Barnay, in the diocese of Lisieux, who was born on the 11th of November, 1741 and entered the novitiate on the 23rd of November, 1763. The Archiepiscopal intervention is mentioned in his case as well; and alongside is written a sentence that falls like a meat-cleaver: "This must stop" .[44]

Three departures in six months: -- as Brother Exuperian wrote,[45] there was reason to be alarmed. Would the Institute be at the mercy of its enemies in Rouen? Would an Archbishop offer a quick and easy way out whenever young Brothers were troubled by passing temptations? The three he had just released had no reasons for a dispensation and, according to their places of birth and baptism, did not even belong to his diocese.[46] Father Marescot's plans were materializing: the premises posed in the decree of May 1767 were moving toward their logical conclusion. The Brothers would have to learn that by themselves they were nothing (not even whey they relied upon to laws of the State and the wishes of the Holy See) and that their organization, their religious existence, depended upon the consent of a Vicar-general representing Dominique Rochefoucauld, their "first Superior".

Against these extraordinary assumptions, one had to be armed with the Law. In 1770, Brother Florence appealed to three esteemed Canonists, Mey, Camus and Piales. He had them file two "reports", one in connection with the question of the dispensation from vows, and the other with the question of the decree of 1767. These lawyers wrote (and signed on the 12th of January,1771, in Paris) two "legal opinions" that eventually found their way into the "Common Rule".[47]

The first opinion established that "the Pope alone" had the right "to dispense Brothers of the Christian Schools from their vows". The meaning of Articles IX and X of the Bull of Approbation was perfectly clear: The Founder of the Brothers' Order (wished) doubtless in order to make dispensations exceptional, that they not be granted by anyone but the Pope. At the same time, in order that the Holy See not bebeguiled by false representations, he wished that these dispensations be asked for and granted only for serious reasons, judged to be such by the plurality of votes in the General Chapter.

In this respect, at any rate, the Brothers, as a consequence, were not "subject to the bishops", who admitted them into their dioceses "on condition of observing the Bull", which was the Institute's charter. From that moment the Bishops themselves became the guarantors of the Bull's integral observance.

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41 His name "in the world" was Jean Baptist Noel. Entrance Register.

42 Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Reply to comments and remarks addressed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools concerning difficulties having to do with the Archbishop of Rouen's decree of the 1st of May, 1767, thirty-two pages, unsigned, 1772, pg. 3.

43 Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 538.

44 Motherhouse Archives, HA m 13. Entrance Register

45 Letter of the 30th of June, 1771.

46 Ibid D.

47 In Brother Florence's file (Motherhouse Archives) there is an old copy of the second "legal opinion" that also gives the date as January 12th, 1771

From the fundamental text it was possible to deduce that the Superior-general of the Order no longer had the right of granting dispensations...The Chapter did not dispense, but it decided on the factuality of the reasons set forth in the petition. Strictly speaking, the only power that the head of the Congregation could legitimately exercise would be, during the interval between Chapters, to authorize Brothers to solicit from Rome a release from their commitments.

Finally, the three Canonists concluded to the moral responsibility of Brothers released from their vows without a sufficient inquiry on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, to the invalidity of dispensations obtained by "the false representations" of reasons, and to the double culpability of the unfortunate individual who "would willingly commit a fault" in order to create for oneself a grounds for dispensations.[48] They were included in the edition that bears the date of 1768; but because of the date on which they were written, they must have been printed at a later date. Brother Exuperian's letter proves that the initiative with "the enlightened doctors" and the "famous lawyers" wasn't undertaken until 1770.

The errors and the accumulation of abuses in Archbishop Rochefoucauld's order appear in the same vivid light to the reader of the second "legal opinion". Mey, Camus and Piales, referring here again to the Bull, set forth the twofold limits of the problem: The various houses of the Brothers of the Christian Schools form a Congregation governed by its Superior-general; the individual houses are at the same time subject to the authority of the diocesan bishops.

By intentionally ignoring one of the "givens" the prelate's counsellors were grossly mistaken. Each particular house's submission creates no right for any bishop over the Order itself or over the houses which are not founded in his diocese. The questions that are dealt with in General Chapters are not special to St. Yon...And it is only over (this) house that the Archbishop of Rouen has rights of inspection as over a member of his diocese, but not over the Order...The Order has a government determined by the Bull of Benedict XIII; and the Archbishop...is not called upon in any way to take part in it. It is on his own initiative, then, that he insists that what is done in the Chapters be presented to him...and demands the presentation of Chapter decisions so that he can confirm them. The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, having been authorized by ecclesiastical and secular power, forms a legitimate Body in the State. But a Body has essentially the faculty of making statutes and regulations to police its members. The Brothers...assembled, following the law of their Institute, have therefore the faculty of freely making such statutes. The Bull that establishes them does not subject them to seeking confirmation from the Archbishop of Rouen. To oblige them to do so would be to impose upon them a new yoke contrary to their own rights.

The "legal opinion" then responded to the claim based upon the residence of the Superior-general in the Rouen diocese and the presumed obligation that the Bull imposed upon him always to call General Chapters where he had his residence: Even if the Superior...lives in the diocese of Rouen, this is no reason for the Archbishop to assume...rights that he does not have. But, besides this, the Superior-general is free to change his residence and to situate it where he pleases and, as a consequence, to call a General Chapter wherever he pleases. It is evident from a reading of Article 15 of the Bull that it is solely for the convenience of the Superior general that it is stated that the Chapter will be called in the place where he resides: if he wishes to go elsewhere, an arrangement which was written exclusively in his favor must not be used as an argument against him. Moreover, in order to avoid every difficulty and satisfy even the letter of the Rule, the Superior-general may, sometime before the Chapter, move into the house in which he planned to convoke it, but he may not return thereafter to the place in which he had previously dwelt.

There was an equally clear refutation of "the 8th article of the order" which made a claim for the Archbishop's right to control the Institute's temporal affairs. According to the Rule, confirmed by Rome, the financial statements of the Communities must be made to the Visitors. "Diocesan bishops are not called upon in any way in this matter...By its nature and of itself, their authority extends to spiritual matters only..."

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[48] On the question of dispensations (as well as that of the renewal of triennial vows) there exists in the Motherhouse Archives and in the special Archives of the Brother Procurator-general to the Holy See a number of documents that should be examined. Between 1772 and 1777, Brother Dositheus, Director of "Trinita dei Monti" and Procurator-general in Rome, drew up a "Plan for Petitions" with the view of securing: 1) "Dispensations will not be granted to Brothers of the Christian Schools except through petitions presented by their Procurator-general in the Court of Rome, or with his approval; 2)That in the briefs of dispensation it be enjoined upon the Ordinaries to whom they are addressed to notify the Superiors-general, in a formal statement, that dispensed subjects have been relieved of their vows." (Archives of the Procurator-general, File I, Document 8.).

The Gentlemen in Rouen were locked into the following dilemma: If we think of St. Yon as a lay establishment, it is a fixed maxim with us that the bishops have no rights over the temporal affairs of these operations. But if we liken St. Yon to a monastery, it can be so likened only to monasteries that are joined together as a Congregation, since, according to the Bull of Benedict XIII, all the houses of the Order are subject to a single Superior-general. But it is certain that, with monasteries that are organized as Congregations, financial statements are made to the Superior-general only, and not to bishops. A final paragraph of a more restricted scope shows that in spite of his "last word" on the 1st of May, 1767, Archbishop Rochefoucauld could not invoke the precedent of Cardinal Tavannes, who was forced to get an order from the king in order "to gain information concerning the condition of things at St. Yon and the statutes and regulations in force there..." Thus, in the past "the Archbishops of Rouen" did not think that the fact alone of their being the Ordinary gave them the right indifferently over everything having to do with St. Yon, and still less with what had to do with the whole Order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

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No matter how Gallican at the depths of their souls these canonists were, to whom Brother Florence applied, they could not, in the face of the text submitted to them, do anything but disavow the pretensions of the Rouen clergy and emphasize the direct relation between the Institute and the Holy See. How would the Superior and his Assistants use the legal document with which they had armed themselves? If the Archbishop refused to yield, would they have to think about a lawsuit? Such as solution was repugnant to De La Salle's disciples: their Founder had been several times dragged into the courts, although personally he never wished to take the initiative in a legal action against his adversaries. And, further, under the circumstances, it would be necessary to hail the abuses of ecclesiastical authority into the civil courts. Respectful of the hierarchy, the Brothers would never go to that extreme. Besides, at the moment the nation was in the midst of a political crisis: Chancellor Maupeou had been firing the judges who had been reacting against the king; and the magistrates who had replaced them were unpopular, suspect and violently attacked. In defiance of a public opinion already hostile to "monks" and only seven years after the suppression of the French Jesuits, the courts of law were no place for a Religious Congregation. In the middle of the mire, it was not just sensitivity and Christian abnegation, but simple human wisdom that dictated that one gently and quietly beat out the surest path possible without splattering the mud.

About May of 1771, Brother Superior left Rouen for Paris,[49] and joined the Community of the Holy Spirit on Rue Neuve Notre Dame des Champs. The facilities were extremely cramped: the house was almost totally occupied by Brothers working in Paris; and it had only a single garden for all of the house's annexes. The space and the conveniences of St. Yon had to be sacrificed. It was hoped that the situation was temporary and that an end to it would not be long in coming. What was important (to have escaped the immediate grasp of the primate of Normandy) had been achieved.

The first Assistant, Brother Exuperian, was given the responsibility of announcing Brother Florence's departure to Archbishop Rochefoucauld. It was at this point, on the 30th of June, that the Assistant wrote the famous letter, to which we have alluded on several occasions. “Having just returned from a long and troublesome journey, I have nothing more urgent to do than to assure Your Highness of my continuing profound respect and to inform him, in the bitterness of my soul, of our resolve to yield to circumstances and to flee the persecution that the gentlest of prelates, persuaded by a few of his Vicars-general, conducts against us.”

The Brother goes on to recall the various aspects of a very sad story: the order, "the work" of those gentlemen, which "tends to nothing less than the dissolution and total destruction" of the Institute; the "submission" of the persecuted, confident (regardless of what they have suffered) in the goodness of the man who had once been their protector in his days at Albi; the cruel "surprise" of the year 1770 and the three young men released from their vows, "snatched" from the Community of St. Yon, as though it were a "vain and dangerous" association.

“Then we opened our eyes,” said the First Assistant, “ and terrified, we saw the precipice into which we had nearly fallen; we looked around for charitable people who would lend a helping hand to save the Institute...We have had the consolation of finding warm and sympathetic fathers among the diocesan

[49] Brother Lucard (Annales, Vol. II, pg. 306) writes "March". We are adopting the date given by Brother Paul Joseph, in his Essai surlaMaison'Mere. It accords better with Brother Exuperian's letter to Archbishop Rochefoucauld.

bishops, for whom we teach school; we have discovered enlightened doctors to guide us and famous lawyers to defend the rights of the Institute whose government has been entrusted to us."

Nevertheless, the Superiors decided to assert these rights with moderation, in a conciliatory, peaceful and humble spirit. "Among the means (the jurists) proposed...the Brothers preferred those which were most deferential to the prelates whom the Brothers loved. The reason why they had "planned to hold their Chapter elsewhere than in Normandy was, especially "to save" the Capitulants "from beyond Paris and Lyons some of their travel-fatigue and expenses". Their "enemies" declared that they "would pursue them everywhere"; whereas, the Brothers defended themselves against these threats by simply pointing to the Bull of Benedict XIII, the "Letters patent" and the "Legal opinions" of the Canonists.

"Meanwhile", the Superior-general "had moved his residence"; Brother Exuperian "was preparing to follow him", not without "having besought" the Archbishop "to take St. Yon and the poor Brothers who inhabit it under his protection".

This was the *alea jacta est*, or, better (with St. John Baptist de La Salle as its model) the total abandonment to Providence, to wherever it pleased God to lead his faithful people. Like their Founder who moved from Rue Princesse to the Faubourg St. Antoine, the Brothers obeyed literally the Gospel injunction, *Cum autem persequentur vos in civitate ista, fugite in aliam*. (Matt.x,24) Since 1767, Rouen had been ista civitas. Obviously, it was not a bloody persecution, not even a banishment of the Brothers, who remained on at St. Yon as teachers to their resident pupils and as guards and (as far as possible) reformers of the king's prisoners. And in the city in which Father Barré had founded his schools, experimented with his methods, where Nicolas Roland had gone to learn about holiness and education, and from whence Madame Maillefer had sent Adrien Nyel to the Canon of Rheims, the Lasallian Institute continued as the directors of popular education. The Brothers were wanting neither in hardships nor in humiliations, since such tests were in constant supply. But it made no difference: Rouen had been the place selected by the Founder, the dwelling place of his most fruitful years and the arena of his happy death. It would be for the future his burial place, and the "holy city" of his followers. With all their heart they were united to Rouen, and it took the Revolution to drive them out of it temporarily. However, the Superiors' departure, realized in 1771 was final. Although until further notice, the "Letters patent" guaranteed legal existence to the entire Congregation, and although the Brothers of the Christian Schools would always be known throughout the kingdom as the "St. Yon Brothers", Rouen was no longer, and would never become again, the seat of the Motherhouse.

CHAPTER THREE

The Problem of Headquarters, and the Aftermath of the Crises

In Rouen and Rheims (1771-1777)

There is a curious obstinacy in men who, with the best of intentions, oppose the charitable works which they did not begin and whose vitality upsets their plans, their prejudices and their passions. The people surrounding Dominique Rochefoucauld viewed with a sort of scandal the "Regime" of the Brothers' Institute as it took defensive action. They showed no gratitude that Brother Florence had not chosen to defend the Institute's case against the Archbishop's decree in the secular courts, as several canonists and politicians had suggested.[1] Rather, they considered his silent retreat as another instance of his "disobedience". And they broke out into a veritable campaign of denunciation, disparagement and obstruction, the effects of which were felt throughout Rouen and beyond and afforded excuses to people who had little concern for the success of the Christian schools, and increased the distress of the Congregation during the years when it had both to ward off material want and defend itself in the face of the enemies of religion.

As Brother Exuperian had quite clearly foreseen, "opposition" was "everywhere" attempted. First, an effort was made to prevent the calling of a General Chapter. At the beginning of 1771, Brother Florence wrote a "Circular Letter", a manuscript copy of which, intended for Brother Zacheus, the Director of Nimes, exists in the Archives: “We are planning a General Chapter during the coming month of July, in order to fulfill Article 13 of the Bull of Approbation of our Institute, which prescribes a General Chapter every ten years. Since the only purpose of the Chapter of 1767 was to elect a Superior-general and his Assistants, it did not decide a time for the one that would follow it, as had been done in 1751 with the election of the most venerable Brother Claude...Hence, we presume that the intention of the Chapter of 1767 was to change nothing in the customary order. Thus, going from 1751 to 1761 when there was a Chapter, (without counting the Chapter of 1767) we are in a position to call an assembly during the course of the present year.”

Apart from the usual number of thirty Capitulants drawn from among the "Senior Brothers" and the Directors of the principal houses, the Regime planned to call ten more as delegates from "middle-sized and smaller" Communities.[2]

The idea of a Chapter, then, was a thoroughly deliberate decision. But the Archbishop of Rouen opposed it. He sent letters to the Ordinaries in Paris and Rheims and to the Lieutenant of police in Paris.[3] Certain "doubts" were circulated "concerning the Brothers' obedience to the Bishops' authority"; the Brothers were represented as "people bearing within them the seeds of indocility", which forced Archbishop Rochefoucauld to practice "constant vigilance" with regard to them.[4] Since no steps had been taken to hold a Chapter in Rheims, Cardinal La Roche-Aymon did not have to act. The Brothers pleaded their cause with the Archbishop Christopher Beaumont of Paris, whom they found favorably disposed, but very little inclined to take sides against his Normand colleague.[5]

It was better to husband the future by temporarily abandoning the thought of crushing the opposition. Brother Florence decided upon a moderate solution which would allow the Institute to ponder its spiritual and temporal interests and which would also have the advantage of setting in motion, outside Rouen's influence, a new administrative organization capable of speeding up transactions without

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[1] Motherhouse Archives, Ha n 3-2. Reply to comments and remarks...concerning the Archbishop of Rouen's 1772 decree.

[2] 1 Motherhouse Archives, AAb a 1, Superiors-general's Circulars.

[3] Ibid., HA n 3-2. Remarques touchant les observations des Freres de Saint-Yon and Reponse aux observations et remarques.

[4] Ibid., Reponse...quoted.

[5] Such is the evidence of Brother Exuperian's letter to Father Bordier, dated the 4th of May, 1722. (Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Report on the Regime of the Institute and the Reasons why It was Moved to Paris in 1711.)

compromising unity of views, direction or Rule. Article XV of the Bull of Approbation provided for the formation of "Provincial Chapters", under the presidency of a Visitor delegated by the Superior-general. Over the past half-century, it did not seem useful to call such assemblies: there was enough good work done in the General Chapters without there being any need for a preliminary elaboration in groups of Communities. On the other hand, in the midst of rapid growth, it would have been unwise for the Congregation prematurely to stabilize its structures. But perhaps the time was ripe in 1771? There were schools in nearly every region of France and others would be opened at a slower pace.

It was the Superior's responsibility to use the Papal authorization to "divide the Institute into as many provinces" as he thought were required and to select "in each of them a house that would become 'the center' called for in the Bull. Provincial Chapters were to examine questions of discipline and "the management of temporal affairs". They were not to make immediate administrative decisions: "everything was to be brought to the General Chapters", which, in the final analysis, would legislate. In the intervals between these major Assemblies, the Superior might draw inspiration for his own legislation from the sentiments circulated in the preliminary provincial assemblies. In a sense, the system anticipated what Turgot was later to propose to Louis XVI and that Necker had attempted to adapt to the kingdom.

Brother Florence's "reflections" led him to call "to the Brothers' house in Faubourg St. Germain", along with his Assistants Exuperian and Anacletus, the former Assistant, Brother Raymond and Brothers Adrian, Jean Pierre, Benezet, Zacheus and Jean de la Croix, who were either Directors or Visitors. This council of "nine [6] worked out the details of a plan that had been outlined by the Regime.

The Institute was divided "into three provinces, namely, one made up of the houses...situated in the (regions) beyond Lyons and two others composed of the houses situated 'this side of' Lyons." It went without saying that Avignon, already the headquarters for the Southern Communities and possessed of relative autonomy, was immediately designated as the city where the first provincial Chapter would be held.[7]

The "Circular Letter" of 26th of July, 1771, explained these interesting developments to the Brothers. "The date of the General Chapter" was "deferred" until after the meetings of the provincial assemblies. The Chapter in Avignon was to be opened on the 25th of August, and Brother Florence intended to preside. Thereafter, the Capitulants for the two Chapters "on this side of Lyons" would be convoked.

The Institute, the Superior wrote, would remain "a single body whose members will continue to be completely united". The authority of the leader "over all the members in all of the houses" will be unimpaired, in order "to preserve union and charity, which is the bond of perfection among the Brothers". "Rules and customs" shall everywhere be the same. By creating provinces, by legislating concerning the functioning of Chapters, according to the spirit and the letter of the Bull of Benedict XIII, Brother Florence had the conviction that he was working in a way that was "essential" for the "strengthening" of the Society of which he was in charge.[8]

Forty-seven Capitulants deliberated in Avignon from the 25th to the 29th of August under the presidency of the Superior-general. All the houses then in service in the South of France were represented in these important meetings.[9] Among the Directors there was Brother Benezet, from the residence school in Marseille, Brother Zacheus, Director of Nîmes, Brother Jean-Pierre,Director of Mirepoix and Brother Ferreol, Director of Novices in Avignon. The former Assistant, Brother Genereux took part in virtue of his position as Visitor. Four former Community heads joined the active Brothers -- Brothers Eusebius, Marcel, Gatian and Sixtus.[10]

The Assembly considered the formation of a fund to assist in the support of the elderly and the ill in the new province: the money was to be supplied mainly from the residence schools. It sought to create the position of a "Provincial Director", representing the Superior-general, who would arrange day-to-day business that the delay in communications (between Paris and Avignon) inevitably left in suspense. The idea does not seem to have had any practical outcome: perhaps the Regime feared the possible

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[6] Including the Superior, as the report of the discussions points out.

[7] Motherhouse Archives BE y 4, Copy of the report of the deliberations, in Brother Florence's file, without precise date.

[8] Ibid., BE y 4, same file, two manuscript copies of the "Circular", dated the 26th of July, 1771.

[9] Except Rodez. As for the school in Mens, whose Director is not mentioned on the list of Capitulants, at this period it must have been temporarily closed, as the result of a series of local incidents

[10] Brother Sixtus was not too far away from being the "Dean" of the Institute; but at this time, Brother Anastatius (Antoine Paradis), who entered the Society in 1709, was still alive; he died at Maréville on the 8th of April, 1774.

fragmentation of the central authority.[11] Nevertheless, in a few years the addition of a third Assistant would correspond to the tripartite division of the Institute and would permit the equalizing and lightening of the administrative burden.

The same sort of meetings were held in Paris and in Maréville. Brother Florence felt that they had worked out pretty much as he would have wanted: "The study and discussion" of proposals to be submitted to future General Chapters would, in his judgment, be easier; the harmony which prevailed among the Brothers in their deliberations gave the Superior confidence for the future of the Congregation.[12] Thus, the crisis provoked by the activities of Father Marescot, which had been going on now for four years, seemed, thank God, to be resolved. The Institute, with its three provinces (West, East and South) and with their three new headquarters (Paris, Maréville and Avignon), with its novitiates and retreat houses organized at various points in the kingdom, was being consolidated on a sufficiently wide base and was avoiding dependency upon a single diocese.

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The Vicar-general in Rouen, however, did not think of himself as ultimately defeated. On one occasion when he was meeting with Brothers Florence and Exuperian, he told them in tones that admitted of no response: “I am the Superior of twenty or twenty-two Communities. They don't bother with temporal affairs.”[13]

Those Religious who prudently and respectfully, but quite candidly, refused to bend before his despotism were, in his eyes, guilty of glaring disobedience. He assembled the principal points of his indictment in a report, which turned out to be a sort of pamphlet.[14] "Where facts speak", he wrote in his introduction, "argument is superfluous." The Brothers "falsified their Bull" in the 1726 edition; they attemptedto become independent...sometimes by opposing the secular to the ecclesiastical authority...sometimes by opposing the authority of individual bishops to the exercise of the Archbishop of Rouen's authority...Nevertheless, they "very much need" to be instructed and directed; they badly misunderstand the obligations of their vocation, and operate their reformatory in such ignorance that it is not surprising that rebellion occurs in that institution. "Archbishop Rochefoucauld was convinced" that one or two sermons a week were absolutely necessary for these "lay-Religious", even though it meant that on those days "the time of meditation had to be reduced by a quarter of an hour".

For the rest, the supreme jurisdiction of the Archbishop in this case was, according to Father Marescot, incontestable. St. Yon as an institution could not claim the privileges of the headquarters of an exempt Congregation without appearing ridiculous. In 1756, Archbishop Tavannes had accepted the king's commission only with respect to the reformatory, to which the Brothers had refused him access except with special orders. His successor refused to follow such blunders. He believed that the Society "was subject to him and its very administration accountable to him..." "As long as the General Chapters of the St. Yon Brothers were to be held in his diocese". Archbishop Rochefoucauld "would take care" that the Institute did not lose "its primitive spirit". (Indeed, at this point the Vicar-general conceded that in principle it was all the same if the General Chapters were held elsewhere.)

When the Brothers heard about these "statements", they quite correctly protested: they never falsified the Bull of Approbation; and they had accepted the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries both over their Communities and over their schools; but how could they submit to the decree of the 1st of May, 1767, "without also failing in respect and obedience to the sovereign ecclesiastical power", as well as to the secular power that had supported the Bull throughout the kingdom with the force of law? They rejected the tendentious interpretation placed upon Archbishop Tavannes' interventions. And they revealed the origins of the malicious insinuations directed against the Brothers' administration of the reformatory. "In 1768,

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[11] Motherhouse Archives, BE y 4, Brother Florence's file, copy of an Assembly report; and HB s 28-8, Historique manuscrit de la province meridionale, Vol. II.

[12] Lucard, Annales, pg. 347, according to the Registre capitulaire B (Motherhouse Archives, CCf p B).

[13] Motherhouse Archives, Response...1772.

[14] We have the text (or at least its summary) in the Remarques touchant les observations des Freres de Saint-Yon...an eight-page manuscript preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2, which includes the Brothers' replies on the margin. The document's title refers only to the decree of 1745. But we shall see by its contents as well as from what follows in the present account that it is concerned especially to present events of 1767-1771 from the point of view of the Archbishop's office.

Father Marescot wanted preachers to eat in the refectory" with the inmates "and converse familiarly with them during recreation". "Orders from higher up" were required "to prevent the implementation" of these untimely visits.

As for the slanderous charges about the Brothers and the duties of their vocation, they cited the words of the Archbishop of Rouen himself, who told those whose regularity he had come to inquire into how well he was satisfied with their "good conduct" and with their "exactness" in fulfilling their mission. How could the Brothers have conducted themselves so well, if they were ignorant of their duties? "Besides, the Rule had provided them with abundant instruction without cutting of a half-hour of meditation".

Since Father Marescot's libel had been spread outside the diocese, it was important that statements set forth briefly in a preliminary reply be developed, made more explicit and delivered from all *argumentum ad hominem.* This defense, in due form, was placed in the hands of Bishops who supported the Congregation. In this way the Brothers "precluded that their apostolate be disparaged or rendered ineffectual". But while standing up for themselves, they did not deny what they owed to the Archbishop of Rouen. Their heart was their surety: they loved and respected this prelate more genuinely that the false zealots who exaggerated his authority. They had long since known "his fairness and his religious spirit.

Thus far, the Introduction to the "Reply to the Criticisms and Remarks Made to the Brothers of the Christian Schools Concerning the Difficulties having to do with the Decree of the Archbishop of Rouen of the 1st of May, 1767".[15] Obviously it originated with the people surrounding Brother Florence; and it was written either by the Superior-general himself or by Brother Exuperian.

The Institute's leaders, first of all, objected to the "improper name", "the St. Yon Brothers". To designate them in such a way was, beyond a doubt, to wish to strip their Society of its universal character and reduce it to the statutes of a diocesan Congregation. In virtue of the Holy See's Bull of Approbation, its only name was the Institute of the "Brothers of the Christian Schools."

Concerning the dispensation "from simple and triennial vows" the report alludes to the opinion of "Piales, Father Mey and Camus". And it goes on to prove that, through quite effective intrigues, the clique in Rouen had blocked the convocation of the General Chapter when it was about to be held outside of Rouen.

The accusation of disobedience and sullen rebellion vanished before a number of witnesses. Everywhere, the Brothers supported their pastors. "As sons of De La Salle", they preserved "as a precious heritage the inviolable attachment of their virtuous Founder to the episcopal authority". Repeating a slogan of Father Marescot (it was fair play), the author of the "Reply" asserted: "Where facts speak, arguments are unnecessary."

After all, what "fact" to the contrary did the opposition produce? None that had occurred during the episcopacy of Archbishop Rochefoucauld. The opposition had challenged the 1726 edition of the Common Rule and the article of the Rule of Government that referred to the Bishops' authority over the schools. But as regards the "quotation" from the Bull of Approbation, the answers had been supplied since the incident was raised by Archbishop Tavannes. As for the Rules in manuscript form, they had been composed by the venerable Founder, who died in the odor of sanctity, and who (no one) doubtless would accuse of being wanting in the primitive spirit of the Institute.

The tactful way in which the Regime had left St. Yon, in order "to avoid an uproar and the demands of protocol", came as the final proof of the Brothers' goodwill and upright intentions.

Was it, then, "ridiculous" (to use another of the Vicar-general's expressions) for St. Yon to claim "the privileges of the headquarters of an exempt Congregation? The intemperance of the language only served to hide an ignorance of the law. To be convinced of this, we have only to reread Article XVIII of the Decree of April, 1695: (Archbishops and Bishops) in the execution and pursuit of the holy decrees and canonical constitutions and without prejudice to the exempt status of...monasteries...may visit in person, when they think proper, those in which the abbots, abbesses and priors who are the Superiors of the Order do not make their ordinary residence...

The right of visitation, then, was not to be exercised where the Superior of the Order resided. (In such a case, and regardless of the extent of the Ordinary's jurisdiction over St. Yon, the Archbishop should

[15] An unsigned manuscript of 32 pages, dated 1772 in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. According to Brother Exuperian's letter to Father Bordier on the 4th of May, 1772, the report was "deposited" at the Archbishop's office in Paris on the 23rd of February, 1772. Archbishop Beaumont "was quite willing to be the depository of the (Brothers') sentiments of respect for, and submission to, the episcipacy", but he refused to become a "go-between" for his colleagues in Rouen.

have confined himself, according to the decree, to require the Superior to reform the so-called abuses; he had no authority to insert himself into the administration of temporal affairs.)

This candid appeal, in which emotion and sensitivity found their place alongside legal argument, situated justice on the side of the accused. And while it did not succeed in changing minds that were already made up, it did prevent the known facts from being transformed into legal precedents and preserved legitimate rights for a better future.

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False shots fired at St. Yon frequently left their mark on the Brothers who operated the schools in Rouen and who formed a special Community apart. Since 1736, they had been living on Rue St. Romain, near the famous "Bookstore Gate", in a building that the Brothers had purchased at the time from Adrian Chalon.[16] In conformity with the stipulations of 1705 and 1707,[17] they received their "wages" from the "Bureau of the Able-bodied Poor", which administered the property deeded to hospices and schools by Laurent Le Cornu, Lord of Bimorel. As the officers of this Bureau, the Brothers conducted classes at St. Godard, St. Elias, St. Vivien and St. Maclou. Similarly, in 1746, they took over the direction of hospitalized children, only to give up the work in 1753, as the effort was no more successful then than it was in De La Salle's time. The members of the hospital commission were always extremely severe on the Brothers, whom they paid poorly and of whom they demanded a great deal. They criticized the Brothers in the General Hospital for having cultivated insubordination among the young boys employed in the "hemp-mill". In fact, the three Brothers who were obliged (between classes) to leave their pupils to the mercy of the foremen in charge of professional training objected strenuously to the lack of supervision and to the mixing of the sexes in the workshops. Their complaints were received with ill-grace and their dismissal was the topic of the Bureau's deliberations in April of 1753: three months later Brother Claude finally withdrew the Brothers.[18]

On the whole, the middle-class in Rouen had not changed its way of looking at things and of acting since the period when, at the request of Archbishop Colbert and Nicholas Camus Pontcarré, it had admitted De La Salle's disciples to serve the poor: the people thought that it was a waste of money to educate the lower classes. If the Brothers wanted to devoted themselves to such a task, their sacrifices would not be rejected, and, occasionally, they would be praised; but they should expect only the lowliest of salaries. Their work would survive only at their own risk and peril. This singularly selfish attitude was re-enforced, after the opening of the residence school at St. Yon, by a surprising sophistry: since Rouen tolerated the opening of these institutions within its borders, and since it welcomed the Superiors of the Institute, the latter, in turn, should pay toward the upkeep of the tuition-free schools with a part of the income from their residence pupils. It wasn't enough for Normand hospitality that the Brothers taught the children in the Faubourg St. Sever without remuneration. It was further necessary that, nearly upon the same conditions, they must ensure popular education in all the other parishes. The people in Rouen, clerics as well as lay, were simply proposing that St. Yon assume, for the want of their own contribution, their charitable obligations. They were careless that St. Yon had been founded to supply the Congregation, without public appeals, with bread for its leaders, its novices, its sick, its elderly and the aides it needed for the functioning of these services. As we have said, they exaggerated wantonly the number of incomes, tuitions, leases and farm rents on which the Brothers lived; they accused the Brothers of economizing on the food for the inmates of the reformatory; and people were forever demanding an account. In vain did the first President and Hue Miromesnil verify the management of the institution; in vain did every inquiry turn out to support the accused. Rumors persisted, because they were so well attuned to special interests, to jealousy and to secret hostilities; and because they provided an all too easy excuse for the carelessness of the Bureau for the Poor.

Until 1744, the Community on Rue St. Romain received nothing from the Gentlemen of the Bureau for the Poor except a meagre annual assistance of 600 livres, established by the decree of the 2nd of August, 1707. With the increase in the cost of living, the sum became absolutely ridiculous. Brother Zacharius, Director of the Community, was emboldened to seek a raise. And at the intercession of Geoffroy Pontcarré, B. Bigot, Director of the General Hospital, was induced to make an agreement on the 19th of June with the Brother and the Superior-general's representative (who, on this occasion was Brother

[16] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for November, 1907, pg. 381, "l'ecole de Saint-Maclous a Rouen"; cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 101-2.

[17] Beaurepaire, op.cit., pg. 361; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 194-7.

[18] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 238-246.

Irenée) which allotted the Brothers in four schools a supplementary and global "gratuity" of 400 livres a year, "without preventing them from asking for other assistances".[19]

Eleven people (the number of Brothers, including the Director, employed in the City) obviously could not be supported, at that time, on a 1,000 livres, no matter how frugal the standard of living. Over and above the alms of the odd benefactor, there had to be some assistance from St. Yon. Would the Superior-general abandon the schools that De La Salle had accepted with such eagerness and retained at the cost of severe sacrifice? By placing a levy on the residence schools, he slipped subsidies to Rue St. Romain, while maintaining rigorously the financial and administrative autonomy of the Community in Rouen; it was important that no precedent be set that might encourage the civil or religious authorities to unload the responsibility for the schools onto the Institute. All too easily Rouen assumed that the Brothers placed at the disposal of its parishes should be nothing but the employees and wage-earners at St. Yon.

But the Bureau became incoherent when it arrogated to itself the right to place a limit on the schools' clientele, which was, in fact, what happened in 1762 when the Corporation of Writing-Masters launched their final offensive against De La Salle's Brothers. The corporation fought with every unfair weapon against the methods and the indefatigable energy of their competitors. Uneasy about their future (It would have proved awkward to have blamed them.) the Writers in Rouen assembled their grievances and complaints under three headings. 1) The Brothers were the "cause of the deterioration..in writing": they were partial to "the slanting round-hand" or Italian style, to the detriment of "the old round", specifically French, style. 2) They attracted to their classrooms the children of well-to-do families. 3) They devoted too much time to instruction: two hours a day would be long enough for the education of the poor.

The first and third points were simply the ineffectual protests of men who had outlived their usefulness. The second, however inspired by the same retrogressive spirit, seemed to the administrators of the tuition-free schools as deserving of consideration: thus, the Bureau forbade the Brothers to receive any pupils but the sons of the indigent. Its decree of the 2nd of July, 1762, was confirmed on the 8th of August by the Parlement of Normandy: the Writing-Masters were authorized to see that the following placard was placed on the doors of the Christian Schools: Charity Schools for the Poor of the city and neighborhoods. It was a Pyrrhic victory: the Writing-Masters were not strong enough to block a movement which, from the early years of the century had led people of modest means (even merchants with a house of their own) to entrust their children to the new teachers.[20]

A harsh and dubious treatment on the part of the hospital administration and an ever-recurring moral and material inconvenience for the Community on Rue St. Romain pretty well summarize the situation in 1772, after the difficulties that had arisen between the Superiors of the Institute and the Archbishop of Rouen. Even though the moment was not favorable, it was decided in the councils of the Regime to begin to take steps that would rescue the Brothers from their critical position in Rouen. Brother Exuperian took the initiative and guided the operations. Petitions and appeals were drawn up and addressed to the Archbishop, the Intendant and the Gentlemen of the General Hospital. The first Assistant also undertook a correspondence with Father Bordier, Vicar-general, who neither approved of the intrigues of his colleague, Father Marescot, nor shared his hostility.[21]

On the 12th of June, 1772, Brother Exuperian wrote Father Bordier that for sixty-five years the Brothers had been curiously dealt with by the Bureau for the Poor, which, during that time, must have collected 152,750 livres of income from Bimorel's estate. But its payments in favor of the Christian Brothers did not exceed 49,000 livres, at the rate of 600 livres a year from 1707 to 1746 and 1,000 livres a year for the last twenty-six years.[22] These figures appeared "absurd" to the Vicar-general, who responded sharply: My attachment to your Institute makes me hope... that you are not working for its destruction as you attempt to defend it, and that spirit of simplicity, poverty and humility which inspired your first Brothers is forever preserved.

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[19] See Vol. I of the present work, pg. 338-339

[20] 1 Beaurepaire, op.cii., pp. 351-2.

[21] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 297-81 et Beaurepaire, pp. 352-3.

[22] All the documents relative to this matter were copied by Brother Exuperian himself in the document entitled "Report concerning the Regime of the Institute and the Reasons why it Moved to Paris in 1771" -- a Notebook, in-quarto, 46 pages, in the Motherhouse Archives, H A it 3-2. Cf. Lucard, Annales, pp. 326-31.

For its part, the Bureau, rather than do justice to the Brothers who continued to serve it with remarkable disinterestedness, was thinking of taking its schools away from the Brothers and giving them to the Writing-Masters. An official contract was drawn up with the Corporation. And while the plan didn't come to anything (as might have been expected), the reason was that the needs of men living in their own homes and burdened with family responsibilities exceeded by a very great deal the Brothers' modest demands. [23]The Intendant, De Crosne, then intervened with the desire of being totally impartial and of reconciling all parties. On the 18th of July, he summoned Brother Gervais, the Director of St. Yon, to his residence. He told him that "he had attended the Bureau's last meeting" and had learned of Brother Exuperian's letter of the 12th of June to M. Bordier; he thought its contents were indefensible. In fact, Bimorel had left 2,350 livres of income to be used for the benefit of the poor, provided that the Bureau produce, on that capital, the funds to support two teachers. Apart from the fact that this income existed prior to the Brothers' advent in Rouen, the hospital would not have accepted it if it had to be totally distributed to the schools. Furthermore, it didn't make any sense to spend all of that money on two teachers.

That, in brief, was De Crosne's position, which could not have been supported apart from documents supplied by the Bureau. Lawrence Bimorel's purposes were certainly more generous; and his efforts were not restricted to supporting two teachers for all of Rouen. Once his position was made clear, De Crosne added that the Brothers had selected a very bad moment to ask for a raise. The hospital was in debt; Parlement had been closed down; and the city government was fragmented. Nevertheless, he was able to bring the Bureau to signal its sympathy by granting an annual increase of 200 livres.[24]

It was a gesture that simply indicated the administrators' distress in the face of school problem. They were too stingy to provide a livelihood for the Brothers.[25] And yet, the Intendant continued to hold urgent meetings with Brother Gervais, who had been received once again on the 11th of August and was reminded of the "promise made by De La Salle in 1705". (As if nothing had happened in the world of finance over the past sixty-seven years!) According to Brother Gervais, he kept the appointments "for the Institute's honor, to keep the promise" made by the Founder. "If not, the Brothers would become contemptible in the public's eyes".[26]

Obviously, supporting the schools preoccupied the Intendant in the most seriously way. For him, an interview with Brother Florence did not seem to be excessive; and it took place in Paris four or five days later. The Superior insisted that he would withdraw the Brothers if a stipend of three-hundred livres was not assured each one of them.

On the 23rd of July, Brother Exuperian wrote: "We have relied heavily on the Archbishop". Dominique Rochefoucauld, put to the test, seemed inclined to a compromise: he promised that he would pay the wages when school resumed. The Brothers, meanwhile, would have to be patient. In April of 1773, they were still awaiting the fulfillment of the Archbishop's promise. The city of Rouen, expecting an immanent change in government, absolutely refused any assistance. In another conversation, the Superior-general alerted the Indendant and, by letter, the Archbishop that classes would not be resumed after vacation.[27]

Meanwhile, however, the City Council undertook new deliberations. Its point of view was spelled out in the following report: “We must not deal with the Brothers as though they had no institutions in Rouen or in the neighborhoods; or as though we called them from another city to teach in Rouen's tuition-free schools. For, in that case, it would be right to grant them 300 livres apiece for food and maintenance...as they are paid in the cities where they have no institutions...If they stop teaching in the schools, we shall be in a position to force them to do so, since there is no question here of bargaining with them as though they were being called to Rouen for the first time. We would even be in a position of maintaining against them that they must, in this case, leave Rouen and its neighborhoods as well, and that we can dispossess them of all the alms we shall prove they have received.”[28]

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[23] Beaurepaire, op.cit., pg. 354.

[24] Report cited.

[25] Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Brother Exuperian's letter to De Crosne, the 23rd of July, 1772

[26] Ibid. HB n 3-2. Brother Gervais' letter to Brother Exuperian, the 11th of August, 1772. 4 To M. De Crosne, letter quoted

[27] Conversation of the 28th of April, 1773, letter of the 30th, in the report quoted.

[28] According to Beaurepaire, op. cit., pp. 355-6.

The Institute was not invited to discuss the matter, even though it was put under the double jeopardy of expulsion and confiscation. Once this ultimatum was issued, the Supervisors condescended (*moto proprio)* to reconsider the grant of assistance.

The Archbishop conveyed the city's reflections and decisions to Brother Florence, with no attempt to soften the blow. How could he have done so, since the city was moving in the same direction as himself? On May 1st, 1773, he wrote from Gaillon:

"My very dear Brother, it was only after mature deliberation that the city granted you an increase of 800 livres and did not decided to do so without the assurance that I would contribute to this excellent work. But, at the same time, it was persuaded that since you are established at St. Yon only by its consent and generosity, you have no right to abandon the schools in Rouen while keeping the institution at St. Yon with all its appurtenances and annexes. The city also believes that it is only for your greater convenience that the Brothers in the city schools occupy a house on Rue St. Romain, a house that might be rented out rather handsomely. Thus, it demands that you reside at St. Yon, as your predecessors have done. It is by conforming with the intentions of the Gentlemen at City Hall that you will deserve their goodwill and that you will avoid confrontations the results of which will not be favorable to you.."[29]

Ten days later, the Superior-general was in Rouen and once again met with De Crosne, who confirmed that "the Archbishop was irritated" and that the city government "(was) unhappy". According to the Intendant, the prelate would have liked to have insisted that pledges be given regarding the holding of General Chapters in his diocese. It was obvious that pressures were being brought to bear on Brother Florence from every quarter. But he did not waver in his conduct, and he declared that "he couldn't change anything".

Except that he made it clear to the Intendant on the 27th of May that, regarding the question of stipends, he was not going to settle into an intransigent position; and that as an "experiment" he would reduce his demands for the Community on Rue St. Romain from 3,300 to 2,400 livres. De Crosne, who was anxious to put an end to this matter, hurried to negotiate with Archbishop Rochefoucauld and the other groups involved on this new basis. On the 10th of July he had the satisfaction of announcing to the Superior: "I made a lot of appointments.. And I cannot hide from you that it was not without difficulty that I succeeded in insuring a better lot for your Brothers. The Archbishop, the city and the General Hospital agreed to contribute their part. And it has been decreed that each year there will be payed a sum of 2,400 livres for the Christian Schools..."

While the Hospital was responsible for half this figure, the rest, in equal parts of 600 livres each, was the contribution of the Archbishop and the city.[30] Regardless of what it might cost, St. Yon could not exempt itself from making up the full amount that was necessary: we know this through a note which the first Assistant added to the report, to the effect that the annual sum to be paid totalled up to 1200 livres and that the Brother Procurator thought that the sum was excessive.

The Brothers in Rouen, however, were not at the end of their troubles. "Toward the last months of 1775", Archbishop Rochefoucauld sent word to the Director, Brother Leander, that "he did not intend to continue to pay...his portion". He "was going to apply his alms" to other works. Contrary winds still blew in over the Institute from Normandy. During the same period, the city treasurer shamelessly declared that Rouen was "in no condition" to pay what was due for the first six months. And, in a letter on the 23rd of February, 1776, addressed to the Intendant, the Council explained why not: the discontinuation of the obligatory use of the mills had deprived the city of a considerable portion of its income. No further payments could be expected from it.[31]

Visiting the Community in those days, Brother Exuperian found it extremely poor. He had to leave 500 livres with Brother Leander to buy linen. Age had not extinguished the first Assistant's ardor, although, only the year previously, he had sought permission to resign, but without success.[32] He set out on a campaign to improve the Brothers' income. However, Brothers Florence and Anaclet thought it unwise to

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[29] Report quoted

[30] Report quoted; and Beaurepaire, pg. 355.

[31] Report quoted; and Beaurepaire, pg. 357-8.

[32] 2 Quoted from one of Brother Exuperian's letters, dated the 19th of April, 1775, in Brother Florence's file. (Motherhouse Archives, BE y 4).

carry on the struggle on that particular battlefield: they feared, in the rather vivid language of their colleague, "that the City and the Parlement were going to fall upon the Brothers and crush them" .[33] Daring won the day. The first President, the Procurator-general and the Archbishop himself agreed to look for means to supply the deficiency. M. Montholon, the successor to Hue Miromesnil as the head of Parlement, also presided over the commission which directed and administered the Colleges since the suppression of the Jesuits. That institution's income, he explained to the Bureau, must serve for public instruction: it was appropriate, therefore, that, in order to prevent the closing of the tuition-free schools, the 1200 livres of which the Brothers had been deprived should be levied on this fund. It was so decided on the 4th of May, 1776, "without, for the future, implying an obligation against the College, and for only as long as" the financial situation would permit it. Brother Exuperian, with visible and justifiable relief, at this point, writes "finis" to the events in Rouen.[34]

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At the same time, matters in Rheims had entered a new phase and followed a course that paralleled the afflictions in Normandy. And here again the first Assistant spent his energy and eloquence and paid with his own person without fearing the blows; and after an exhausting struggle and on the verge of obtaining his objectives, he left the Regime in 1777.

In Rheims, as in Rouen, the problem was to generate income for the Brothers; furthermore, it was necessary to obtain "Letters patent", which would consolidate the Institute's position in Champagne. Here as there, the Brothers were running up against the same sort of resistance and the same sort of suspicions as in Rouen.

In about 1753, during the generalate of Brother Claude, a residence school had been opened on Rue Contray.[35] The Superior wanted "to be useful" to a city that had been "forever dear" to the sons of De La Salle.[36] From the city politicians there came nothing but verbal authorization; but it seemed that their word could be counted upon, since they had asked the Congregation to assume responsibility for the enterprise as a mark of affection and gratitude coming from the Founder's native city.[37] St. Yon had "paid all the costs, which came to 26,500 livres". The institution was a modest one, with rather few pupils: facilities existed for about forty-five residents. The income that could be realized from it was just enough to support the sick and elderly and to amortize the debt. However, the calumnies that had circulated against the Normand residence school spread also about the residence school in Rheims: the Brothers, it was rumored, were becoming outrageously wealthy; they would soon be like the monks who, "beginning with nothing, have the income of princes"; they had been "the Jesuits' servants"; and now that the illustrious "Society of Jesus" had been expelled, who knows but what the Brothers may not attempt to substitute themselves it its place and inherit its power?[38]

Because, following a tradition begun by their Founder, the Christian Brothers did not exclude from their schools "certain young gentlemen" for whom their parents had intended careers in commerce and industry, the Brothers were accused of being unfaithful to their mission as educators to the poor. It was thought that residence schools assumed too large a place in their program of activities; and people grumbled that funds originally intended for charity schools were diverted to the advantage of those institutions. On the other hand, the generous welcome given in the elementary classes to children of every condition appeared something of a scandal: the most conspicuous indigence (to believe the Congregation's detractors) had not only a preferential right, but an absolute privilege, in schools directed by the Brothers. It was a surprising failure of logic: while ancient France recognized that secondary education and higher

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[33] Report quoted.

[34] Ibid., and Beaurrepaire, pp. 357-8

[35] It is impossible to specify the date. But it certainly is not the one given in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January, 1909, in an article on the schools in Rheims. Brother Exuperian says quite clearly (in a letter dated the 23rd of May, 1774) that the residence school was established "about 20 or 21 years ago". The documentation regarding the Brothers in Rheims in the second half of the 18th century was collected in the library of that city and published in 1848 by Ernest Arnould in his book, already referred to, les Etablissements d'instruction primaire de in vine de Reims. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 313-25.

2 Motherhouse Archives, HA n 3-2. Brother Exuperian's letter for the 5th of August, 1773.

[36] Ibid., n 3-2. Letter by the same, April, 1774

[37] According to the papers of the attorney for Rheims, Sutaine-Maillefer, employedby Arnould. Cf. Essai sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 80, note 2.

[38] Statement by the Brothers, given in a letter from the City Council to the Intendant, dated the 15th of September, 1773

instruction were to be shared by all in the benches of colleges and universities, tuition-free, a strong sentiment persisted in restricting the gratuity of primary education to the ABCs and the catechism.

Such was the mentality that put in its appearance in Rheims during the years between 1771 and 1777; such was the prejudice which opposed the free development of the Institute, which provoked the mistrust of parochial structures and city politicians, demanded the end of the residence school, refused to grant the school the most mostest subsidy, held up the granting of "Letters patent", and, finally, excluded the Superior-general from the city of the Founder.

All of these difficulties were intertwined, although they were not all constantly on view at the same time. A "Rule for the tuition-free schools in St. Hilary's parish", dated the 24th of September, 1772, insists on forbidding the admission of pupils without an "admittance slip", handed out by the President of the Bureau, the pastor or one of the administrators.[39] This was the initial scuffle. The battle proper was about to be joined at full tilt and pursued on all fronts, when Brother Exuperian, mandated by Brother Florence, determined to obtain a favourable solution to the affairs of the Community in Rheims. The end, to which secondary objectives were subordinated, was to move the Regime to Rue Contray and the Rue Neuve, a project which had been suspended since 1746, but had always been cherished, because its successful issue would put an end to many difficulties, lift the very embarrassing mortgage that the Archbishop of Rouen had caused to weigh morally upon St. Yon and would also liberate the Superior from the inconveniences of his provisional residence in the Parisian Community of the Holy Spirit.

In Rheims the Brother Assistant had found someone to understand and help him: M. Sutaine-Maillefer, the chief attorney for the city, an excellent gentleman, whose name seems to suggest a blood-relationship, or at least a marriage-relationship, with the near relatives of John Baptist de La Salle. Brother Exuperian, who had come to town in July of 1773 to expedite negotiations, wrote to the attorney on the 18th of that month:

"...I recognized yesterday that the prejudices against our establishment are immense, since nearly a hundred years have not been able to overcome them. One has to have as much courage and wisdom as you have, Sir, to undertake to dispel them..."[40]

These "prejudices" were known, and the Assistant accounted for them in a letter, dated the 5th of August, addressed to the Director of the Community in Rheims. The City Council wanted to introduce two conditions into the "Letters patent" project: the interdiction of the admission of children from well-to-do families into the tuition-free schools, and the abolition of the residence school. Brother Exuperian had not difficulty in agreeing that the Institute is "especially for the poor": he noted, nevertheless, that it was quite improvident and a sign of singular narrowness to attempt to set up road-blocks at the school door: "At Meaux, the mayor and the city officials told me when I lived there: those who have preceded us have committed the greater fault; they themselves excluded their children from your schools and they didn't know to whom to send them...The Gentlemen in St. Omer, Calais and Boulogne acted more wisely. At Arras, Douai, Bethune and Hesdin they intended to enroll their children..."

"Regarding the residence school", the Brother declared frankly that the Institute "was not wedded to the idea". Its creation would have been "an error that we should have always regretted", had it been material prosperity that had been aimed at and was alone in question. But the Gentlemen must "be very careful before pronouncing judgment". It was, indeed, "a great advantage" for a city "to have a residence school" where young gentlemen were "brought up under the eyes of their parents" -- an advantage so notable and so much sought after" that in several places there is need to specify in an article of the founding contract "that the Brothers will admit resident pupils". The "dearth of Brothers" usually prevents the Superior from giving satisfaction on this point. But the Brothers would be happy to make an exception for Rheims.'

Even when the Community had, through legal recognition, rapidly obtained the right to accept legacies and to acquire real personal property, it had not been, for all that, assured of the immediate means of livlihood. In the summer of 1773, at the urging of their Superior, the Brothers in Rheims petitioned the Intendant and explained that the cost of living and the death of their former benefactors had worsened their circumstances and that it would be necessary for them to reduce their numbers, and, as a consequence, close some of their classrooms, if they were not helped. On the 12th of August, Rouille Orfeuil sent this request to the City Council for investigation and possible action.

The city made an appeal to the parishes' charity funds, but results were quite disappointing. Those who presided over these funds replied unanimously that there was nothing they could do. Indeed, some of

[39] Arnould, pp. 65-68.

[40] Idem., pg. 70.

them believed that it was the time to complain about the Brothers: who, they thought, neglected the poorest children, and were wanting in obedience to their pastors. They also returned to the question of the residence school: if the Brothers had not spent so much on that institution, they would not be in such great need.

Forwarding these reports to the Intendant of Champagne on the 15th of September, the Mayor and the Supervisors observed: “The public universally seems to demand the suppression of the residence school. The Brothers promise to comply on this point with common opinion as soon as they can obtain an audit of the institution's accounts. You alone, Sir, may perhaps be able to obtain from the Cardinal-Archbishop the help that can no longer be hoped for from the various ‘Parish funds’".

The letter closed with some thoughts on the "Letters patent", which remained to be studied: "His Eminence and his Co-adjutor" appear favorable. "The 'Letters patent' could be viewed in such a way that the pastors" would no longer have any reason to criticize the Brothers' conduct, and the Institute may be "returned" to its purpose "which (is) the instruction of poor children". But, "meanwhile", it was necessary (to) provide" for the needs of the schoolteachers.[41]

Brother Exuperian was right to vent his sadness. On the 30th of November, he wrote to Sutaine-Maillefer: “I know no one but yourself who has any zeal for the preservation of the good work in Rheims. I confess to you that my own zeal diminishes from one day to the next, when I see the indifference of those who should be its mainstay. They gladly allow us to restort to begging to stay alive; but we believe that that is insufficient gratitude for the services we have provided the city over the past fifty-three years.”[42]

It was hardly the season for optimism. But to dash matters totally, all that was needed was the harsh letter of the 17th of February, which bore the signature of the Cardinal-Archbishop La Roche-Aymon writing from Versailles to Rouille Orfeuil: “I received, Sir, the letter with which you honored me on the 10th day of this month, concerning the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the City of Rheims. It's not the first time I've heard tell of their needs; but in my diocese I have a quantity of more deserving poor...I am not surprised at the aversion that the "Parish Funds" have shown to supplying them with assistance; the income from these funds are intended to support the parochial churches...It is rather for the city to seek out ways to help the Brothers.”[43]

In this universal neglect, there remained only one solution: to close one of every three classes in each of the schools.[44] This is what the Director of the Community announced to the city officials at the beginning of 1774.[45]

In the midst of these vicissitudes, Sutaine-Maillefer continued to refine a plan for the "Letters patent" with the City Council. He got in touch with the Brothers in April. The city officials had not changed their positions. They meant to subject the schools to detailed inspection. And they demanded the dismissal of all children whose parents could pay tuition. They also demanded that the Institute, in association with themselves, assume the initiative in proposing to the king the elimination of the residence school as a necessary preliminary to any legal recognition.

Immediately, the first Assistant made known his views in a long letter, dated the 6th of April, that was intended to pass through the hands of the Brothers on the Rue Neuve and make its way into the hands of the local authorities. He wrote: “I am too much of a friend of Christian education to advise the city fathers...to restrict it to the poorest children; that would be the source of endless controversies..It would be for the public good that the schools were left tuition-free.”

Nevertheless, "the preference should be granted the poor while awaiting sufficient funds" to increase the number of teachers and classrooms Brother Exuperian thought eminently reasonable. But were the Gentlemen going "to demand the expulsion of their children as a favor from the king"? Since the schools would be absolutely closed to all youngsters to whom the city refused a certificate of indigence, and since the residence school was to be closed, where would they send those of their own sons "who could learn nothing" from tutors in small pay-schools, who would be "restive at home", and who manifested "no taste for Latin"?

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[41] Idem., pg. 72.

[42] Idem., pg. 75 and pp. 85-6.

[43] Motherhouse Archives, HB t 3, Historique manuscrit du district de Reims.

[44] The four schools directed by the Brothers in Rheims were in the parishs of St. James, St. Hilary, St. Timothy and the one in the "residence house" on Rue Contray, which, since 1682, had replaced the initial St. Maurice school

[45] Arnould, pg. 94.

Concerning the procedures for closing the residence school, there was a great deal to criticize. For the time being the Brother Assistant was satisfied to emphasize their contradictory character. He dwelt at a little greater length on the point about the inspection of schools: the Institute had never intended to withdraw its instruction from official control. Magistrates may come, right up to vacation time, and along with pastors, they may question the pupils, inspect their notebooks, and take part in "arthmetic exercises"; they "could distribute prizes" to the most deserving. "That would inspire a noble emulation." And such was the practice is several cities.

All things considered, the Superior's deputy wanted, on this occasion, to evince enough confidence to propose a plan for the construction of a "public chapel" in the house and of purchasing a garden from a Madame Gard. The transaction would be subject "to the king's good pleasure"; and it would be presented as necessary to the establishment "of the Regime and a novitiate".[46]

At this stage in the negotiations, then, an agreement in principle seemed to be in the offing. But the forms with which the politicians in Rheims seemed fascinated could not be conceded: Brother Exuperian was quite agitated about them; and, as the days passed by, the more he felt the wound. A sort of irritation boils up in his correspondence at the end of April and in May of 1774. To ask the Brothers to unite with the city in order to have included in the text of the "Letters patent" the obligation of eliminating the residence school was an "insult". Such a step was the equivalent of "dishonoring the work of a former Superior, who was still alive".[47] The language is spirited; but, then, the letter was addressed to the Brother Procurator of the Community in Rheims, and he understood everything. But on the 23rd of May there was a letter to Sutaine-Maillefer that was equally high-pitched: “We can neither approve of nor accept the scheme of the "Letters patent" that you propose as coming from the city; to ask the king to suppress a residence school that we had the simplicity to build at our own expense, and to do so at the request of the Gentlemen at City Hall would make us look like self-proclaimed imbeciles.”

Rheims made nothing but demands uncompensated by anything like generosity. However, it had nothing to gain by allowing the Brothers to leave. “We wore ourselves out in support of the tuition-free schools...We can do no more. The city doubtless has been aware that, as it has not paid for the support of this work, neither has it any expectations, should it happen that the schools are shut down tight.” The income on the property acquired by the Founder's family would go to the schools in Rethel.

Failure to understand the public's true interests, criminal indifference to children and ingratitude for the work of an illustrious son of Rheims -reasons enough to steep in bitterness and arm with irony the eloquent pen of the Brother Assistant. Reflecting on the neighboring cities, in Champagne, Flanders and Artois,[48] which had generously provided Christian education to both rich and poor alike, he concludes: “I see that...Rheims wants to distinguish itself by thinking otherwise than do other cities when it comes to the education of youth.”[49]

The criticism was in no way directed personally at Brother Exuperian's correpondent. Sutaine-Maillefer was the first one to deplore the situation created for De La Salle's disciples; and he taxed his imagination to find greater revenues for them. Why not, he suggested, ask for the disposal of estates in abeyance? The suppression of the Jesuits as well as of monasteries effected by the Commission for the Regular Clergy at the end of Louis XV's reign had, by law, put capital and landed property in the hands of the government and the episcopacy. In a letter from Brother Laurence, Procurator of the Community, we see what may have been Sutaine-Maillefer's initiatives along these lines.

Brother Laurent wrote to Sutaine from Damery on the 12th of September, 1774, after having seen the Archbishop's Co-adjutor: “At your directions I went to Hautvillers, to His Highness, who told me that 4,000 livres derived from Jesuit property, the College of Compiegne, has been earmarked for thirty years, and that he had done his best to have it for his own diocese, but without success.”

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[46] Idem, pp. 98-102.

[47] Brother Claude, who died on the 25th of October, 1775

[48] In his letter of the 6th of April, 1774, continuing on this subject, the one of the 5th of August, 1773, Brother Exuperian listed Rethel, Mezieres, Charleville, Sedan, St. Omer, Boulogne, Arras, Bethune and Douai.

[49] Arnould, pp. 103-6.

“I had the good fortune to speak with him concerning the Celestine property in Soissons, and His Highness told me that that property was already spoken-for, that we must not think about it, and, as a consequence, it is useless to speak to His Eminence about it.”[50]

Probably without awaiting the outcome of this bold attempt, Maillefer once again entreated his colleagues at City Hall. For the sake of peace and quiet, he obtained a subsidy of 500 livres "so that the Brothers might continue two classes at St. James' and two at St. Timothy's[51] until the vacation of 1775". M. Coquebert, the king's representative, on the 26th of September, communicated the city's decision to Brother Exuperian, who, on the following day, expressed his gratitude, while maintaining every reservation about the future.[52]

Indeed, it was necessary to get beyond this perpetual makeshift situation. A commission had been appointed to examine "the school issue". It completed its work in November, and on the 29th there was a resolution by the City Council. The aid to be provided the Brothers was to be considered in the following context: the Community was not to number more than eleven persons (not including the teachers at St. Hilary's, whose support was otherwise assured); expenditures were fixed at 3,000 livres, or 300 livres for each Brother; and once the income from properties and investments of the foundation reach 1,374 livres and 10 sols, a supplement of 800 livres would be the responsibility of the city, but with the explicit qualification that the deficit of 1,125 livres and 10 sols be made up by a contribution from the Archbishop and his clergy. The parish Bureau was to grant the children certification of admission. A "higher Bureau, called the 'Bureau for discipline', composed of a Vicar-general, the Canon-Director of Education, the Dean of the Chapter, pastors, the king's representative in the city, four Counsellors and the Trustee-procurator were to administer the scholastic institutions. The entire municipal assembly "would be aware of complaints that might arise" and would legislate improvements and reforms, "in concert with the Regime of the Institute". Legacies, beginning with the minimal of 250 livres, would be managed by City Hall, "for the purpose either of founding a school in St. Peter's parish in the future or of otherwise directing the income in order the better to assure" the future of education.[53]

Once again, this was an effort to control the teaching Congregation, and without even the appearance of compensation of material security, since promises of payment were subject to problematical diocesan participation. The city complained about estate revenues set up, not for the support of teachers, but to feed the elderly and the ill.[54] Finally, it reduced the number of Brothers in the Rheims Community to an exceedingly low figure without considering the importance of the institution on the Rue Neuve and Rue Contray.[55]

The Superior's response was an objection. But it did not go so far as to suggest a rupture. When it came to Rheims (more so than anything that had to do with Rouen) the Brothers practiced a sort of angelic forebearance. “The Institute would be patient,” Brother Exuperian wrote on the 9th of December, “until the end of the century...in the hope that, once the century was over, the city would look with better grace (on the requests) of those who had served it for a hundred years.”[56]

It should be noted that the people in Rheims preserved a touching fidelity to the Brothers. They were distraught by the forced closing of several classrooms. A "zealot" took out an advertisement in Notices of Rheims and the Champagne Region to announce a subscription scheme.[57] The Director, Brother Lupicine, wrote to Sutaine-Maillefer:

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[50] Ibid., pg. 107

[51] St. Hilary's had its own funds, administered by the Bureau. As for the school at the "residence house" on Contray Street, it seems that this was left to the responsibility of the residence school.

[52] Arnould, pp. 107-8.

[53] Idem, pp. 108-12.

[54] These must have left Rheims because of the institution's deficit. But they could not in justice be ultimately deprived of income which, provisionally, must have had to have been destined for the teachers in active service.

[55] 3 According to the statement prepared by the Regime in 1774 and that the city seems finally to have accepted in its petition to the king on the 25th of November, 1776, the normal personnel of the Community must have been eighteen or nineteen Brothers.

[56] Amould, pp. 112-16.

[57] Idem., pg. 134; Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp.

“Parents give us no rest; endlessly, they come to the house or classrooms; they pester us to admit their children.”[58]

This sort of poll inspired second thoughts. And the city government, while delaying the obvious decision, was induced to renew its subsidy, which stood at 600 livres in August of 1776.[59]

And then despairing of the "Parish funds" and the Archbishop, and wishing to be itself relieved of all responsibility, the city adopted an idea once urged upon it by its own attorney. It sought from the king "a portion of the properties of the late Society of Jesus", calculated in such a way as to amount to an income of about 5,000 livres. By adding to this to the previous revenues, eighteen Brothers would thus have the necessities of life. Such, in brief, was the tenor of the petition of the 25th of November, 1776.[60]

Dilatory measures, unacceptable conditions and endless discussions had the effect of determining Brother Florence to look elsewhere than Rheims for a place to set up the Institute's central administration. He had nevertheless pursued the negotiations regarding the "Letters patent". These letters whose scope exceeded by a great deal the limits of the business in Rheims, were signed in March of 1777, without the local authorities having to intervene once again. The recording of the document was deferred beyond the time when the fourth Superior's generalate would come to an end. In this respect, Brother Florence's successor, Brother Agathon, would harvest the fruits of Brother Exuperian's labors; he would preserve the residence school, and he would find the needed funds for the teachers and the schools. The man who, by his tenacity, had made this success possible, deserves to be acknowledged.[61]

[58] Letter dated the 2nd of November, 1775, archives of Rheims

[59] Correspondence of Souyn, the peoples' Amould, pp. 120-24.

[60] See below, Fourth Part, chap. ii.

[61] See below, Fourth Part, chap. ii.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Christian Schools in the time of Brothers Claude and Florence 1751-1777

Although new institutions begun during the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence were few, there is no lack of abundant material for an account of the opening of schools between 1751 and 1777. But to describe in detail the founders, the discussions and the negotiations and contracts would add very little to the principles and the facts we have been attempting to emphasize. What is essentially historical has been stated in connection with the most important undertakings of Brother Timothy and in the analyses of the difficulties in Rouen and Rheims, which set his successors against civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The sympathy and the cooperation, the mistrust and the obstacles, the joys and the sorrows were the same in whatever region into which the Institute was called.

It seems to us that we should simply dwell upon the following fundamental notions: best minds never abandoned the advocacy and the promotion of popular education; the royal government, while failing to afford the representatives of that education with strong direction and an overall plan, was, on the whole, disposed to applaud individual initiatives; indeed, the Brothers, at the request of the public authorities and more intelligent benefactors, when they could, enthusiastically broadened the cycle of studies that were considered of primary necessity to the humblest citizen. And it wasn't just in their residence schools, but in some of their primary schools that, faithful to the all-inclusive and liberal mind of their Founder, the Brothers added technical courses, and an introduction to professional training within the singularly brief period of study that the 17th century had designed. There is no doubt but what their aspirations and decisions in this matter corresponded with the spirit of the times: the *Encyclopedists* had proclaimed the value of science both for the cultivation of the mind and for the progress of the earthly city and the alleviation of human servitude to nature. Religious believers could not stand to one side of the general movement any more than they could have rejected the "Renaissance" of arts and letters in the 15th and 16th centuries. Just as Christian humanism had purified and spiritualized Graeco-Roman antiquity through contact with the Gospel and at once limited the ravages of neo-paganism and the Protestant revolt, and the France of Louis XIII and Louis XIV had given wing to heroic and religious spirits, so, too, in the face of a militant materialism, a judicious line of action was in order: -- admit the legitimacy of scientific research and through an efficacious cooperation preserve for it the rectitude of its methods, in order to conclude to the agreement (which is certain) between revealed dogma, conscience and human science. Minds must not be forbidden the discovery and use of partial truths: on the other hand, one must object when, satisfied with their discovery, people lose sight of the desire for the whole truth. So, too, in the political and social order there is the problem of understanding people who have only the humblest aspirations and of helping them to become educated, to emerge from their poverty and to assist the divine gift within them to flower, without unleashing, for the want of moral instruction, their passion for pleasure and their rebellious pride.

The Brothers possessed a strong faith and they were not borne away by prejudice. In the children of the common people they saw souls to be instructed and saved, minds to be fashioned, citizens of a Christian nation to be prepared for life. They were not among the number of those who dealt with human beings as though they were unworthy of knowing the truth. The word "citizen" (which, after 1750, became current) ought not, they thought, be forbidden to the poor. In the Brothers' eyes, the littlest ones in the earthly kingdom should be placed in a position to fulfill their social function, skillfully to practice a trade, to feed and bring up a family and to serve the nation as best they could. Closely united to the workers and artisans in the cities and larger towns, to the sailors in the great naval and commercial ports, sprung themselves, for the most part, from the class of Frenchmen in which simplicity of habits were allied to refinement of spirit, balanced judgment and the love of beautiful and excellent work, the Brothers were aware that they were dealing, not with an amorphous and passive mass, but with an accomplished people capable of indefinite progress. And since the sciences contributed to the development of industry and the arts, opened up new careers to talent, and supplied a little more comfort to families, the Brothers were inclined to propagate a taste for the sciences and especially to demonstrate their practical application.

They dedicated themselves to this task with discrimination, without fanfare, within the everyday round of their classroom duties, and within the context of their vocation and according to their educational

methods. Among their pupils they formed teams of technicians, competent and honest, preserving a contact with reality, mistrustful of hasty generalizations and empty rhetoric, but not closed off to what goes on beyond the horizons of the visible, material world. While their victories were few, and too many young people called upon to provide the binding force for the nation eluded the double-pronged training in scientific apprenticeship and Christian wisdom, the reasons were that teachers were too few and schooling was sporadic, and De La Salle's Institute continued to be despised and too little known in many place; and quite zealous supporters thought of the Institute only as a charitable society whose activity should be limited to the youngest and the poorest of children, to the sons of the indigent, so as to be protected for a few years from delinquency, until the time came (and the sooner the better!) to put them to work as valets or manual laborers; and, finally, because public opinion was each day more and more controlled by the Church's enemies, for whom the education given by the Brothers was suspect as long as its supreme end was the sanctification of souls.

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At the very threshold of this period, we remark a bold action that recalls Father Chétardye's invitation to John Baptist de La Salle to provide Sunday instruction for the youth of the parish of St. Sulpice. Yielding to the desires of his pastor, De La Salle, besides starting up elementary courses in this "Sunday school", also added supplementary courses which included, to be sure, lessons in drawing.[1]

Half a century later the idea was reborn. This time it was not a problem of teaching young adults who had to make a living during the week. But, once again, instruction in drawing was given a prominent place. Those who would benefit from it were younger pupils -- Parisians with a lively eye, an ingenious mind and agile fingers were trained to maintain, in family workplaces or in factories, the artistic traditions of their city. On the 14th of July, 1753, according to a notarized document "the very distinguished and powerful lady Reine Madaillon Lesparre, Marquise of Lassey" (on her own initiative or at the Brothers' urging) provided the necessary funds to support a teacher who, as a member of the Community of the St. Sulpice Schools, "would be exclusively employed to teach drawing to children" in the parochial schools. The grant specified that the Brother responsible for this important mission would have "to lead" his pupils to such a point of competence in the art that they might thereafter successfully embrace the various professions which, to be practiced properly, demanded competent draftsmen. On the 24th of December, the pastor and the wardens accepted title to the funds invested in taxes and excises.[2]

The Brothers were sixteen years ahead of the "Tuition free School for Industrial Arts" that was opened about 1769 by the painter Jean-Jacques Bachelier, with the encouragement of the king and the cooperation of the Lieutenant of Police, Gabriel Sartine. There was a certain M. Rozoy who, besides being an admirer of Voltaire and d'Alembert, explained the activities and celebrated the virtues of this school in his "Philosophical Essay on the Founding of Free Schools for Mechanical Drawing".[3] It is not without interest to observe in what direction and to what magnitude the seed cultivated by De La Salle and his disciples developed. "Geometry and architecture, shape and animals, flowers and ornaments", wrote Rozoy, "are the subdivisions of the studies of 1,500 pupils who, twice weekly, receive public lessons." Competition was held every three months: only drawings done at the school were admitted. Each year there was a general competition for the leaders in each section. "First prizes" were conferred at a special assembly; and the winners then had the right to compete in an examination "for the 12 masters and the 12 apprentices". The Count Saint-Florentine, the Minister and Secretary of State, was not above presiding at the distribution of awards at the Tuileries.[4]

Apparently without being aware that Bachelier had predecessors, the author emphasizes the benefits of these innovations. The distinction proper to manual workers was finally "recognized"; art, based upon principles, replaced routine. In a single institution citizens find combined three advantages worthy of the legislation of a Lycurgus or a Plato: at the very center of the school they imbibe a taste for good morals; they are instructed in the love of their country, which in the past did nothing for them; and

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1 See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 184.

2 National Archives, S, 7046-47; and Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 270.

3 Published in a volume, in-16, Paris, Quillau, 1769.

4 ibid

for which they, in turn, worked only complainingly...(and) the talents with which nature had endowed them are not hidden away, for the want of a means to put them to work.[5]

And, on this lyrical note, the author predicts the effects of the royal solicitude: until now, he states, since only institutions that taught literature were tuition-free, parents preferred such schools for their sons; besides, a sort of inferiority was associated with the profession of the craftsman, which even public officials seemed to regard as little worth. Henceforth, there will be few starving lawyers, fewer clerics without a calling, and fewer ignorant physicians. "Themis' sanctuary, Bourdaloue's ministry and Boerhaave's science" shall be cleansed. Every craftsman, thoroughly convinced that (the prince's) concern has reconciled his vocation with that of artists, will combine greater skill in his profession with a sense of self-esteem. He will no longer be fearful of establishing a family: and "he will provide (sons) to the nation", who, satisfied with their lot and proud of their craft will support it with their work.[6]

These passages are sufficiently revelatory of the state of moderate opinion after the *Encyclopedists*' manifesto. The Christian Brothers, ignored or despised by the "philosophers", had long since deserved well at the hands of the "ordinary people" with whom Rozoy sympathizes.[7] Without invoking "self-esteem", but rather by commenting upon the Gospel, the Brothers had instructed their pupils in the moral and social importance of the lowliest tasks. Without discrediting the liberal professions, they supplied the nation with generations of good workers, good employees, and small owners who were accustomed to exertion, and provided with reliable judgment, detailed knowledge and tested methods. As much by their example in education generally, as by their determination always to adapt instruction to local needs and the living conditions of their pupils, the Brothers conquered routine.

From among several dozen contracts we shall dwell on two, which are characteristic. They show what can be included in a program of studies for elementary schools that were intended to respond to community needs.

On the 7th of June, 1762, Brother Genereux, Assistant, and Brother Jean Pierre, Director of Montpellier, were in Cahors. They had just signed an agreement with Bishop Bertrand Baptist René Guesclin, the Mayor, the Council, and representatives of the Cathedral Chapter and of the Presidium. They had contracted to supply five Brothers to replace the "Reading Tutors" whose "public lessons" had borne "little fruit". A sixth Brother was to be sent on the following 1st of January, who would teach a course in "Architecture and Surveying", which would consist in instruction in arithmetic, geometry and drawing. "The goal proposed by the city" was sufficiently important to require an additional special teacher. The other Brothers would not have sufficed for the task. The Bishop assumed responsibility for "the furnishing and the room-and-board for the Brothers appointed to the Community". The Mayor and the Council were to pay for the purchase of books and supplies. In fact, the school was quite liberally financed: it was among the most flourishing in the region, which were the best from the point of view both of studies and discipline. And, in 1768, it won a new grant from Bishop Guesclin.[8]

Before the Brothers arrived, the people of Castres were no more satisfied with their elementary schools than the people in Cahors were with theirs. "The teachers take no care of the children entrusted to them", it was declared at a meeting of the City Council in 1775. Nevertheless, fourteen years were to go by before a contract of foundation was drawn up, with the very generous cooperation of Bishop Barral.

This prelate, who presided over the diocese from 1752 until 1773, had the right kind of mind and heart to understand the role of the Christian Brothers. He is pictured as holding a compass in one hand and in the other a piece of paper and a pencil, measuring, computing, adding, here establishing a benchmark, there pounding in a stake or stretching and chalkline, or pacing off an elevation on an uneven piece of land.[9]

He "showed an enormous energy in favor of earthly concerns". He built roads to Toulouse and Montpellier, and he organized the unemployed into welfare-teams to complete these projects. He replanted public walkways in Castres, filled in the moats that surrounded the city, rebuilt its gates and straightened out its streets. To him it was that the peasants in the region owed the cultivation of the potato years before Parmentier's promotion of it: he imported the seed from his native Dauphine and he ordered his pastors to

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[5] Rozoy, pp. 75080 and pg. 100, n. #2.

[6] Idem., pg. 42

[7] Idem., pp. 46-58

[8] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 226-9, according to the Municipal Archives of Cahors.

[9] Sicard, op.cit., pg. 176, according to Anacharsis Combes, Etudes historique sur Mgr. de Barrel, 1844.

distribute it among their parishioners and induced his rich property owners to set aside some experimental fields for the use of the poor.

His goodness compelled him to the boldest undertakings. Alarmed by the mortality rate among young mothers and infants, he arranged for midwives to be instructed by the physician, Icard, who accompanied the Bishop on his pastoral visits. He ordered the people to have their children inoculated for smallpox. At Castres the hospital was remodelled according to plans worked out by the Bishop: air and light were made to circulate throughout the buildings. The Sisters of Charity were brought to the bedsides of the sick. Physicians and surgeons were assigned to the institution and their professional care was free. The prelate made the hospital and the alms house his heirs, in a "remarkable (will) that breathes the liveliest sort of faith" .[10]

This was the man who, in 1769, welcomed the Brothers, after having paid their travelling expenses and furnished their home;[11] the man who, before he died, continued to think about the Brothers and the pupils who were working in very narrow quarters; and so, he pleaded with his brother and Vicar-general, Pierre Alexander Barral, to build a larger school, complete with an excellent garden, around a tennis court.[12]

The contract, dated the 4th of October, 1769, bore the marks of the Bishop's personality. It stipulated that: “The Christian Brothers would be bound in perpetuity to supply the City of Castres with four Brothers, beginning on the 1st of the following November, one of which was to be in charge of temporal affairs. The other three were to tutor and teach: 1) the elements of Christian Doctrine; 2) Reading; 3) Handwriting, both "financial"[13] and "round-hand"; 4) Arithmetic; 5) Spelling, and the use and practice of punctuation; 6) The number system, both Arabic and Roman, the four rules of Arithmetic, the rule of three, the rules of mensuration, interest, commerce, square root, as well as the principles of practical geometry -- to the children of the city and of the diocese who wanted to come to their school, from the age of seven years and above...The Councilors.. .reserved the right to add regular lessons in double-entry bookkeeping to the above instruction...provided that the Brother Superior-general be informed six months ahead of time, so as to send a Brother prepared to teach this course.”[14]

From this contract we may conclude that in Brother Florence's time the Christian Brother's professional training was, in general, advanced beyond the simple primary level. The Brother was in a position to develop his pupils into competent calculators and good "writers" - in the modest sense in which our ancestors employed that term. Further, he provided them with enough of the notions of geometry and drawing to put them in position to be prepared for suitable situations as architects' clerks, auditors, or surveyors. We already know that in the maritime cities accessible to the Brothers' influence, young people emerged from school equipped to become navigators or captains. Some Brothers received special training in order to teach, some of them, bookkeeping, and others, industrial design. This is as much as to say that, without having the right to question their good judgment and without assuming with any appearance of reason that their pupils who left the family circle "conquered the world", De La Salle's disciples contributed to the decrease of poverty, to the raising of the standard of living of many thousands of their countrymen, to the enlarging of the number of households that were assured of a future and of those social cells which spring up and develop among the masses and which are a nation's best guarantee of peace and stability. For the rest, there was no fear that excessive well-being would benumb the soul, bend it tyrannically to the pleasures of this world, and, in opposition to the moral law and the spirit of justice and charity, enable sordid interests to triumph, as well as that egoism which encapsulates the pseudo-Christian, the paganized petty-bourgois, anxious about his savings, about his increasing expenses and about his growing responsibilities as father of a family, business man and citizen. The Brothers' pupil was nourished on the most substantial doctrine by catechists whom the clergy regarded as remarkable; he had been prepared for the examination of conscience, for the daily grind and for a genuine asceticism by Religious whom their Rule, their educational methods, the instructions handed down by their Founder and

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[10] Idem., Ibid.., pp. 167-69, 181, 402, 411.

[11] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 371, according to minutes of the City of Castres, meeting of the 19th of February, 1769.

[12] 2 Idem.,Ibid., pp. 375-6, meeting of 21st of Nov., 1774.

[13] "'Financial handwriting' is a term to describe handwriting in round letters". (Dictionnaire de l'Academie, 1778 ed.)

[14] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 373-4.

commented upon in novitiates had initiated into psychology and (within the limits of their non-priestly vocation) were trained spiritual directors.

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To complete the history of the schools during the generalates of Brothers Claude and Florence means to pass in review the cities the Institute entered in the course of these twenty-six years. We have already implied that it was a period of transition. The main period of expansion coincided with the generalate of Brother Timothy. And soon there would appear another powerful organizer, a leader with broad perspectives, Brother Agathon. Between 1751 and 1767 and from 1767 to 1777 scarcely more than twenty schools were opened.

The Brothers came to Vannes in 1752 under the auspices of Bishop Bertin.[15] In 1754, they were in Nîmes, through the triple cooperation of a politician, David Planchut, Procurator-general for the Upper-Council, a military officer, Pierre Baudan, Captain in the Bourbon Regiment, and a priest, Father Jacomon, pastor of St. Castor's parish. Bishop Charles Prudent Becdelievre who, for forty-six years occupied the episcopal See, displayed his zeal "to pacify hearts" and to "extinguish ancient hatreds" between Protestants and Catholics,[16] practiced from the outset great goodwill with the primary school teachers, and considered them as precious aides and generously subsidized them. Four-hundred-and-fifty children were taught in five classes.[17]

The same year as the school in Nîmes, another institution was opened in the Papal Territory of Avignon. We are aware of the place the Brothers occupied for a half-century in that city. Nonetheless, there was an area that escaped their influence: St. Madeleine's parish, inhabited by "people who hauled by land and water, people ceaselessly wandering the roads and rivers". The children, deprived of all schooling, were genuine urchins and grew up to become villains. A report of the period speaks of grown youths who had not made their "First Communion" and who had already distinguished themselves by the precocity of their vices. The Missionaries of St. Garde, as they preached the preparation for the Jubilee Year of 1750, were shocked by such ignorance and depravity. It remained for a man of eminent virtue, Joseph Ignace de Blanc, Marquis of Brantes, to assume the work for the salvation of these souls. In 1753, he accepted the post of First Council in order to pursue, before all else, the task of moral improvement. Along with the Vice-legate, Aquaviva, Archbishop Joseph Guyon Crochans and Brother Visitor, Adrien, he succeeded in opening St. Madeleine's school on the 1st of October, 1754.1 He insisted that credit for the foundation be attributed to the Holy See; and he engraved on the lintel of the door the inscription: "To Benedict XIV", along with the coat-of-arms of the city and of the Pope.[18]

Through the city's efforts, three Brothers were set up in Condrieu, near Lyons, in 1756.[19] On the 2nd of January, 1759, Toulon welcomed three other Brothers, assuring them of 1,000 francs annually on capital funds from the Cabasson and Ferre foundation. Negotiations had been conducted by the enterprising Director of the residence school in Marseille, Brother Benezet. On the 7th of October, 1758, he advised Brother Adrien “to be good enough...to have the Brothers ready and be careful to select ones who are good Religious and good teachers...It is important the and schools succeed there...(The city) has an extremely upright Bishop who loves the good;[20] he will love the Brothers, to be sure, if they are quite regular and perform their duty. I beseech you once again to cast an eye about you for good Brothers, who are neither dandies nor boors...”

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15 Motherhouse Archives HBS, 633, Historique sur les etablissements des Freres en Bretagne et en Anjou.

16 Sicard, op.cit. following Goiffon, les Eveques de Nimes an dix-huitieme siecle, pg. 175

17 Mother House Archives, HB t 1-2. Histoire de Padministration de la maison de Nimes depuis son origine, c'est-a-dire depuis l'an 1754, jusqu'a ce jour 8 mars, annee 1779 (by Brother Armand of Jesus, Director of the Community from 1778 to 1782; the manuscript was continued under the directorship of Brother Anacletus, Brother Armand's successor) and Histoire de Petablissement des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes de la ville de Nimes, ou tableau en forme de journal historigue sur les evenements arrives depuis son origine. ..also by Brother Armand of Jesus (with a copy of many official documents). In addition Canon Francis Durand's book les Ecoles des Freres de Nimes, 1754-1907, published in Nimes, Bois, 1907.

18 Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 241-53, following the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse and the Municipal Archives of Avignon

19 Idem., Ibid.., pg. 725.

20 National Archives, L 963.

The teachers were, without any doubt, such as Brother Benezet wished them to be, since in 1762 Father Breoule, pastor of St. Louis, established a fund of 12,000 livres for the opening of two new schools.[21]

With the schools in Bordeaux there appeared in the history of the Institute the name of the celebrated Intendant of Guyenne, the Marquis of Tourny. He was drawing close to the end of his career when he became quite personally involved in a project, conceived in 1758 by the city, to open tuition-free schools which (a thing extraordinary in itself) had been lacking in the great city. The Brother Superior-general, thoroughly aware of the Intendant's goodwill, in a letter dated the 22nd of June, 1758, thanked Tourny effusively: “There is nothing except a great resource of piety and religion and...a sincere love of God that can inspire your Highness with such noble...views”.

The Institute's work was "in truth, great in God's eyes, but quite insignificant and even despised in men's eyes. Since such an exalted person deigned to be associated with it, Brother Claude "would strive to enter into his sentiments[22]. by selecting excellent teachers for Bordeaux. In return, he hoped that through Tourny's support, the Brothers would have "the little they needed to be in a position to fulfill their task..."

Brother Jean-Pierre, the Visitor, whose mission was announced in this letter, came to an agreement on a contract with the City Corporation on the 3rd of July. Starting in 1750, a Community of seven Brothers were to teach in the parishes of St. Louis, St. Eulalia and St. Michel in Bordeaux. It was not long before the Community was divided into two houses -- one in the Chartrons, and the other, near the St. Eulalia Gate. Prior to the Revolution, the Brothers, by then grown in numbers, were teaching ten classes in five schools.[23]

Satisfied with the results obtained only the day after the opening of the school, Tourny, stirred up municipal discussions in Perigueux and in Sarlat, with the view of granting tuition-free instruction to the people in these two cities. Brother Armand of Jesus announced the news to Brother Adrien in a letter dated the 23rd of November, 1759. Regarding Perigueux, the hope for a favorable solution was justified -- all the more so, since the diocesan leader was Bishop Bouzey, the former Dean of the primatial church in Nancy and in that capacity, a well-known benefactor of the schools in Lorraine. The prelate gave the warmest of welcomes to the Superior's delegate and declared that he was ready to contribute to the purchase of furniture and supplies. Sizeable capital funding was collected. Nevertheless, it does not seem that the project was carried to a successful issue. In 1777 and again in 1779, Perigueux did not figure in school statistics. Tourny's death, occurring in 1760, must have halted the negotiations. His successor showed no sympathy for the Brothers and allowed the cities to make unacceptable proposals.[24]

Louis Francis Gabriel La Mothe, Bishop of Amiens, for whom King Louis XV had such great respect and veneration, whom he called "a saint", and whom the Dauphin called "his shepherd", was earnestly concerned for the education of youth. He inquired into teachers' activities, pursuing his search deep into the countryside. The call he extended to the Brothers in 1757 testified to his concern for orthodoxy. He convey to them the inheritance of his diocesan superintendent of education, Jean Baptist Pingre. A piece of property, also given for educational purposes by another Canon, Antony Vilman, retained the name of "the Big Hats" from its association with the Brothers who wore the broadbrim hats. The school opened in 1759, at the latest. A variety of gifts allowed it to grow successively from two to three and then to four classes. In 1790, the Brothers directed all the charity schools in the episcopal city which bore reminders of the spiritual inheritance of the great native of Amiens, the precursor and counsellor to De La Salle, Father Nicolas Barré.[25]

In the neighboring region of Aire-sur-la-Lys the Mayor and the Supervisors had entrusted the teaching of young girls to the Sisters of Providence of Rouen and then thought about the Christian Brothers for the boys. The town had just been disappointed by a group called the "Ave Maria Brothers" who had, in

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[21] Louis Albert Joly Chouin, Bishop of Toulon from 1737 to 1759.

[22] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 10, Toulon file. Brother Benezet letter is in the original.

[23] Motherhouse Archives, EE y 3, certified copy.

[24] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 215-6 and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July 1912, article on the schools in Bordeaux, pg. 287.

[25] This, it seems to us, has been proved by Brother Theodosius of Jesus in his Historique de la province meridionale in opposition to Brother Lucard's assertions in his Annales, Vol. II, pp. 219-20. The letter Lucard quotes (with the improbable date of 1751) must be interpreted according to the meaning in the above text.

March 1760, willfully abandoned their pupils. The need to provide instruction for youth decided the officials to turn their eyes toward the teachers whose soundness would guarantee them in the future against similar decisions.

The Bishop of St. Omer eulogized the Congregation that had been established in his own diocese for forty years. But the king's lawyers and procurators in the bailiwick of Aire were of another mind. The royal government, informed of the disagreement, approved the city's decision and made known that it might ignore the opposition posed by members of the legal profession. The matter seemed to be settled. However, nobody knows what stood in the way of its realization.[26]

The schools of Montreal in Languedoc, of St. Die in Lorraine, of Cahors, Sedan and Charleville were the last ones founded, between 1760 and 1766, prior to Brother Claude's resignation. While the balance sheet is a modest one, and while some setbacks occurred in these enterprises, the gains were appreciable and, on the whole, would remain as definitive achievements. Prior to the Brothers elementary education was mediocre or nonexistent: "tutors" reserved only a brief period of time for classes and their teaching programs were poorly planned; the brief space of time was wasted by the antique "individual method" and by reading in Latin; many children completely eluded school; those who were sent to school by their parents had plenty of leisure dawdling at their desks or playing hooky; they completed their so-called studies scarcely knowing how to read. When a city appealed to the small societies of teachers, poorly organized and unstable, it experienced the sort of disappointment met with at Aire-sur-la-Lys. But when De La Salle's disciples came, all of that changed. And when cities reflected on accomplishments, they swore an enduring gratitude and affection for the Christian Brothers. In several places practical problems arose: funds were scarce; City Corporations hesitated to increase their responsibilities; Brothers endured privations that were all the more painful because their professional duties were restricted and so ended in worry and weariness. We have written about the struggles sustained by the Superiors in Rouen and Rheims to achieve a better life for the Brothers. And we shall see how, on this point, Brother Agathon armed himself with the necessary defenses.

The sons of a saintly ascetic drew their courage from their father's example. Then, too, they had the consolation of being loved, supported and assisted. With the help of cities and Bishops, here and there, they succeeded in setting themselves up more comfortably: in 1761, they rebuilt the house in Rethel; in 1753, they bought the Benezet property in Alès; in 1759, the Caumette house in Nimes, and the Andreoli house in Ferrara; in 1766, Brother Gontran, in the name of the Institute, became the proprietor of some rather imposing buildings in Montauban, should the Brother Superior-general decide to open a novitiate there. The income from residence schools in the South of France was spent in part on building up a landed-estate for the headquarters in Avignon: on the 24th of November, 1758, Brothers Adrien, Jean Pierre and Sixtus purchased at a cost of 18,000 livres than lands and buildings of "Barringues" in La Mothe, between Bollene and the Holy Spirit Bridge. In 1764 there was another acquisition of land on the Isle-sur-Sorgues for 29,500 livres. Serving-Brothers were used to work the fields; while the teaching Brothers returned to these houses in the countryside to renew their energies. On the 9th of June, 1766, a new residence was selected for the entire Community in Avignon, including the novitiate; this was the former De Sade mansion which was one of the most beautiful dwellings in the Papal City; its front doors and windows opened out on to Rue Dorée; it included a chapel, a garden, courtyard, backyard and utility annexes. The Brothers payed 33,000 livres for it, and they occupied it until they were dispersed by the Revolution.[27]

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Brother Florence's ten years as Superior-general saw the opening of schools in 1768 in Champagne at Damery, founded by Marie Anne Perier, widow of Pierre Petite and at St. Menehould, which was initiated by a particularly benevolent municipality.[28] In 1769, a school was opened at Castres, which has been previously described. In 1770, Aigues-Mortes received the Brothers within its walled

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[26] Rohrbacker, Histoire universelle de l'Eglise, Vol. XXVII, pg. 131, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 224.

[27] The plan to make a foundation was the subject of a correspondence preserved in the Departmental Archives of the Pas-de-Calais, Seires c 446 (copies in the Motherhouse Archives; Historique du district de Saint-Omer.)

[28] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 235,256,257,263,269; Brother Theodat Germain, Les Freres des Ecoles chreliennes a Alais, 1908; Canon Durand, Les Ecoles des Freres a Nimes, 1907; Motherhouse Archives, registers, quoted above, by Brother Armand of Jesus; and Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. II (HB s, 28).

quadrangle that dated from the Middle Ages, and Morhange (at the time a small, quiet city) in 1771.[29] In the following year the Alms House in Douai called the Brothers and guaranteed them a suitable salary;[30] the school doors were opened wide to the children of every class, rich and poor, the sons of merchants as well as the sons of day-laborers.[31]

In 1772, also, there were two Brothers, Joachim and Sigismund, in Compiègne where, as at Versailles and at Fontainebleau, the Institute was never far removed from the king's sight. The beginnings of this school demanded extraordinary lengthy negotiations. In 1743 a priest and native of Compiègne, Father Claude Louis Picart, became the Superior of the Major Seminary in Puy-en-Velay, and decided that his neighbors back home should enjoy the benefits of a school like the one whose successful beginnings he had admired in the Velay region. He made an offer to the parishioners of St. Jacques in Compiègne, who, in their meeting of the 13th of October, 1743, commissioned their pastor and wardens to pursue the matter. On the 17th of April, 1745, a contract was notarized between the representatives of the parish and Brother Hubert, Director of the Community in Noyon and representative of Brother Superior-general Timothy. Father Picart undertook "to deliver a house.. in good condition and suitable for holding classes and for lodging two Brothers", to furnish it and each year to pay 50 livres for possible repairs, and 228 livres for the support of the teachers -- which salary was supplemented by the provision of two Compiegne measures (about 1200 litres) of wheat. Five years went by. On the 28th of May, 1750, the promise piece of property was finally purchased on rue Ardoise from a Mlle Bayart; the seller, however, reserved the use of the house during her lifetime. And she didn't die until the 14th of March, 1765. Father Picart survived her; he was a patient and persevering man who, in 1765, gave Brother Claude 3,000 livres as an advance on his gift, without requiring that the sum be returned should the school fail to open, asking, in that case, nothing but prayers.

The house became finally available, and the people in Compiègne set to work, but nobody was in a hurry; they fully intended to satisfy Father Picart's intentions, but in their own way. The name of the "De La Salle Brothers" meant nothing to them. In place of these unknowns "the cantors of St. Jacques parish" must be substituted to teach reading and catechism. This was the theme of a letter addressed on the 23rd of February, 1768, to Henry Joseph Claude Bourdeilles, Bishop of Soissons, in whose jurisdiction Compiègne had been placed.

On the 29th of February Bishop Bourdeilles replied very cautiously: “The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools seems to me to be the most solid and advantageous. The retired and edifying life of these Brothers wherever they have gone, the wise Rule of their Institute, which necessarily removes any idea of ambition or politics, the experience of the success with which they work at the education of youth -- everything confirms me in my opinion.”

At the same time, Father Picart had been informed. His reply on the 1st of March succeeded in defining issues a little more clearly: he could not "oblige" the city "to accept the Brothers". But no more could it "oblige him" to prefer the cantors to the Brothers. "The great and daily task" of these parish employees left them no way "honestly and to the public's advantage to fulfill" the responsibilities of teachers. The Gentlemen of Compiègne "would therefore not find it wrong" if, in his will the benefactor "gave complete power to the Bishop of Soissons to establish the school in any other place in his diocese that he judges proper", should Father Picart's "native city" fail to approve "De La Salle's Brothers".

The will was written on the 12th of April; and the old man died on the 24th of November, without having seen his hopes realized. Only on the 21st of December did a city assembly accept the inheritance on the stipulated conditions. But four opponents eagerly declared in a notarized statement that it was crucial to prevent the Brothers from coming to Compiegne...Such Institutes are dangerous...Three quarters of the city was already under *mortmain*.

From this time, a curious correspondence was carried on between the authorities in Compiègne and the officials of several cities which placed their schools in the hands of the Christian Brothers: Rouen, La Fere, Guise, Noyon and Soissons were consulted. We still possess their pronouncements. The one from Rouen has a very special flavor, since the Brothers could scarcely have rejoiced at the way the Normand capital had behaved and, at the time, they were still the target of Father Marescot's charges.

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[29] National Archives, L. 963.

[30] Brother Exuperian's letter of the 6th of April, 1774, in Arnould, pg. 99; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 358-59.

[31] Ibid.. And Brother Exuperian's letters from the 6th of August to the 15th of December, 1775 in Arnould, op. cit., pg. 73; and Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 350-1.

"The founding of a tuition-free school in your city could only be quite useful and beneficial", wrote the Mayor, the Supervisors and the king's procurator on the 15th of October, 1769, to their counterparts on the banks of the Oise. "Generally speaking we have reason to be pleased" with the Brothers. “Their morals, behavior and their teaching are subject to the Bishops' scrutiny...and since they have no character that requires their ministry to aid the dying, nor even to the pious elderly,it does not seem that one need fear from them that seduction which is prejudicial to the interests of legitimate heirs.”

After these attempts to pacify the anxieties and misgivings of the solid middle-class, the Rouen correspondent concludes in the typical Normand manner: the best institutions are not always without disadvantages: it's up to the practical wisdom and authority of those to whom these institutions are subject to anticipate and suppress vices and abuses.

On the next day, the 16th of January, the Mayor and the Supervisors of La Fere totaled up the wages and "the small profit" provided there to teachers in the Christian Schools; against whom there were "no reasons for either temporal nor spiritual complaint".

The Supervisor in Guise who, on the 19th of January, "was given the task of replying" for the City Corporation, described Marie of Lorraine's foundation, the generosity of the princes of Condé, and the help granted by the "administrators of the trust for the poor" and also mentioned the existence of "part time resident" pupils in the school. His praise of the Brothers was expressed with much more warmth than the preceding testimonials: Each Brother as an individual can accept nothing. A gift for the Community is permitted...But never do they suggest the slightest thing to encourage it. In a word, everything is done on their part with an air of uncommon disinterestedness. Regarding spiritual matters, their conduct is quite edifying; they attend the Sacraments frequently, but especially do they make it their principal obligation to teach children well. They rarely visit individual homes, in order to avoid the criticism such "assiduity" might attract. From every point of view, Gentlemen, I believe you could not make a better bargain...

On the 27th of January, Noyon supplied some interesting details: “Many of the middle-class in this city send their children (to the Brothers) so as to get them a better education. Some of them...from time to time...by indirect means...furnish (the Community) with some small advantage.”The previous Bishop, Bourzac, raised their insufficient income by 300 livres. The present Bishop, De Broglie, "solicitous to provide the inhabitants the extended advantage" of the school, made it a personal obligation to invite a fourth Brother and to assure the teachers 800 livres in overall stipends. The witness concerning morality was brief but clear: “The Brothers...have never given any reason for dissatisfaction...They lead a very quiet life and we have never noted anything reprehensible in their conduct.”

In his letter of the 2nd of February the Mayor of Soissons seemed determined to avoid influencing his neighbors' decision. Having said that gifts and legacies permitted "the support of as many as six Brothers" and "of establishing a second school in the suburb of St. Wast", that the classes were "well kept" and "as to morals (the children) are very well supervised", and that they are given "lessons in politeness", he notes that "formerly some abuses had slipped in" regarding the admission of the sons of the lower middle-class. "Matters have been corrected"; now "a certificate of indigence" is required, which is issued by the pastors or the chief magistrates. The Mayor was quite willing to agree that "the Brothers were edifying"; however, hedging the language of his peroration and touching upon some philosophical reflections he refused to predict the future: Up to now we have scarcely had any reason to regret having called upon the Brothers...The good (they do) is too evident to think otherwise. But who can say whether we shall always be in a position to congratulate ourselves? As you know, time destroys everything in the world that is fine and good: there is nothing that does not corrupt as it moves away from its starting point...

Did this tinge of pessimism puzzle those who were conducting the investigation? While they had scrupulously informed the city assembly regarding the results of the inquiry and while merchants and craftsmen in Compiègne were disturbed by the news that Villers-Cotterets and Chateau-Thierry had applied for Picart's legacy, the majority of the Council took a neutral position.

It took the weight of royal authority to tip the balance. Since Louis XV, in the course of 1772, was living in his chateau in Compiègne, the matter was related to him by the Duke Laval, who was functioning as governor of the city in the name of the Vicomte, his son; and, on the 3rd of August the Duke notified the municipal assembly that His Majesty would look with pleasure upon the opening of the school. There were no longer any detractors.

On the 22nd of August a final contract was signed by Bishop Bourdeilles, Claude Louis Picart's executor, and Brother Exuperian. And on the 12th of October, Father Boulanger, pastor of St. James, proceeded solemnly to the installation of the two teachers.

In concluding this account (in which we observe so many of the personages and sentiments of 'Old France' at work) it is well to add that the royal family was not slow to contribute its financial support to the

institution. In the years during which Louis XVI came to Compiegne, the Brothers received from the Queen, from the Counts of Provence and Artois, from Lady Elizabeth and from the Ladies Adelaide and Victoria subsidies totalling 240 livres. While the Court was residing at the chateau, pupils (as the agreement of the 22nd of August stipulated) were given a vacation; and the Community found among the king's entourage a tenant who paid a rent of 400 livres and, at his departure "left several months provisions". Only the Prince's gratuities were to be "deduced" from the salary of 300 livres that the Bishop of Soissons and the government of Compiegne paid, starting in 1774, for the support of a third Brothers.[32]

Considering the difficulties that had for so long thwarted the realization of such a modest project as Father Picart's, we are inclined to grumble in some surprise...*tantae molis erat*. And we marvel at the patience, the gentleness and the forbearance of the Institute's leadership. The Superiors insisted on what was strictly indispensable for the Brothers; and the maximum of effort was required from the teachers. More precautions were taken against "infringements" by the Congregation than it itself took against possible vexations. Allegiance to a demanding vocation and the joy of being an instrument in the salvation of the children of the common people came to prevail over considerations of human calculation. Thus, at Montargis (where the Duke of Orleans was responsible for paying the Brothers), after the death of the prince, who had "forgotten to put the Brothers in his will", the latter, although penniless, wanted to keep the school opened. They ran themselves into debt and, around 1754 the Motherhouse was obliged to pay off the creditors and withdraw the Brothers.[33] In 1773, it was the Superior-general himself who, sought out by the pastor of the tiny Normand city of Carentan and, in order "not to delay a good work", ordered classes to begin without having agreed with the city for the upkeep of the buildings. Toward the end of the following year, repairs were necessary. The city refused to assume the cost for them: and the pastor also took evasive action. A law suit followed, which the Institute ended up by losing in the Rouen Courts. The school, which had been closed for several months, was ordered to reopen by the judges. The Brothers faced the bad situation good-naturedly. And in 1779 they had nearly 150 of Carentan's youngsters to teach.[34]

Bishop Condorcet (the uncle of the "philosopher"), severely orthodox, who had carried on a bitter struggle against the Jansenists in Auxerre (his first diocese), decided in a spirit of generosity, gentility and affection, fifteen years after his transfer to Lisieux, to entrust the Christian Brothers with a "charity school for the tuition-free instruction of the young boys of that city and its suburbs".[35] The Community moved in October, 1776. We shall return to this establishment later on.

Similarly, we shall save for a more opportune moment the story of Fort Royal College in Martinique, which passed into the hands of the Brothers in the final years of Brother Florence's generalate. The importance and novelty of this enterprise will be studied at greater leisure in the chapter that deals with residence schools.

The list comes to an end with the school in Bapaume that was opened by the city in 1776.[36] We have to admit that the period through which we have been passing was a sterile one, a sort of wasteland where happy encounters and quiet resting places were rather widely dispersed. The Brothers supported the labors of the day and its heats, making their way (like some heroic caravan) over an expanse that was at once both bleak and pale. For every sympathetic soul that came to their aid, whether priest, bishop of simple member of the middle-class, what hardships, what contempt they had to endure! There were moments of anxiety, of distress and there would be moments of discouragement, had the Brothers allowed their faith to become clouded and had they turned their faces away from the "star" that guided them.

On the 13th of September, 1776, they were overwhelmed by a catastrophe in Grenoble. The Bureau for schools had neglected to keep an eye open for the slow decay of the school house, which

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[32] This information is taken from a book by Albert Plion, l'Instruction publique a Compiegne avant la Revolution, Part One, Enseignement primaire, les Freres des Eccles chretiennes, Compiegne, 1886. Plion has especially relied upon Series GG, no. 56 of the Municipal Archives of that city; Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 351 to 358 and the Motherhouse Archives, HB s 246, Historigue des Communautes de la province et du district de Normandie.

[33] Brother Exuperian's letter to Bishop Bourdeilles, 1773, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 356-7.

[34] Brother Florence's letter to Father Le Couvey,

[35] Motherhouse Archives, HB s. 246, Historique de la province de Normandie; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 359-66.

[36] Contract dated the 21st of September, 1776 and "Letters patent" dated july, 1778, quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 366.

suddenly buckled and its facade crumbled into Rue St.Laurent. Many pupils could not get out of the building, and fifteen bodies were removed from the rubble.[37] The frightful scene shocked the City of Grenoble. A subscription was begun, at the head of which the Intendant signed, the Councilmen and the richest lord of the realm, Louis Phillip, the Duke of Orleans.[38]

Even in Rome the Brothers' life was proving to be difficult. After rebuilding the house on Rue Felice and a long lawsuit, Brother Aristarchus fell into debt. He died in 1771 and the Superior-general sent Brother Dositheus (Nicolas Tirode) to Italy to attempt to clarify the situation.[39] Cardinal Berths, the French ambassador, welcomed the Brother Procurator of the Institute. The exquisite courtesy of this prelate was well-known. At one time a very worldly priest, in his mature years he became a genuine "man of the Church" and an excellent archbishop of Albi. From 1769 until the middle of the Revolution he was the very worthy representative of His Christian Majesty the king at the Papal Court, and in Roman eyes the embodiment of French magnificence and generosity. Francis Joachim Bernis had known the Brothers in his diocese; and he was quite prepared to be of service to them. On the 24th of February, 1775, ten days before the accession of Pius VI, Brother Dositheus wrote to the Cardinal: The Christian Brothers in Rome, prompted by your kindness and the most urgent need dare once again to kneel before Your Eminence to implore his powerful assistance with the new Pontiff. Steps he was good enough to take with Clement XIV have determined them to give the most positive and comforting pledges; but an unforeseen death has bereft them of the experience of the consequences. What the deceased did not have the time to do, in spite of his goodwill, his successor will perform out of regard for Your Eminence, to whom nothing is denied.
And the Procurator went on to ask that the labors and difficulties of the Brothers on Rue Felice be set before the Sovereign Pontiff.

In a rescript, dated the 15th of March, the Pope granted 55 écus. This very slight increase in salary did not affect the deficit. And so, the Procurator went to work again: he explained to Archbishop Bernis how the Brothers "for very nearly the beginning" of their undertaking supported two classes at their own expense, since what they have been given up to now was enough only to pay the rent for the school and their own residence...God alone and the poor petitioners knew the penury they endured in order to preserve this good work. A little bread, vegetables and water have been their nourishment for more than thirty years; their beds consist of a little straw and a few rags do them for blankets...When Brother Dositheus arrived in the Community, "the sad condition of the house made him long for...the one at Fontainebleau", which he had just left. He offered the following solution: the Papal government would lodge the Brothers

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[37] National Archives, L.963.

[38] Motherhouse Archives, HB s 28-8. Histoirque de la province meridionale.

[39] Brother Anacletus, Assistant, came to Rome at the same time. But during his stay he could only assess the problem and initiate certain negotiations; Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 333-7.
The following is the account of this disaster by Brother Tranquillian, quoted by Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 339-41: On Friday, the 13th of September, 1776, at about 8 o'clock in the morning, the wife of our tenant came looking for our Brother Director, who was in class: "Dear Brother", she cried, trembling with fright, "hurry, come see the wall which is threatening to fall." Immediately, Dear Brother Director went down to the street to see the wall; but rather than examining where the crack was, he saw that the facade of the building, which was two stories high, was hanging out over the street. The tenant thought he should have it repaired; Brother Director asked him to run to where the Councilmen met and to the Mayor's office so that they might quickly bring assistance. Meanwhile, he went back hastily upstairs to his class and spoke to the children: "My children, take your books quickly and leave immediately, but orderly; I'm giving you the rest of the day off." The pupils in the upper class were practically all out of the building, when (the Director) saw what was like a flash of lightening and heard, as it were, a clap of thunder; his classroom immediately collapsed. Fortunately for him he was standing by a wall where he was protected by the beams. At the same instant he heard a second clap, and the lower class along with the roof of the building were engulfed in a maelstrom in the midst of a thick cloud of dust, while in its frightening descent, it swept away the neighboring house. Unfortunately, neither the children nor the Brother in the lower class had time to get out. Through God's mercy, the Brother Director was able to reach the door which gave on to the stairway: he grasped the bell-rope and never stopped ringing until the Brother-cook came to open the door for him and let the pupils out through the vineyard. When the door was opened and the dust had settled, the Director saw two of his pupils trapped in the debris; he ran to them and freed them. His colleague, about whom the Director was greatly worried, had gotten out through an opening between the beams, with only a couple of scratches, one on the head and the other on the leg. Brothers and other people rushed to the scene of the disaster and worked frantically to free the victims, who could be heard groaning or crying under the rubble...Twelve pupils, a woman and two of the tenant's children, fifteen people in all were killed; about sixty persons were injured more or less seriously: but we are happy to have them rather rapidly returned to health...

"in a house appropriate for Religious" and furnish it for educational use: the Scotch College, for example, or the Maronite College (should these buildings become available through the unification of their students with those of other nationalities). The property of Rue Felice could then be rented out and the income from it joined to what was realized from the sale of a "small inheritance in Vallerane" could cover the Community's expenses.[40]

A second subsidy (this one for 60 écus) was granted in November.[41] Pope Pius VI continued to display toward the Lasallian Congregation and especially toward the Brothers living in Rome, an affectionate and efficacious goodwill.

[40] Archives of the Procurator-general to the Holy See, File #1, copies of Brother Dositheus' letters.

[41] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 338.

CHAPTER FIVE

Hostile Doctrines and Forces

Whether implied or proclaimed in peoples' behavior, doctrines rule the world. We have often seen appear in the course of this history religious, educational or social teachings some of them arising out of the Gospel, propagated by coherent Christians faithful to the Church and who can reply precisely to the question: Do you know of what spirit you are? Others, more or less imbued with paganism or heresy, born of the ancient pride which pretends to build and rule the city of man for the benefit of the few, to assign people a permanent burden within narrowly prescribed limits and to institute (by invoking "nature", race, climate or heredity) a legal system which ignores the ends of the human person and his eternal destiny. We cannot be surprised that in the crucible that was the 18th century hostile ideas were in ferment. Sometimes contraries seemed to have coalesced; naturalism was confident that it could assure the spiritual liberation of man; class prejudices struck up alliances with theories of necessary hierarchies, of the subordination that should exist, for the common good, between talents and between virtues. Destroyers of the foundations of morality rose up as the preceptors of conscience; and the most characteristic heresy, to believe its adherents, was the citadel of orthodoxy.

Real affinities, however, finally succeeded in recognizing one another when they were illumined by the light of faith. From our point of view, it is enough to be aware that the masters of popular Christian education, volunteer in the service of souls, witnesses to the revealed truth and obedient sons of the Roman Pontiffs had for enemies not only the "philosophers" but the Jansenists and the partisans of what was most antiquated in the "ancien regime". Attacks did not come from all sides at the same time; but, nevertheless, they did converge. That is why the Brothers' positions were especially difficult and would have been untenable had God not taken a hand in them. Here was a small band that resisted and even succeeded in making progress, even as religious unity (splintered by Protestantism), which Louis XIV blunderingly and vainly sought to reestablish, ended in dissolution; even as, under the banner of Catholicism, the activity, whether subtle or crude, of the Jansenists fomented discord and consummated treason; even as a particularly rugged fighting force, the Society of Jesus, was obliged to yield and, under the fiercest kind of pressure, seemed to succumb; even as, seduced by the ancient enemy of the truth, "the prince of this world", many Christians gave ground, deserted and turned against their Mother, the Church.

Assaults that were meant to be decisive were unleashed beginning in 1750; and the battle endured for a quarter of a century. Between the announcement of the first volume of the *Encyclopedia* and 1778, the year in which both Voltaire and Rousseau died, *Émile*, *The Social Contract*, the *Philosophical Dictionary* and the materialistic treatise that Helvetius called *Concerning the Mind* were published. After the Jesuits were condemned by the Courts and expelled from their Colleges, there took place the great debate over the reorganization of education, the "plans for national education" -- the crucial question, more warmly discussed than ever: the determination of the future by deciding the direction in which young minds were to be guided. All forces entered into play: -- not only the most anti-Christian (the paradoxes of Rousseau); but among others (those that sought to safeguard religion while breaking with the *Ratio .studiorum* that had been associated with the past 200 years) the most tainted with Jansenism, the most Gallican and most hostile to "monastic" tendencies, if not the most "secularized", in the modern sense of the term.

To complete our picture, it remains for us to depict the followers of St. De La Salle in the face of their adversaries.

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Of the Protestantism that the Brothers met with in the past in their Districts in the Southeast we should have had little to say on this occasion had not Calvinist resistance become crystallized in, and symbolized by, the endless quarrels that swirled around the school in Mens. Since the arrival of the Catholic teachers in 1740 and until about 1772 this market-town in the Dauphine was in a latent or open state of insurrection against them. The school for boys was opened "against Calvinist wishes"; and, to top things off, in 1753, the Bishop of Die, Alexis Gaspard-Plan Augiers, inaugurated a school for girls, which he placed in the hands of the Congregation of St. Joseph. On the 21st of April, 1754, the assembly of inhabitants insisted they be relieved of supporting both the Brothers and the Sisters. The pastor, Father Antoine Martin, alerted the Intendant, La Porte, who replied on the 1st of May: "I have difficulty in believing that this commune intends to abolish two such useful institutions", and, called upon to consider

the demand made by the people of Mens, he "suggested that they make their representations" to the Bishop of Die, which was an indirect way of rejecting their petition. In 1756, and again in 1762 and in 1764 the same problem reappeared. The citizens persisted in demanding to be rid of religious education; and, through the city-treasurer, they cut off the Brothers' and Sisters' livelihood; and at the same time they introduced teachers selected by themselves, Antoine Oddelay and his wife, Louise Oddoz. Their explanation, of course, was that the education given in the Christian Schools had failed, by "its results", to live up to their "expectations". Father Martin repeated the appeal he had made to Grenoble: "To tolerate the initiative" of these people would be "to authorize Protestants in their disobedience". La Porte forbad the mayor's office "to remove" the teachers approved by the Bishop of Die; and on several occasions he ordered that their overdue wages be paid.

A lawyer in Grenoble, named Barthélemy, consulted by the commune, advised his clients to embrace a sort of ruse: “In a matter of this nature,” (he told them), “which is looked upon at Court as belonging to the general police-power of the realm and a proper way of executing the laws concerning the unity of religion, you must wait so that the facts presented by the community (of Mens) are exact and that the Bishop is especially consulted, as well as the Intendant and, perhaps, even the First President...

"Before becoming involved" you must know thoroughly "the views of these three powers", present the matter to them in its best light, by proving that the city's finances cannot support the burden, and that the results obtained do not justify the effort that is being asked. You should go so far as "to suggest" that you would not hesitate to take the matter to the royal Council. These are matters "to be conducted delicately, while gaining support for your cause".

These machinations were no more successful than open violations of the law. A decree of the Courts in Grenoble on the 20th of August, 1764, reinstated the Religious in their teaching functions. The Bishop supported the Brothers "with whom the commune was no longer happy". And the inhabitants were surprised that their whipping-boys "persisted" in remaining at their posts. But why speak of "Protestant cabals"? Apparently all factions in Mens complained about each other.

Calvinists withdrew their children from school. In 1770 the teachers had no more than twenty-two pupils. Besides, "it was well-known" (states a communal petition of that year) "that since the opening of the Brothers' school, no Calvinist child has embraced Catholicism."

During 1771, the boys’ school appears to have been closed for several months. But in November, probably after the intervention of civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the Brothers returned. In 1772, they asked for extra pay in the amount of 100 livres, which the local assembly refused, while accusing the Brothers of having become "less sober". Ignoring the assembly, the Intendant granted the supplementary salary.

Peace finally prevailed. And in 1777 the councilmen and other leading citizens raised the salary of each of the teachers to 400 livres.[1] In 1779, in an atmosphere free of acrimony, a residence was being considered for the Vicar and the Brothers, who now had sixty pupils. Ten years later this figure reached eighty.[2]

In other Protestant towns the early difficulties seemed to have gradually been resolved. No echo of them is found at the end of the century, except in a report prepared for the Bishop of Nîmes by Brother Anaclet, Brother Armand of Jesus' successor in that city. The document has the advantage of showing the eclecticism with which the Brothers dispensed (then, as it continues to do today in "mission" countries) an education appropriate to all families. A few Huguenot parents among the many who, under no compulsion, sent their sons to the tuition-free Christian school, wanted their children exempted from assistance at Sunday Mass. The Director wrote on the 15th of May, 1783, that the Brothers admit, impartially, the children who apply without regard to differences of views concerning religion; instruction is in common to all their pupils without distinction of status or class; they are all subject to the same school policies...

But it was precisely this uniformity that prohibited the making of exceptions for attendance at religious services. The Rule was explicit on this point; and is included in the Bull of Approbation (the allusion is to Art.17) and had become "the law of both the Church and the State". If some Protestants prefer to withdraw their children rather than to subject them to this obligation, "they are quite free to do so". They would be making room for some of the "400 children who are waiting their turn" to take "part in Christian

[1] The Sisters were less successful, and the last of them withdrew in 1784 "being unable to live any longer on her salary". A Vicar-general in Vienne wrote at that time: "It's a huge work to keep a school open in a big place like Mens, where there were a large number of Huguenots" .

[2] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 7, Mens file (including many original documents or old copies). Brother Theodosius has made very good use of it in his Historique de In province meridionale

education". But it cannot be permitted without injustice and without harm to the "common good" to keep in school, and in preference to other prospective pupils, children who are exempt from collective responsibilities. The question was never raised in the parishes of St. Paul, St. Charles or St. Basil. There was no reason why it should be raised in St. Castor.

Thereafter, petitioners held their peace. No complaints reached the Bishop.[3] Frenchmen belonging "to the so-called 'reformed church' were on the eve of obtaining their full civil rights from Louis XVI, although that did not include freedom of worship: they had no longer to fear persecution.

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Jansenist clamor filled nearly the whole of the 18th century.[4] After the "Appeal" of the four Bishops and the suspension of one of them (Soanen) by the Provincial Council of Embrun, there were the ridiculous scenes of the "convulsives" at St. Medard's cemetery, on the tomb of the Deacon, François Paris. There was "fearful opposition" directed by the Courts against the Bull, *Unigenitus*. There was the long, sad history of the withholding of the Sacraments and the shocked capital when Father Bouettin declared that he was in conscience bound to allow Charles Coffin to die without the consolations of religion. (Coffin was the former rector of a university, the principal of the College of Beauvais and one of the authors of the diocesan Breviary and Missal). And, then, the higher magistrates intervened in matters of faith and religious discipline, going so far as to claim, in their notorious "Reproofs" that the faithful...publically deprived...of participation in the Sacraments of the Church...have a right to have recourse to the secular authority.

There was Louis XV caught between the "Scylla" of the justice Courts and the "Charybdis" of Christopher Beaumont: he exiled the justices to the provinces and the Archbishop to Conflans. There was the Courts in Normandy issuing a decree against the Bishop of Evreux. And there was Benedict XIV who, asked to restore peace in the kingdom, mercifully decided that the Sacraments might be administered to those who were not publicly nor notoriously insubordinate. On the 14th of December the seat of Justice forced the Courts in Paris to register an agreement with Rome. Overall, until the end of the reign, there was a terrible *imbroglio* involving politics and religion, Jansenism, Gallicanism, and the Fronde, royal power checkmated by "the legal profession", fidelity to the monarchy shaken, revolution in the making, premonitory symptoms of schism experienced here and there (exorcized, however, by the vigilance of a majority of Bishops through the declarations of the Assembly of the Clergy in 1765), disturbed Christian consciences and many minds moving toward scepticism -- and all of this to the exceeding glee of the "philosophers".

The last disciples of the Jansenius and of Father St. Cyran, the supporters of Father Quesnel, were agents of religious dissolution, of the slow, but certain dismemberment within the Catholicism of the French nation. In his funeral oration for Louis XV, Father Aviau noted that perhaps nothing did more for the propagation of irreligion than the machinations of the faction that frequently prided itself in combatting it most.

That "faction", the Jansenist sect, was indignant that anyone would condemn its activity; but, under the banner of defending the purity of the faith, its adherents, spread everywhere, drew up false accusations, split the clergy, thwarted and rendered suspect the apostolates of the very best people. Since the authority of the Holy See and of the episcopacy was constantly called into question, souls created beliefs at their pleasure or gradually vacated all creeds. Bishop La Mothe of Amiens quite clearly perceived this implacable process, which a superficial glance failed to grasp, because "exterior worship" survived in all its traditional and grandiose pomp.[5]

The work continued under cover and in secret. It went on behind imperturbable facades; thus, it was *sub rosa* that the Jansenist newspaper circulated, which for more than sixty years was clandestinely printed, distributed from home to home and from city to city by people who were in on the secret. It was called the "Church News" and was bloated with eulogies honoring priests and prelates who were thought to

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[3] Motherhouse Archives, HB t 1-2: Histoire de Padministration de la maison de Nimes (begun by Brother Armand of Jesus and continued by Brother Anacletus; copy of a report presented on the 15th of May, 1783

[4] Georges Goyau, Histoire religieuse de la Nation francaise , pp. 477-81. Leon Cahen, les Querelles religieuses et parlementaires sous Louis XV, Paris, 1913. E. Predin, les Jansenistes an dix-huitieme siecle et la Constitution civile du Clerge, Paris, 1929. Paul Ardoin, La Butte "Unigenitus" dans les dioceses d'Aix, Arles, Marseille, Frejus, Toulon (1713-1789), Marseille, 1936

[5] Bishop La Mothe's letter to Father Leon, 5th of March, 1753. Quoted by Father Regnault, Vie de Mgr Christophe de Beaumont

have been won over or favorable to the sect, and with violent indictments, calumnious gossip and invidious insinuations regarding those who were suspected or convicted of Romanism or of "Jesuitism".[6]

The Christian Brothers were rather abundantly attacked in its pages, by the same pen that aimed at harassing and stigmatizing those who supported the Brothers. In 1733 it was asserted that in Aix, where the anti-Jansenist Bishop Brancas had invited them, the Brothers had forbidden their pupils "under the threat of the whip" to enter the church of the Oratorians, who had become dear to the editors of the News. The sudden death in 1734 of the First President, Le Bret, the Intendant of Provence and friend of Bishop Belsunce, was announced in the following language: Many people thought they saw (in this incident) the hand of God, Who judges the judges...We have already mentioned Le Bret's kindness in regard to the Institute.[7]

At about the same time the Brothers at St.Sulpice seem to have been teaching in the schools in St. Medard's parish.[8] They had been invited by the pastor, Father Coeffrel, who was concerned to snatch children from the influence of teachers who were excessively dedicated to the cult of Deacon Paris. There was an uproar in Jansenism's "holy place", and there was a call to arms against the "de la Sale"(sic) Brothers, the "big-sleeved" Brothers, the "Ignorantins".[9] While the sect may not have invented the epithet, contemptuous or insulting depending upon the lips that uttered it, it did propagate its use.[10] The new teachers certainly had their nerve to warn their pupils against error and to shrug off "the wonders" so recently reported from the cemetery! On the 1st of May, 1735, the anniversary of the "blessed Deacon's" death, a mob invaded the church in order to honor the "saint" whom Rome had refused to canonize. The clergy, the porter and the beadle attempted to prevent the demonstration. One of the Brothers, encountering a certain M. La Combe, remarked that the display was a form of "idolatry"; and he called the porter who shoved the Jansenist about. There were repercussions, of course. The Brother, perhaps allowing himself to get carried away, was sent to Caen. The chronicler of this incident concludes with the remark (the target of which, at least in his own mind, seems unmistakable): "Often what appears outwardly to be religious is a very different matter in the heart."

But the principal as well as the most vehement and ominous accusation was directed against St. Yon in 1744, following the burial of a pastor, Father Guisainville, from the diocese of Chartres. In May of 1736 this priest had insolently received his Ordinary in his Beauce presbytery and suggested that the bishop take as "his model" Bishop Caylus of Auxerre, one of the most rigid backers of the "Appellants". Jansenist literature was seized upon at the pastor's residence, and, a month later, he was committed to St. Yon on "the king's orders". There he remained for seven-and-a-half years. When he was set free, he spread complaints about his "jailers". A correspondent in Chartres for the "Church News" (perhaps Father Guisainville himself anonymously) thought the time had come to set out on a crusade against the Brothers. On the 6th of February a long letter, which filled four pages of fine print in the newspaper, claimed not only to divulge the prisoners own personal grievances, but to reveal the principles and practices of the Congregation that "persecuted" him.

Of course, the Jansenist pastor was the innocent victim of cruel headhunters. He had endured the dungeon - for two entire days! He had been deprived of food, both physical and spiritual, since during the last few years he had been prevented from assisting at the Sacraments. (One or more of these themes was raised in the appeals addressed by the most recalcitrant prisoners with the officials in the Parlement of Rouen; the inquiries of 1745, 1756, 1758 and 1767 ended only in proving the plaintiffs' bad faith or their morbid exaggerations.)

After this introduction, the author of the communication seeks to give some glimpses of a rather general nature. He describes St. Yon, the novitiate and the headquarters of the Institute's government. He

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[6] The file of the Nouvelles ecclesiastiques is in the National Library, 4-e L, c 32 as well as Table raisonnee et alphabetique published in MDCCLXVII, which summarizes the paper articles for 1728 to 1760 inclusively.

[7] 1 Cf. above, pp. 177-179.

[8] There is reason to believe that they were merely delegated by the St. Sulpice Community. There is no evidence for the existence of a special Community set up in the parish of St. Medard.

[9] Nouvelles eeclesiastiques. 1733, pg. 19.

[10] Out of humility Caesar de Bus' "Doctrinists" called themselves "Ignorantins".

writes about Brother Timothy, "the son of a Parisian tailor", about Brother Irenée, "the assistant superior", whom "De La Salle, while in Rome, found soldiering in Italy"; and Brother Stanislaus, Director of the free residence school, who was also, according to his own admission, a "former soldier"; and Brother Polycarp, of whose unpleasant dealings we are aware from other sources. He adds a treacherous and deceitful declaration regarding perpetual vows "which (the Brothers) hardly ever make, unless they have received some inheritance..."

He had, however, already shown his own colors. The Brothers were "barbarians" who "uttered slanders against the 'holy Deacon'[11]. The story became crystal clear: This new Institute is especially protected by the Jesuits...Politics and cupidity, which are as it were the master-spring of their behavior, are the marvellously appropriate ties that bind them to each other. The St. Yon Brothers, like the Jesuits, are excessively lax in the administration of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. (We might have expected this accusation, even though, at first glance, it hardly squares with Father Guisainville's complaint. However, we must be patient: the Church News would explain that the consolation of the Sacraments was withheld from Jansenists only.)

"Almost professionally ignorant of doctrine and of ancient guidelines" (the learned author seems to think that there is no salvation except for those who have mastered Latin; but, according to the requirements of the cause he is pleading, he attributes a very wide range to the so-called "ignorance" of his adversaries), “the Brothers know neither the nature of Christian justice, nor the characteristics of a true conversion, nor the necessary tests of one. They have no other method nor other practice in the dispensing of the Sacraments than the ones suggested by Molinism and the literal interpretation of the Bull *Unigenitus*. Their prisoners have no choice except "despair" or "hypocrisy". Since the problem is reduced to such simple terms, it is easy to imagine the situation that must prevail.”

Hence, it happens that men lost in vice, far from finding in the Church's Sacraments a cure for their ailments, are made more incurable by them and only find in these means of salvation, which they abuse, the sign of their own obduracy. (There is no doubt that if, as Jansenism insisted, it were necessary through a grace of election to be confirmed in the practice of virtue in order to receive Communion, most of the "prisoners" would never have communicated. Thus, in the diocese of Bishop Calus, so extolled by Father Guisainville, there were Christians who, come to the age of twenty or thirty, were waiting to be "worthy" to make their first Communion.)

Having exposed his artillery and spilled his bile, the writer for the News then contrives to assume the guise of an impartial commentator. He concedes that at St. Yon the inmates "were not left to themselves to waste their time, that they are occupied, and that they are provided with teachers of handwriting", arithmetic, etc. "His purpose was not to denounce" the institution, (Could Tartuffe have put it better?) but to make it clear...how hateful it is for worthy ministers (whose only crime was their inviolable dedication to the truth) to be associated with dissolute men, who were frequently irreligious”. But, alas! devout churchmen are delivered into the hands of mercenaries whose ignorance and blind zeal acknowledge hardly any other real evil than resistance to the Bull *Unigenitus*!”

Jansenist intrigues were probably never far removed from the frequent vexations which beset the Superiors of the Institute during their stay in Normandy. It is true that the sect had no reason to rejoice in Cardinal Tavannes. Jansenists "lamented" the "sad condition to which the vast diocese of Rouen was reduced since the Bull"; and they considered "the pastoral letter written by Father Terrisse" (on the death of the Archbishop) wretched, because "it did honor (to put it mildly) "neither to the author nor to His Eminence..." But, after a half-century of austerities, a group of "Appellants" had held out. There surfaced the name of "Sonnes", a cleric whose "insight" and "piety" were celebrated in the "News" on the 17th of December, 1758; and on the 16th of July, 1760, it recommended one of his posthumous writings, called *Anecdotes*. This miscellany included the most dreadful calumnies against the morality of the Brothers. In this instance, even the Jansenists felt some shame. On the 10th of December they declared that the passages in question were reckless fabrications unseasonably added to Sonnes' *Anecdotes* by another hand, and that they disapproved of them. However, what provides a measure of their sincerity and what underscores their polemical methods (since, actually, they eminently deserved to be made the butt of a sort of Provincial Letters) is the lines that immediately preceded their astute disclaimer: There are those who speculate that what is said about the Brothers of Christian Doctrine of Rouen.. should be attributed to the Fathers of Christian Doctrine,[12] who have two houses in Paris and who are too well-known and too highly

[11] The Nouvelles for July, 1760

[12] Like the Oratorians, the Doctrinists were, on the whole, Jansenistic in tendency

thought of there to be confused with the St. Yon Brothers, whose ghastly, but, unfortunately, all too faithful portrait is sketched in this brochure...

It is rancorous, calumnious and defamatory -- and perseveringly repetitious. St. La Salle's Institute never met with a more vile adversary than these people who draped themselves in an austere morality and, in spite of Roman condemnations, persisted in staying in the Church.

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Lawyers even when they eluded any charge of bias in questions of dogma and discipline, were frequently suspect when it came to a religious Congregation. Tradition and heredity brought them up in opposition to "mortmain". We recall the Edict of December 1666, under the rule of which lived a small band of teachers with De La Salle at its center.[13] The State seemed to think that the old precautions were not enough. In August of 1749, when Aguesseau was Chancellor, an edict was promulgated which confirmed the old and added new restrictions. And it was, as usual, for the same reasons: concern "for the existence and survival of families" and to prevent "property" from being taken out of "commerce". Acquisition by legal entities had been excessively promoted by collecting, without inquiry and automatically, "rights to amortization" which, in principle, were to be substituted for estate rents only for the most serious reasons. Further, "mortmain people" had reached the point of increasing their property-holdings by a system of land revenues: when those who owed these revenues were unable to meet their obligations, they had to hand over to their creditors lands and buildings, the collateral for their loans.

With this as preamble, the edict went on to renew the prohibitions against the founding of new institutions, excepting, however, a few pious projects (among which were mentioned charity schools), provided that they did not involve the organization of a "corporation, college or community". With this reservation it was merely prescribed that such foundations have their initial agreements ratified by the courts. In all other cases the granting of "Letters Patent" was necessary and was subjected to a very serious inquiry. Previously authorized foundations were subject to this rule for any future acquisitions. Redress was to reside with the heirs of founders and nobles enjoying feudal rights.

The law was made retroactive: it declared null and void those establishments whose founding did not conform to the Edict of 1666; it restricted the scope of "Letters Patent" already granted and which left Congregations or Societies free "to accept or acquire landed property indiscriminately or up to a certain value".

The prohibition against acquiring without "Letters Patent" was extended to "real taxes and non-redeemable landed income". However, there was an exception -- one which indicated a desire not to restrict the market for public borrowing; it involved, in fact, "loans made to the king, to the clergy, government bonds, and city bonds"; money must flow unobstructedly into whatever treasuries His Majesty might wish to dip.

Finally, there were provisions for penalties against "all persons who might lend their names to the "mortmain people", with the view of perpetrating illegal acquisitions.[14]

Landed wealth, therefore, and even most, capital in stocks and shares, became possible for Religious Orders only at the good pleasure of the Sovereign. State supervision was closely exercised, and, if the government fell into the hands of the enemies of the Church, there was nothing to prevent such control from translating into harassment, veto, slowdowns and interruptions in the progress of projects. On the 20th of July, 1762, a royal "declaration" gave charitable institutions a little more freedom, without abolishing the fundamental law of 1749. The legal system in the Parlements, furthermore, made it its business to interpret the law in the way that was most inconvenient for monastic institutions; judges claimed the power to reduce gifts and legacies in the most drastic fashion.[15]

We shall now describe how the Brothers complied with the demands of this legislation. Their institutions were in a category which benefited from a special consideration. Their activities were not displeasing to people in high places. Nevertheless, they were in the position of having to undertake numerous and burdensome manoeuvres. They lived in a time so foreign to the thinking of the founders of Religious Orders! When it became a question of the reform (surely, long overdue) of many monasteries, the monarchy refused to defer to the wishes of the Assembly of the Clergy which, in 1765, advocated the

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[13] Cf. Part One, Chap. II

[14] Jourdan and Isambert, Recuell des anciennes lois francaises, Vol. XXII, no. 658.

[15] Des Cilleuls, Histoire de l'Enseignement fibre dans l'ordre primaire en France, 1898, pp. 408-9.

intervention by Rome and the designation by the Pope of Bishops delegated to investigate and renew. Anticipating the "Jacobins", the monarchy got the idea that the reorganization was a police matter. The "Commission for Regulars" created by the decrees of the Council on the 23rd of May and the 31st of July, 1776 and composed of five Bishops and five members of the Privy Council emptied institutions, combined disparate groups, modifying their Rules, changing superiors, founding houses of strict and mitigated observances, without advantage, of course, to the most fervent. The Commission totally wiped out several well-known Congregations: the Celestines, the Premonstratensions, the Servites, the Camaldolese and the monks of Grandmont. This was the first experiment in excavating and levelling before the whole edifice toppled.[16] Meanwhile, Clement XIV's protests fell on deaf ears.

The chief piece of destruction had already been accomplished. The Jesuits had fallen under the lawyers' blows; and De La Salle's Institute, certainly not "affiliated" with the Jesuits,(but enjoying confidential relations and unity of doctrine with them, and on several points of Rule, choosing their Constitutions as a model), must have gotten a whiff of suppression. Father La Valette's unfortunate lawsuits in 1756 supplied the opportunity to Gallican and Jansenist lawyers for a signal revenge: the Jesuits, declared jointly responsible for the commercial operations, and, consequently, for the bankruptcy of their confrere, appealed to the Parlement of Paris. It was an artless gesture, which gave the lie to their reputation for Machiavellianism. The lawyers to whom they appealed not only upheld the initial judgment, but claimed to see in the La Valette error the end-product of a system of universal domination affecting both heaven and earth. They required the surrender of the Order's Constitutions. They judged them contrary to the laws of the realm, to the liberties of the French Church, to the independence of the civil power, to the majesty of the Prince and to the inviolability of the royal person! The prosecution speech by the Attorney-general, Omer Joly Fleury and the report of Father Chauvelin, the clerk for the Council, summarized these charges. On the 6th of August, 1761, a decree closed the Jesuit colleges. On the 6th of August, 1762, the Society itself was condemned to be banished from the kingdom. Provincial Parlements were associated in the work of devastation. In 1763 all Jesuit residences were closed.

Without success forty-five Bishops undertook the defense of the persecuted Jesuits. On the 24th of January, 1764, a copy of the writ drawn up in their defense by Christophe Beaumont was shredded in the hands of some savage and then burned at the foot of the grand stairway of the Palace. All that the king could do was to save from exile those Jesuits priests who had deserved well at the hands of the Church, the nation and the dynasty. The Edict of 1764 authorized them to "live privately" on French soil.[17]

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The Jesuits taught a great number of the sons of the nobility and the middle class. Furthermore, since their instruction was tuition-free, it had opened an entrance into liberal learning to the children of the people who were exceptionally well endowed. The disappearance of the Jesuits posed grave problems for the reorganization of education and for the future of studies in the kingdom. Who would take the Jesuits' place and what would henceforth be the direction given to young people? The brutal act of the Parlements involved a total revolution.

First of all, teaching personnel had to be thrown together for about a hundred colleges that had been stripped of their teachers. A few religious Congregations, the Oratorians, the Doctrinists and the Benedictines maintained colleges. In several places they were called upon to replace the Jesuits. But lacking numbers, they had to hire laymen whose conduct and convictions did not always provide the most robust assurances.

Through the Edicts of August 1763 and March 1764 the royal government entrusted the task of restoring the pieces, not simply to the Bishops but, in each city, to a "Bureau", of which the Bishop was the president, and in which he was joined by the first officer of Justice, the king's Procurator or his representative, two city officials, two leading citizens, and, finally, the Director or "Principal" of the college. Decisions were made on a majority vote. Thus, the Church was no longer mistress of education; it would have to reckon with the inclinations of its new associates.

Many of them had been more or less won over to Jansenism. The sect also included partisans within the ranks of the Oratorians and the Fathers of Christian Doctrine. And the same sympathies were

[16] Goyau, op.cit., pg. 494.

[17] Goyau, op.cit., pg.493. L. Madelin, Histoire politique de la la Nation francaise (1515-1804), pp. 447-9. Cahen, op.cit.,

found in the universities, whose students, for the most part well prepared for the task, generally fleshed out the staffs of the reconstituted colleges.

Parlementary attitudes and efforts favored a movement toward a more thoroughgoing "secularization". Having destroyed, the lawyers now thought that theirs' was the task of reconstruction, while eliminating all Religious of whatever sort from education. On this point the Edicts occasioned dissatisfaction, because they granted autonomy to institutions operated by the Congregations, in which the reformers saw at least a temporary obstacle to their long-range plans. By means of the Bureaus, manned by civilians and lawyers, and thus docile to the influences of the high courts, the reformers sought to change the principles and the structure of what they called "national education ".

Ambitious plans were drawn up, and the new pedagogy and the new culture were lauded to the skies. Over the twenty-five years that preceded the laws of the Constituent Assembly and the Convention, it was a work endlessly revived, a theme with numerous facets, which launched ideas that the 19th century would rediscover and proclaim as necessary and fundamental. Among the tares of paradox, prejudice and sophistry, there were some fruitful ideas. Some of these would find a ready soil in the Brothers' residence schools, as well as a field in which experience was guided by wisdom, along with a precise appreciation of possible results, within the limits fixed by psychological and moral truths. We shall point to all of this at the appropriate time. But meanwhile we shall have to describe how false principles were put to work. The Brothers' task, because it was essentially religious, was not spared in the writings of the innovators; and because it exalted the humble, it unleashed the anger of those who meant to maintain a monopoly on intelligence, to perpetuate the "élite" and to guarantee an elegant leisure through the servile labors of "the masses".

It needs to be said as clearly and as emphatically as possible that neither the universities nor the Parlements of ancient France dreamed of opposing Catholicism. University people were "clerics", in principle and by definition, men of the Church, even if they all did not go on to the priesthood. The higher officials were, with the usual exceptions, believers. When, in 1769, they all agreed to provide regulations for *Louis le Grand* College, which had been the glory of the Jesuits, and which was to remain a nursery for scholars and teachers, they insisted that the teacher's first duty was to inspire the students with "sentiments of religion and piety". The school-day began with Mass. Every class period opened and closed with a prayer. The reading and recitation of the "Lives of the Saints" was obligatory. And in the lawgiver's commentary one senses the breath of a living faith.[18]

But the breath lacked the power to purify the air. The College was not the sort of closed-off compartment that external breezes failed to penetrate to it. Religion was taught and practiced in the classrooms and in the chapel; but the students knew very well that it was being questioned, denounced and derided in drawing rooms, bookshops and academies. The professed objective of the "Philosophers" was to separate religion from education. The author of the article entitled "College" in the first volume of the *Encyclopedia* criticizes teachers for giving too much importance to "external practices" and of sacrificing to them instruction that would make their students "useful to the nation". The famous article on the word "Education" lavishes advice concerning hygiene: and it is silent about religion.[19]

Soon the strategy would be to invest the Catholic citadel and surround it with a vacuum; so that sooner or later it would succumb, pretty nearly without a whimper, in the general indifference. Reading once again the article on "Morality" in the *Encyclopedia*, we find its sham moderation significant: It would be a misunderstanding of religion to emphasize the merit of the faith at the expense of morality; for while the faith is necessary for every Christian, it is possible to assert that in various respects morality is superior to faith.

In plain language, this means: what is the value of dogmas? Time spent on them is wasted. And should we demur, Voltaire is prepared to show us the error of our ways. In his Philosophical Dictionary where, cautiously anonymous, he gives full scope to his irreverence, he addresses himself to theologians, those talkative preachers, extravagant controversialists, miserable logic-choppers, preach morality, and nothing else! There is nothing but morality. It cannot be said too often that morality is the same for all people who use their heads.

[18] Father Augustine Sicard, 1'Education morale et civique avant et pendant la Revolution (1700-1808), Paris, 1913, pp. 19-21.

[19] Ibid., op.cit., pp. 43-4.

Morality, Morality -- the apostles of the new age, like their friend and confrere Charles Duclos had constantly this refrain on their lips.[20]

And then Rousseau came along to orchestrate the same theme in his own way. In 1726 he published his *Émile* at a moment when the Jesuits, the great masters of Christian education, had been hewn down. The new educator's thesis is well-known: the child must be raised in total ignorance of God and the supernatural life. Émile did not go "to church to get bored" and "mutter prayers".[21] At fifteen years of age he didn't even know "whether he had a soul", and perhaps at eighteen it might still be too soon for him to learn...If he learns earlier than that, he runs the risk of never knowing at all. What does a young mind "conceive" of the Christian religion? So little that he "would just as gladly adopt the contrary", if it was taught to him.[22]

Strictly speaking there was here no moral education, since conscience was not trained to struggle, as it was thought incapable of acquiring notions like "duty" and "virtue" until a much later age. The child would be given over to "the first movements of nature...(which are) always right. (He would be directed by a) "purely negative" education: Be reasonable and do not reason with your pupil, especially to make him approve of something he doesn't like...Exercize his body, his limbs, his senses, his energies, but leave his soul alone.[23]

And when, with the progress of mind and will, the soul sets "to work", it will only be a question of adapting the adolescent to the needs of his material existence, to the laws of the physical world and to the demands of his social environment. Since we reject the dogma of original sin (and Rousseau is unequivocal on this point),[24] the idea and the word "sin" is abolished from the conscience. Indeed, it is effaced from language itself. Disobedience to God no longer exists, nor does breaking a higher, immutable law. The notion of "fault" is foreign to our innermost personality, to be replaced by an "error", an accident, or a rupture between the individual and society. It is a breach which might imperil our happiness, our peaceful enjoyment of earthly goods (and public respect, honor and friendship are among the most precious of these). Our natural goodness, our "heart", our lofty passions and our "sensitive" urges conspire with our interests to keep us faithful to the social contract.

This "morality" which the 18th century preached everywhere and which it meant to substitute for the "morality" of the Gospel was, then, a sort of "hedonism". God might be recognized by Voltaire as a sort of indispensable demiurge, but far removed and pitiless as concerns its creatures; it might well have been revered and loved by the Savoyard Vicar, but with respect to it a man had no exact obligations. But, then, man didn't have any either with regard to himself; and we know what became of rules of morality for these great "Philosophers" and for their adherents.

Like every community in which the faith is lost, in which the special value of each soul is denied and in which the "last ends" are not an object of preoccupation, all duties tend to be reduced to feelings of civic solidarity, of interdependence between the members of the same nation. That the formation of youth has a singular importance for the greatness of a people the most spiritual of educators have always professed. Rollin emphasized this truth in a passage of his *Treatise on Studies*.[25] But in an anti-Christian system, the divinized State absorbs the human person. Obedience to the law, indeed the entire submission of the conscience to the "general will", and the most rigid sort of conformity becomes the "alpha and the omega" of morality. Here we find that Rousseau pushes his deductions to the bitter end: to believe him, man, "the unit", must lose himself in the social body; therefore, it will be necessary (quickly) to strip him of his absolute existence, and give him a relative one, and transpose the "I" into the common unity; so that each individual no longer believes himself one, but part of a unity and is no longer sensitive except within the whole.[26]

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[20] Cf. Sicard op.cit. pp.46-48

[21] Emile, Book II

[22] Ibid Book IV

[23] Ibid Book II

[24] "There is no original sin in the human heart; there isn't a single vice of which we cannot say how it got there and by what route." (Emile; Book II).

[25] Traite des Etudes, Book VIII, art. 1; in Sicard, op.cit., pp. 192-3.

[26] Quoted by Sicard, pp. 194-5.

"Civic education" would henceforth appear in the reformers' program of studies. All education must be cast in this mold and achieve this goal. And this is why the State not only cannot be indifferent to the problems of education, but has the duty of solving them itself. Such, basically, was the thought of the Minister, Turgot, in a report addressed to Louis XVI in 1775: Your kingdom, Majesty, is of this world. Without placing any obstacles to instruction that has some higher goal...(Turgot made room for the catechism, something which, at that date, went without saying), I believe I cannot propose to you anything more advantageous for your people than to see to it that all your subjects are given an education which will clearly manifest their obligations to society and to your power (which protects them), the duties which those obligations impose upon them, and the interest that they have in fulfilling these duties in the public good as well as for their own private welfare.[27]

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Of these ideas spread abroad by famous journalists it remains for us to examine the most thoroughgoing, as well as the most judicious explanations in three important documents, all written about the same time, by Louis René Caradeuc La Chalotais, Procurator-general in the Parlement of Brittany, Louis Bernard Guyton Morveau, Attorney-general in the Parlement of Bourgogne, and Bartholomew Gabriel Rolland Erceville, President of the Court of Inquiries in the Parlement of Paris. We have not stressed La Chalotais's role in Rennes, nor the "prodigious success" of his prosecution of the Jesuits in 1761, nor his long quarrel with the Duke of Aiguillon beginning in 1764.[28] Guyton Morveau and President Rolland also sided with the most ardent adversaries of the Jesuits. Through his speeches and writings Rolland had especially contributed to the inexorable decisions of 1761 and 1762. These three "Jurists" were inspired by the same biases: but their intellectual accomplishments were considerable. La Chalotais was a precise and brilliant orator who reformed the judicial language and style of the period; and Morveau was a celebrated chemist who later on (once he had completed, and not without awful responsibilities, his political career under the Revolution) became a professor at the Technical Institute, and a member of the Academy of Sciences; Rolland was a provincial academician in Orleans and in Amiens and became an excellent administrator of *Louis le Grand* College in Paris.[29]

La Chalotais' report, entitled *Essay on National Education* or *A Plan of Studies for Youth* is the prior and the more frequently cited of the three. The Procurator-general presented it on the 24th of March, 1763, to the Parlement of Brittany. His purpose was to prove that "in place of an education that was only more or less fit for the classroom", it was possible to suggest one which would form "subjects for the State".

With perhaps more sincerity than the "Encyclopedists", La Chalotais exhibited a certain religious spirit. Imagining that he was being listened to by the king as well as by the public at large, he insisted that the enemies of the Jesuits were not the enemies of the Faith. But, at the same time, he, too, strove to dissociate the teaching of dogma from the teaching of morality. He quoted Father Gedoyn, who proposed that, while preaching the fulfillment of duty to the young, one should avoid theological disputes; so that, as Gedoyn believed, in the shipwreck of the Faith, one might save the "moral virtues". The commentator went the priest one better:...All learning acquired by a young man in religious schools and retreats falls before any specious objection of the unbeliever; and, unfortunately, the entire edifice of a badly supported morality crumbles. Young people...think of themselves as liberated from all bonds; everything is mixed up in their heads with the petty devotional practices of which they have become ashamed.. [30]

Those who were responsible for these dangerous and deplorable calamities were, of course, the Jesuits and all those Religious whose educational theories were inspired by the principles promoted by the Jesuits. Such teachers neither can nor will prepare a child for life. They sequester him in a restricted environment, nearly as far removed from church, "where he should be learning his religion" [31] as it is from the public forum. They produce "confraternity" Christians, and they take no care to make citizens of them.

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[27] Turgot, OEuevres, Vol. II, pp. 506-9, quoted by Sicard, pp. 200-2 and by Compayre, Histoire de Pedagogie, pp. 301-2. The spread of English FreeMasonry throughout the circles of French aristocracy certainly contributed to the success of the doctrines we are now examining. But regarding ideas and morals, it is much easier to figure out the consequences of occult influences than to decipher everyday activity. See Bernard Fay's book, La Franc-Maconnerie et la Revolution intellectuelle du dix-huitieme siecle, Paris, 1935.

[28] On La Chalotais, see Histoire de Bretagne by B. Pocquet, Vol. VI.

[29] Rolland Erceville protested against the decrees of the Constituent Assembly. He was guillotined in 1794

[30] Essai, pg. 134

[31] Ibid., pg. 14.

How was it possible to think that men who do not agree with the State, who routinely (place) their Order above the Fatherland, their Institute and their Congregation above the Law, would be able to educate and train the youth of the kingdom?[32]

And how could they train future heads of families? It's a curious error, a "mystic" aberration (but a singularly widespread one) to entrust schools and colleges to "Communities" of monks and clerics. People doubt whether married teachers can educate their children...They want to debar all those who are not celibates from what are purely civic functions. What a paradox! It seems as though having children excludes one from being able to educate them.[33]

It is for the nation "to reclaim" its "inalienable and imprescriptible rights". It should select from within its own fold educators who have experience of the world, a clear idea of social and political duties and who have a sense of their own dependence upon the leaders of the temporal and earthly city. "The State's children" should not be entrusted to any but "the members of the State".[34]

The point to which this logic can lead is obvious. The modern adversaries of Congregations, the theoreticians of educational monopoly and the dictatorships that have presumed to snatch the child from the family and the Church have used the same arguments. But what typifies Chalotais' work, what its date and the environment in which it was elaborated reveal is (intimately bound up with its "Statism" and its "Secularism") its thoroughly aristocratic point of view. The lordly Breton magistrate, the jurist in the tradition of the Caesars, means to change nothing in the social structure of that State which he strives to exalt as the director of conscience and as the ultimate goal of the individual. He wanted a small number of "masters", but a mob of servants, not to say, slaves. In this connection, the education of the common people seemed to him something of a stumbling block.

One of La Chalotais' compatriots, Langourla, had observed that "the `ignorantins', the Brothers with the wide sleeves, should be sent packing", because "these queer fellows teach the common people how to wield the pen, which, in some hands, is a very dangerous tool". [35] It would have been ill-advised to criticize the Brothers for leading young people away from French, parochial family life. The Christian school remained in permanent contact with parents as well as with pastors and civil servants. In most of the cities, it was a public service; it was encouraged by the Sovereign, and the Religious teachers always gave evidence of an ardent patriotism. What La Chalotais especially held against them was that (apart from their Roman orthodoxy, which united them to his victims) they prepared poor people for a better way of life.

He worried about the ambitions (sometimes, to be sure, irrational) which compelled "laborers and artisans" to send their children "to the colleges". The classical humanities, without a serious training of the will and a certain intellectual "realism", could (according to Taine's observation) strain and upset many minds in the 18th century. But nobody more than the Brothers (we repeat) reacted against these tendencies and, in the field of education, sought solutions in conformity with La Chalotais' legitimate demands.[36]

Under cover of public interest, he had attacked the principle of tuition-free, universal education: “The Brothers of Christian Doctrine,” (he wrote) “came upon the scene to complete the disaster: they taught reading and writing to people who shouldn't have been taught anything but drawing and how to handle a plane and a file, but who no longer wished to any of these things. The Brothers are the rivals or the successors to the Jesuits. Social welfare requires that the knowledge possessed by the common people not extend beyond these occupations. Any man whose vision extends beyond his grim trade never acquits himself of it with courage and patience. It is scarcely necessary for the common people to know how to read and write, except for those who live by these arts or those for whom these arts are an aid to living.”[37] In a note, the author asserts that "since the Brothers opened schools in Brest and St. Malo", it has been difficult to hire cabin boys "to serve in the merchant marine". There is well-documented evidence that explicitly refutes this statement.

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[32] Ibid., pg. 13.

[33] Ibid., pp. 14-15

[34] Ibid., pg. 17

[35] There is a bitter paragraph that explores this theme in his Essay on National Education.

[36] Quoted by Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 274, following the Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine (Intermediate Commission Source).

[37] See below, pp. 584 et sq.

The examples were hardly convincing; and the principles were offensive. That a man must be locked into a trade betrays a caste prejudice. And a trade can appear to be something "grim" only to one who refuses to open the horizons of his thought to the lowly among his brothers. We don't believe that Rousseau shows such narrowness when he states at the opening of *Émile* that "the poor man has no need of an education". Indeed, he explains that ‘`a, poor man can mature on his own", i.e., that his daily experience, the conditions of his work, the necessity of making an effort, adapt him to life and make him naturally more valorous and wiser than a rich young man in his artificial environment, with its atmosphere sheltered from excessively severe blows. And while Rousseau observes that "in a social order where all positions are determined, each person must be raised to occupy his own", he also points out that such an order did not exist in France, "where only the rankings are permanent, but the men who occupy them are constantly changing" .[38]

As for Diderot, who like "Jean-Jacques", came from the people, he protests that education, "far from corrupting, softens the character, enlightens it on its duties...and stifles or veils vice". He asked for schools, obligatory and tuition-free, open to all children, "schools for reading, writing, arithmetic and religion", with instruction in morality and politics. His position was summarized in the statement: From the Prime Minister to the least peasant, it is a good thing for everyone to know how to read, write and calculate.[39]

The sons, respectively of a cutler in Langres and of a watchmaker in Geneva, Diderot and Rousseau retained, along with their errors, their shameless talk and their foolish insolence and hearts capable of pity and enthusiasm. It was at Ferney, with Voltaire, the wealthy lord, that La Chalotais' words found their most sonorous echo. The Breton magistrate submitted the unpublished manuscript of his book to the famous wit and uncontested master of public opinion. On the 28th of February Voltaire wrote him: “I congratulate you for refusing education to workers. I, who am a farmer, ask you to send me work hands and not tonsured clerics. And especially, send me those "Ignorantin" Brothers to guide and work my plows”.

He went on to congratulate him also "for requiring that those who instruct children be themselves instructed".[40]

Nor should we see in these remarks mere polite compliments or harmless witticisms. Three years later in Damilaville, Voltaire revealed his own mind and showed himself to be the man of letters who, from the lofty heights of his own talent, cast a disdainful eye upon miserable humanity; and who, in a most unrevolutionary fashion, perpetuated pagan tradition and desired nothing more than to be a citizen of the classical city: “It is fitting that the people be guided and not educated; it is unbecoming that the should be.(March 19th, 1766)[41] ...It seems to me essential that there be the ignorant poor. If you tried to improve a piece of land, if you owned carts, you would be of my opinion (April lst)[42] ...Light must dawn gradually; and the light in the lowest class of people will always be quite confused. Those who are involved in gaining a livelihood cannot be concerned with improving their minds; for them the example of their betters is enough.”(April 13th).[43]

Like his entire generation, Guyton Morveau was under Voltaire's spell. He was a young Attorney-general when, at the age of twenty-seven, he presented the Bourgogne Parlement ("all Houses assembled") with his Report on Public Education on the 18th of March, 1764. He spoke with deference of La Chalotais "whose name... is on the lips of every citizen". But Morveau's tone was less lofty and his thought more moderate than his great predecessor. He thought that education must be allowed to spread. Quoting Montesquieu, he declared that laws made for a "despotic State" would be "dangerous in a monarchy"; to oblige sons to remain in the profession and in the conditions of their fathers "would destroy competition".[44]

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[38] Emile, Book I.

[39] Diderot, Oeuvres completes, Tourneux edition, 1876-1877, Vols. II and III. The quotations are from Refutation du livre d'Helvetius sur l'homme and from Plan dune universite , by Gabriel Compayre, Histoire de la Pedagogic, pp. 267-8.

[40] Voltaire, Correspondence, no. 5207 of the Gamier edition. See also letter no. 5324, dated the 22nd of June, 1763.

[41] Idem., Correspondence, no. 6296

[42] No. 6306

[43] No. 6314

[44] Memoire, pg. 45.

Nevertheless, "the excessive progress of Letters" was a thing to be feared. Hence, the number of colleges should be reduced. In colleges in small towns, the sixth year should be abolished, which would close off access to the humanities to those children who are not called to pursue studies but whose social condition destines them, at the age of 12 or 13, to manual labor.[45] Once this selection has been made, programs of studies will then be set up on a broader base; so that pupils will receive at various levels "the elements" of everything they will need to know for living.[46]

Concerning the selection of teachers, Morveau repeats the current objections to Religious, "devoted to a state of perfection to which few persons can attain" and that "most ought not" even to seek; men who regard reputation as absurd, comfort a danger; and who know no restraint upon the passions except monastic slavery and.. more concerned with rousing aversion for the world than for improving it, they are continually preaching the need to flee the world in order to be virtuous.[47]

He asks that teachers "be totally given to their task", have no other vocation and no other thought than their educational mission.[48] Away with these "tutors, slaves of a method of which they have penetrated neither the end nor the means, and have touched upon the teaching profession just enough "to instruct themselves" and then leave it to perform some other task.[49] This was a shrewdly aimed criticism: it was directed at the Orders whose members were not exclusively dedicated to education. The Christian Brothers were not the target. However, the young lawyer was in the grip of his personal bias against the Jesuits.[50] And he concludes: "These reflexions seem to me to determine irrefutably a preference for seculars, and I believe I have sufficiently proved that the safety of the Sate and the strengthening of the constitution, the progress and the stability of morality, the perfection of education and the interests of science require that they be the only ones responsible for the public schools."[51]

Teachers in the past insisted on forming "monks". They failed miserably. Future teachers, Morveau assures us, must form Christians. "Religion must march at the head of all education" was the first principle proposed by the "Prospectus for a College" that was appended to the Report. Even within the text of the address itself, we notice an interesting appeal in favor of parochial worship. The author claims that, because of "the oratory" in a school, children, imprisoned, "for the most part acquire nothing but the most invincible distaste for every religious ceremony". The generalization was obviously a mistake. Nevertheless, there is much to give pause in this excellent passage, to which John Baptist de La Salle might have well subscribed: Regarding spiritual exercises, it would be both more conformed to the mind of the Church's hierarchy and advantageous to the good of religion if (children) (as far as possible) were sent to parish churches...(where) the grandeur of the edifice, the majesty of the divine service, the concourse of the people and the mixture of ages and classes, all inspire devotion; the children come together not as pupils but as the faithful; they assist with their relatives, their teachers and the powerful ones of the world bow before the Eternal, and they would become habituated to look upon this worship as a duty from which neither rank nor dignity can dispense.[52]

Apart from his anti-Jesuit bias, there was nothing that would have led one to suspect the aversion that Rolland Erceville exhibited for the Christian schools. The important services he had rendered the College of *Louis le Grand* induced that institution administration in 1783 (initiated by a proposal by

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[45] Ibid., pp. 50-1.

[46] Ibid., pg. 58.

[47] Ibid., pg. 84-5

[48] Ibid., pg. 97.

[49] 5 Ibid., pp. 85-6.

[50] It seems however that Guyton Morveau borrows his idea of "revolving tutors" from the Jesuits, who followed their students from class to class over a cycle of four years. (Memoire, pp. 101-2.)

[51] Ibid., pp. 105-6.

[52] The Collection was published in Paris by P.G. Simon and N.H. Nyon, printers to Parlement and the College of Louis The Great, MDCCLXXXIII. The city library in Orleans possesses a copy, including, on the back side of the title page, the following noted: This book belonged to the former Academy of Orleans and was the property of Citizen Le Blond who placed it in the literary repository with my acknowledgements. (Signed) Barraud.

President Pontcarré) to have a "collection of several of his writings" on public education published. In this large volume we should read "the report of the 13th of May 1768 to the assembled Houses (of the Parlement of Paris) concerning various communications sent by the Universities situated within the jurisdiction of the Court", or at least the introduction in which are explained certain suggestions for the reform of education.[53]

President Erceville emphasizes that: “Before entering into the details of the report, the suppression of the Jesuits has everywhere been regarded as a memorable period for the restoration of Letters. The sovereigns (of those realms closed to the Society) have all thought the moment had come to improve education and to provide for the schools an organization that fits with the customs of each nation...so that we might finally set up a "national education".[54]

Preparatory work was in progress: “those who are responsible for it,” Erceville declared, not without courage: “will not adopt that current philosophy which has no other end that to undermine the foundations of our faith, and which, be desiring to lead man away from the sacred yoke of religion, at the same time snaps the bonds of obedience to all authority”.[55]

On the other hand, he acknowledges that instruction is necessary for everybody: “There is no one in the State who ought not to have religion, morality and knowledge of the profession he practices. The knowledge of reading and writing (the keys to all the other sciences) must be universally widespread... People who are deprived of the resources of the first elements are less human and more savage; they are also less rich and less industrious. Even agriculture, which the systematic mind might abolish, is equally lost through blind routine; the laborer who has received some sort of instruction is only the more attentive and competent as a result...Finally, the more ignorant the people are, the nearer are they to being subjugated whether by their own prejudices or by the charlatans of every sort that lay seige to the ignorant. It is therefore a false politics that decries the primary schools, which our kings, in their decrees, have sought to make common throughout the countryside; the more they are spread into the market-towns and villages the more, on the one hand, will religion and the State gain faithful servants, and, on the other, the more science will not run the risk of losing those fortunate geniuses whom elementary education discovers and places in a position to be recognized”.[56]

And, taking his cue from one of Morveau's projects, Erceville outlined a classification of "schools for boys": he distinguished four kinds: for the children of laborers, vine-dressers, gardeners and agricultural workers; for the children of craftsmen; for the children of people who were well-off, young gentlemen...up to the age of nine or ten and, finally, the colleges, including "courses in the Latin humanities" and in the French humanities, which would be for everybody, while only those who were found to have a taste for languages would be admitted to Latin.[57]

The concern to avoid excluding any mind was thus energetically asserted. Even the separation into social classes did not seem to create insurmountable obstacles: the doors remained open to "fortunate geniuses". Aptitude was taken into account; and as a curious proof of it, there was a system of "orientation" or "branching" designed to channel the rising tide of secondary school students.

With slight modifications, it would appear that the Brothers' schools might have fitted into this setting. But under pressure from the same furies that drove La Chalotais and suddenly appearing as sectarian as his colleague, Rolland Erceville, without examination and without inquiry, made it his duty to cast the teachers of some thirty-thousand pupils into exterior darkness.[58]

Although a member of a Parlement hostile to religious education, he had been extolling "the zeal" and "the success" of several of the Congregations what had been operating secondary schools.

“I shall cite (he says) the Juilly College, near Paris, directed by the Oratorians, and the College of Pont-Levoy, near Blois, directed by the Religious of the Congregation of St. Maur, better known as the Benedictines”. And, after having observed that, unfortunately, a too large number of new institutions and a dearth of vocations had lowered the level of the teaching profession, he then hurled the following unexpected thunderbolt: “These respectable Congregations which deserve the greatest consideration must

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[53] Ibid., pp. 280-2.

[54] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[55] Ibid., pg. 10.

[56] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[57] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[58] Ibid., pg. 26, note

not be confused with a new Order, founded by a gentleman by the name of De La Salle and known under the name of the Brothers of the Charity Schools or 'the Ignorantins', whom La Chalotais...regards as the rivals and successors of the Jesuits. This Congregation is not authorized by "Letters Patent" within the jurisdiction of the Court and needs to be dealt with attentively. (Which means, as the context indicates, "with the greatest caution"). The Court has already been looking into the matter".[59]

The mind of the jurist and the mind of the Gallican met. We see in what follows in "the Collection" (Report on the College of Bourges, Chapter IV, The Brothers of the Charity Schools)[60] that in order to found his suspicions about the Brothers, Erceville depended upon a report which had been sent to him from Berry. There, the Christian Brothers' school had been expanded into a small residence school in which the pupils were given instruction in science and even some "outside" teachers had taught the "elements of the Latin language". The university was alarmed and had obtained from the Parlement in Paris, on the 22nd of July, 1763, a decree prohibiting the teachers invited by the Archbishop's office from dispensing instruction to any others except "the children of the indigent" and commanding them to reduce their program to reading and writing.[61] The residence school was closed forthwith. These reactions were inspired by the most unjustifiable fears; at the moment in which the Jesuit colleges were collapsing, jurists and university people were already having visions of the Society, by which they were obsessed, transporting its heritage and principles to the Christian Brothers.

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The struggles that the Brothers were then sustaining in different parts of the kingdom and at Estavayer, in Switzerland, nearly always had the same causes: people wanted rigorously to limit the Brothers' mission to the teaching of the very poorest; the most annoying supervision was practised on their schools, so as to conform, regarding the subject-matter and the number of their lessons, to the good pleasure of the municipalities; and, finally, it was thought that even if they agreed to serve only an indigent clientele and to offer none but the most elementary instruction, they were still "useless" and even "dangerous".

There is no need to return to the ideas of the people in Rouen and Rheims in the 18th century concerning the charity schools. We come upon the same ideas in Bourges, where they were able to attract Cardinal Frederick La Rochefoucauld; they appeared in 1758 in Dijon, where the fatherly Bishop Apuchon successfully opposed them.[62] In Bourgogne, as in Normandy, as in Bordeaux, Amiens[63] and St. Malo the same notions fuelled the complaints and the court actions of the writing-masters and the school teachers. In St. Malo they aroused the scruples of a pastor who, about 1770, posed the following question to the Attorney-general of the Commune: "Can we admit (to the Brothers' school) the children of craftsmen who, responsible for large families to feed have nothing but their work...and (what of) the children of small merchants"?

Deep down in his own conscience the priest tended in the affirmative. "The Brothers (he wrote) give assiduously six hours of class a day; they form the children to piety as much as does knowledge, and the writing-masters do not want to be subject to a similar schedule".[64]

This was merely the continuation of a very ancient quarrel. Hostilities were being revived on another battle field and for an important reason: the question was no longer one of deciding which children should benefit from the Brothers' instruction, but whether in this instruction there was benefit or mischief.

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[59] The figure taken from statistics assembled nine years later, in 1777. (Motherhouse Archives, LI t u v).

[60] Collection, pp. 34-5, including note no. 52.

[61] Pp. 470-4.

[62] It is to be noted in this connection that in 1750 Cardinal Frederick Jerome La Rochefoucauld required "a poverty ticket" for the admission of children to the Brothers' schools. (Decision of March 2nd, 1750, Motherhouse Archives, HB u 42, Historique des etablissements des Freres a Bourges).

[63] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 266. Concerning Bishop Apchon, see Sicard, lea Eveques avant la Revolution, pp. 394 and 545.

[64] The Bordeaux writing-masters' complaint to the Comptroller-general against the Brothers, 1762 (Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for October, 1910). Court action brought against the Brothers by the writing-masters and the schoolteachers of Amiens (Darsy, Les Ecoles et les Colleges du diocese d'Arniens. Paris, 1878, pp. 37-9.

What was in question was the principle of popular education. Voltaire and La Chalotais had rather numerous and militant disciples in the managerial class and among the higher functionaries. Against their intrigues the pastors in Vezelay, in a report to Bishop Marbeuf of Autun, sent up a cry of alarm in defense of the Church's traditions: “Some of our Lord Intendants,” (they wrote) “refuse to confirm the parochial appointments of school-teachers, which is a cause of the failure of instruction in the villages. And the signatories then mounted an offensive against ignorance, "the inexhaustible source of crime and disorder", contrasted "the zeal of the heretics for education and even that of pagans with the indifference of Catholics" and recalled the proliferation "of public schools in Protestant countries".[65]

Some twenty years earlier, when the tuition-free schools in Grenoble were threatened with ruin for the want of financial support, the Bureau issued an appeal to possible contributors, and it believed that it had to dispel suspicion and "eliminate ill-founded pretexts" by insisting on the religious "mission" of the Brothers, and by pointing out that the teaching really came to very little; since parents hardly left their sons in class "until their First Communion at the very latest". Prior to that time what was required was to shelter youngsters who were still too young "to learn a trade or do any steady work" from idleness and "dissoluteness". Overall, "the rich and the well-to-do people of this city" must regard as a blessing the modest education provided the poor whom "Providence has destined to serve them".[66]

At Grenoble the argument worked. But resistance was more intense in Montpellier, where, on the 13th of April, 1754, on the occasion of an inquiry preparatory to the purchase of some property, Mayor Cambaceres had the City Council declare that the Brothers' "usefulness" was highly questionable.[67] At about the same time, in St. Malo, the pastor, Father Dufresne, had to refute the assertions of the enemies of the school. “We cannot assume,” he wrote to the municipal authorities, that "knowing how to read and write" gives the lower classes ambitions that are incompatible with their condition: During the nine years that the Brothers have maintained the Christian school, have we witnessed changes that we have regretted? Far from lacking sailors or cabin-boys, every day we are obliged to turn them away.”[68]This testimony, coming from the pastor of the people of St. Malo and deferred to by the city administrators was difficult to challenge.[69]

Nevertheless, in 1762, Francis Xavier Le Bret, the Intendant for Brittany, withheld consent to the annual expenditure of 400 livres that would result in the addition of two Brothers to the Community in Brest. According to him, "the city had to worry about much more important expenses...What is more", the project seemed to him to be contrary to the interests of this great port city. Then came the inevitable line: rather than send boys to the charity school, it would be better to enlist them aboard the ships. They were being "turned aside from their vocation"; and they were being supplied "the means of embracing all the other callings in which, certainly, they will never be so much needed".[70] In this way, Le Bret created a precedent that his successors never failed to invoke: in 1773, Dupleix Bacquencourt, in identical language, opposed a new undertaking by the people in Brest.[71]

In Provence the Brothers were accused of stripping agriculture of field-hands. Archbishop Jumilhac of Arles had to talk loud and firm to prevent recruitment for the school from being thwarted by members of the City Council.[72] A lawyer by the name of Mezard, a member of the Council in Apt, wrote

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[65] Motherhouse Archives Ha q 9, copy of a letter whose original is in the Municipal Archives of St. Malo, Series GG, no. 331.

[66] Quoted by A. De Charmasse in his book, Etat de l'instruction primaire dans l'ancien diocese d'Autun pendant les dix-septieme et dix -huitieme siecles, Paris, 1878, pp. 37-9.

[67] Avis au sujet des Ecoles chretiennes et gratuites tenues par les Freres sous la direction de plusiers Messieurs et Dames de cette ville de Grenoble, a circular printed about 1752, a copy of which exists in the Archives of the Hospital of Grenoble, Series B, no. 155. (Copy in the Motherhouse Archives HA q 5, Grenoble file). Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 282, attributes this document to Morel Argy, Advocate-general of the Court of Accounts

[68] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 260, following the Register of Council minutes.

[69] Municipal Archives of St. Malo, GG, no. 323 (quoted by the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, January, 1910, pg. 6).

[70] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 388-9, following documents from the same source

[71] Letter dated the 8th of March, 1762, to the city of Brest, Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine, C.595.

[72] Motherhouse Archives, Historique de la province ineridionale; cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 274-6.

the Intendant in 1769: Many believe the "Ignorantins" are more harm than good in the cities and smaller places; that sooner or later the government will suppress them. Even the Communes will turn them out once real interests are better understood...They remove a huge number of field-hands...And they educate a host of minor craftsmen who will be unable to make a living.

The Intendant, Des Galloy La Tour shared Mezard's opinion. On the 4th of August, 1776, he forbade the city of Apt to pay the Brothers' salaries and rent, on the pretext that the initial decisions of 1738 and 1739 had never been approved. The councilmen attempted without success to dissuade him. And the school was closed. Upon the Brothers' departure, Bishop Felician Bocon Merliere could do nothing but recommend them in the most laudatory terms. In the following year La Tour, after having opposed the return of the Brothers, authorized the Commune to invite two laymen at higher salaries.[73]

He was also the cause of closing the school in Cannes. The Brothers left the city on the 1st of January, 1777, although they had (according to the pastors' statement) "fulfilled their school duties exactly and...always gave indications of the purest morality".[74]

The municipal officers in Montelimar had to struggle with the higher administration over their tuition-free school. In 1780, the Intendant of the Dauphine refused to confirm their decision to invite a third Brother. They asked him, rather spiritedly, to rethink such an unfortunate decision: “In a century of light, it seems to us shameful to condemn most of our fellow-citizens to the crassest sort of ignorance. We regard it as an outrage perpetrated on humanity to treat them like beasts of burden. They are destined to work: but that work assumes some intelligence, and that is developed by education. There is not a craftsman who doesn't have contracts to examine, accounts to make, and estimates to present...We perform, Sir, an act of justice rather than of goodwill when we spend a modest part of the city's revenues for the tuition-free instruction of the people. Collected almost entirely from among them, it would be, it seems, rather harsh to use these revenues for purposes that do not involve them or that regard them only indirectly...Two teachers are not enough to instruct four hundred children.” The Intendant yielded to this entreaty.[75]

No document dealing directly with the Christian Brothers better shows the depths of the thought of their indomitable enemies than the report written in 1764 by Granet, the Lieutenant-general for the jurisdiction of Toulon. It is a formal indictment in which is gathered together the objections and complaints of both jurists and "Philosophers". By quoting from it at some length we believe that we shall be throwing a sort of retrospective light upon the analyses, the testimonies and the descriptions included in the present chapter.

The civil servant was attempting to prevent the strengthening of the position of the Brothers, who had been called to Toulon in 1758. And while he was undertaking a campaign against the local Community, he was aiming at a great deal beyond that immediate target. He condemned the Institute as a whole. "The founding of these Brothers in the kingdom" has, indeed, "spread tuition-free education...the source of harm experienced in every age by the most enlightened minds".

After wrapping himself in the authority of Tacitus ("hands are more necessary to the Republic to cultivate the soil than heads to govern it"), he quotes from the Englishman Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*.[76]

“In a free nation, where slavery is not permitted, the greatest resource consists in being able to have at one's disposal a multitude of poor laborers...To render society happy, there must be a great number of its members who are both ignorant and poor; ideas increase and multiply our desires and the less a man hopes for things, the more easily is he supplied with the necessities. Therefore, "knowledge is pernicious for the poor"; and every hour that their children spend with books is "time lost for society".

The "Ignorantin Brothers" multiply and exacerbate these perils. They run to wherever people call them, satisfied with quite meagre salaries and dispensing with all the legal formalities; to believe them, their schools have no need of "Letters Patent". On this theme, they quote from the Edict of 1749. But by its

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[73] Motherhouse Archives, HB s 28. Historique de la province meridionale and HB t 1, account of the school in Apt. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 309-10.

[74] Motherhouse Archives, Historique cited.

[75] Motherhouse Archives, HB t 4 Montelimar file, copy of the letter written by Mayor Dafflons and Supervisors Pain and Estran on the 9th of November, 1780.

[76] Concerning Bernard Mandeville and the "disgraceful success" of his Fable of the Bees, see Bernard Fay, La Franc-Maconnerie et la Revolution intellectuelle du dix-huitieme siecle, pp. 75-6.

general tenor this text makes exception only of charity schools taken in isolation and not those which "involve the formation of a new ecclesiastical body". They also claim that the royal letters of 1724 authorizes the spread of the Institute throughout the kingdom: "Apart from the invalidity of title in the jurisdiction of the Courts in which it has not been registered", its clauses have been repealed or restricted by most recent edict."

In fact, "the progress made by the Brothers is fearsome. Their revenue is constantly increasing through the profits from their residence schools and thanks to the legacies they receive to the detriment of hospitals. La Chalotais was absolutely right to regard them as successors to the Jesuits. Living under the domination of a Rule that is private and secret (Granet had unsuccessfully looked for a copy of the Rule in the publication, ("The French Church"!), bound by a curious vow by which, in consecrating themselves to religion, they renounce the priesthood...active in society, they are inoperative in the church, they make up an Order that is bound to nothing but clings to everything...Despairing of meriting the trust of the laws and of the magistrates, they have become attached to governors, provincial Intendants and bishops...Artifice, intrigue, hidden under an exterior of ignorance and humility, make them only the more formidable. Like the members of the proscribed "Society" who understood no engagements except subject to their Constitutions, *juxta Constitutiones nostras*, (they) do not promise to fulfill the conditions (stipulated by founders) unless they conform to their Rules. Thus, they are "unfit to discharge" the obligations specified for the schools in Toulon: they leave the city magistrates neither the freedom to select teachers nor the right of inspection."

On the other hand they "take the jobs" of the tutors in the primary schools, a result particularly deplorable in a world "in which we must...train teachers (belonging) to the citizen class".

"The teaching of religion and the superiority of their method" are counted to their credit. As regards the catechism, it must be replied that only "pastors and ministers are doctors of the law". "Laymen, who have renounced the clerical state in order to devote themselves to ignorance" are not entitled to replace priests. As for the method, it is certainly useful in that it assures the reign of "order and silence", while dispensing collective instruction; but it is "tiresome", "monotonous" and it fails to take regional differences into account. Granet believed that in order to teach reading, a sort of "typographical desk" with mobile letters, advocated by La Chalotais, would work wonders.

Such was the "report" concerning which there can be no question of its originality nor profundity and still less of its persuasiveness. If it momentarily grabs out attention, it is only because it is a perfectly clear and faithful echo of that aristocratic and, on the whole, anti-Catholic and anti-Christian mentality, whose emergence we have been noticing. Besides, it supplies us with admissions, the more exact in that they issue from the mouth of the adversary, concerning the popularity of the Lasallian Institute, the support it enjoyed, the esteem in which it catechetical and educational methods were held and its continuing progress during the most troubled moments of the 18th century.[77] In the eye of the storm, in the whirlwind of contradictory opinions, under threats coming from every point on the horizon, the Brothers did not know, at any moment and almost at no place, any assured peace. Sometimes the reef rose to the right of them and sometimes to the left. There were persecutions at the hands of city magistrates, insults from distrustful populations, attacks from journalists and obstacles thrown up both by the State and the clergy. But Lasallian teams remained obedient to their orders, attentive to their work, steady in their headings, on a vessel that their Father had securely tied to "Peter's Barque". They were on the eve of electing one of their number as the captain who would enable them to make still more difficult crossings. And they would end up perishing in an immense catastrophe. In fact, their faith would conquer the world, and death would prepare for and merit the resurrection.

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[77] Granet's report is in the Municipal Archives of Toulon, Series GG, note 54. A copy of it exists in the Motherhouse Archives, H A q 10, Toulon file. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 221-3 supplies inadequate quotations

PART FOUR

THE INSTITUTE COME OF AGE

The Achievement of Brother Agathon

CHAPTER ONE

De La Salle's Heritage in the Hands of Brother Agathon

Brother Florence was profoundly hurt by the trials that marked his generalate. Although he was still at the height of his powers and in a state of health that would carry him up to the end of the century, he thought that the burden was too heavy to bear. Since no General Chapter could be called for ten years, after his election in 1767, he had to disregard the difficulties and obey article 13 of the Bull *In apostolicae dignitatis solio.* Dominique La Rochefoucauld persisted in wanting the Assembly to meet in Rouen under his control. In order to assure the Institute's freedom, the civil authority was obliged to intervene. On the 28th of April, 1777, the Minister, Bertin, informed the Archbishop's office, whose complaints he had listened to, that it appeared quite difficult to prevent the Superior from convoking the General Chapter where he believed to be the most convenient. Normandy was no longer the headquarters of the Congregation; and Rheims, where the Chapter of 1745 had been held, appeared to be more central.[1] In spite of the prelate's fresh entreaties, Brother Florence, no longer shackled, issued a circular letter on the 20th of May announcing the opening of the solemn Assembly in the Founder's native city for the 3rd of August.

"It will be our task (he wrote) firstly to establish unity of opinion on the extent of the duties which our vows impose upon us. (The importance of the Chapter would go well beyond this modest program.) The doctors of the Sorbonne had been questioned for interpretations of articles in the Bull relating to the character and number of the Capitulants. Henceforth, the number was to be thirty, not including members of the Regime. Each of the provinces of the Institute would elect ten deputies, five from among the Directors of the principal houses and five from among the Senior Brothers, i.e., those having at least fifteen years of profession."[2]

The Assistants resigned according to Rule. However, Brother Anaclet thought it would be helpful to announce at the first session that he was not a candidate for re-election, since nervous fatigue prevented him from undertaking any work of long duration. As to the Superior's intentions, although, of course, known, nothing was said until the 10th of August, after a retreat, the reading of some proposed resolutions and the putting of the finishing touches on some other pieces of business. The language used by Brother Florence suggested an extreme humility: More than ten years experience (he said) proved so many times to his satisfaction and in the most striking ways that he was absolutely incapable of fulfilling his task, and that...for the good of the Institute...and for (his) own as well, (he) was obliged in conscience to tender (his) resignation.[3]

This was the first time a Superior-General of the Brothers, elected for life, had laid down the burden before being brought down by infirmity or old-age. Brother Florence urged that his gesture should not "create a precedent" for his successors. The times were so troubled, and events required such fearless and vigorous response that the Assembly, while expressing its regrets and paying tribute to the prudence and the efforts of the leader who was stepping down, did not insist that he re-examine his decision.

A providential figure had already made his appearance. He was Brother Agathon. Since the Assistants who had resigned were not in contention, Brother Agathon was elected to the presidency of the Chapter at the moment when deliberation had begun on Brother Florence's resignation. Having won a majority of the votes and have been proclaimed Superior-general, according to custom he immediately received the allegiance of the Capitulants, as, one by one, they knelt in obedience before him and kissed his hand.

The day before he had only been one of those "Senior Brothers" elected from the western province. He had perpetual vows for twenty years and ten months. But he had not turned up suddenly, as from the shadows. Called, not too long since, by the Regime to the Parisian house on the Rue Neuve (the "Motherhouse", since it served as the Superior's residence), Brother Agathon, without apparently any special assignment, succeeded in familiarizing himself with important transactions. But even prior to that he had been equally successful. He himself had supplied a summary of his *curriculum vitae* in a document

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[1] Letter quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 406, following the Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine.

[2] Motherhouse Archives, AAb a 1, manuscripts of the Circulars of the Superiors-general; cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 407-9.

[3] Ibid., Cf. p B Capitulary Register B. Quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 411 -12.

addressed in October, 1792, to the "administrators of the Council of the Department of the Seine-and-Marne", wherein he states that he spent his religious life in part in the primary schools and in part teaching the elements of mathematics in Brest and hydrography at Vannes, and in part directing the school in Angers and in shaping the magnificent school that was "the Rossignolerie" .[4] The work he had done as Director in Angers is closely associated with the fruitful achievements of his generalate and we shall not fragment what, as regards its history, is a perfect whole.

Agathon ("the excellent one") - the Greek name seemed to bear a destiny. But it had to be "tried on", so to speak, before finding the one to whom it belonged and would make it famous. There was a man named Henri-Joseph Gaudier, from the diocese of Cambrai, who had received that name upon his entrance into the Congregation in 1745. But he "left" at the end of a few months, because he had "a weak understanding". Raymond Gilles Le Senechal, from the diocese of Rennes, in September of 1746, was the second "Brother Agathon", who didn't stay very much longer than his predecessor.[5] Out of this similarity of names there was to arise a confusion. There is scarcely any other way of explaining the origin of the legend that was current in the Institute [6] as late as sixty years ago, to the effect that a young Brother was to be dismissed from the novitiate at St. Yon because he evidently had no talent. But a zealous Director accepted him into his Community and took in hand his religious and professional training, and was so successful that his pupil became the Most Honored Brother Agathon, the fifth Superior-general.

The story, excellent for promoting the confidence and the patience of Directors of novices, does not fit with other traditions nor with the well-authenticated documentation. The biographical data, collected from various sources, is as follows: Joseph Goullieux (as the family name was formerly spelled) was born on the 4th of April, 1731, in Longueval, a village in Picardy, situated between Bapaume and Albert. (At that time, Longueval depended ecclesiastically on the deanery of Peronne and the Bishop of Noyon; politically, it belonged to the Intendancy of Amiens.) It was a great wooded region (what was left of the ancient forest of Arrouaise) with farmlands that exploited vast areas for cultivation and the cottage industries in which hummed the cliquety-clack of the weaver's trade. The domains of the arch-monastery of St. Remy touched upon its borders, and Joseph's father, Pierre Goullieux, had leased several large parcels of land from the monastery. His forbearers and relatives belonged to the solid peasantry, working-people with landed-property. On his mother's side, there was another profession and another sort of life, but with the same perspective and without any marked change in social milieu. The Driencours, generation after generation, were the business managers for the neighboring lord.[7] On several occasions they had been related by marriage to the Goullieuxs; and about 1728 Anne Driencourt married Pierre Goullieux.

On the 19th of May, 1729, was born their eldest son, Nicolas. Eighteen years later, on the 29th of April, 1747, this young man entered the Institute under the name of Brother Jean Colomban. He made his perpetual vows on the 22nd of September, 1757, and died in 1759 "at home where he had been sent to regain his health".[8]

A vocation such as this one, which was to be followed immediately and with equal enthusiasm by the youngest son, Joseph, witnessed to the living Christian flame in this Picardy household. There was serious piety, profound faith (extending to the sacrifice of affection and interest), and, at the same time on the human level, there was a lucidity, an imperturbable good sense and a joy, and a sort of pungency that did not diminish the heart's goodness, and a persevering, determined and victorious will. Such was the portrait that might be sketched of the Goullieux family, in the light of the known facts, the family's ancestors and the French people of the same epoch, and, finally, following Brother Agathon's own character.

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[5] Municipal Archives of Rheims, St. Remi Source, file no. 265 (40-41). Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, January 1937, pp. 10-11.

[6] Ms. 11122.

[7] Departmental Archives of the Somme, B 148, fol. 10 and 289 fol. 56. Bulletin cited, pg. 11.

4 Motherhouse Archives, HA m 17, St. Yon Vow Book. Brother John Colomban signed as "Nicholas Goullieu".

[8] A remark noted on the margin of the vow formula. The Register of Entrants also indicates that Brother Jean Colomban died in 1757. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes (art. cited, pg. 11) says that "he died a saintly death at Maréville in 1785". There is an error of identity here. There was another Jean Colomban (Jean Robert Ricquier) who "took the black robe" in 1759 and pronounced his perpetual vows in 1767. This is the man who died in Maréville. (Ms. 11122).

Joseph came to St. Yon on the 20th of October, 1747, two weeks after the death of Brother Irenée. The Institute never lacked for great men. One day it would be for this youngster of sixteen to continue the tradition of De La Salle and Brother Irenée, to hand it on living, whole and with all its power for good to the generations which, risen from the ruins, would spread that inheritance to the ends of the earth.

In his birthplace the Brothers had already been a familiar sight. They had been in Noyon since 1739 and at Abbeville since 1740. It was no surprise that their recruitment extended throughout the diocese in which their schools existed. The novitiate in Rouen welcomed two Goullieux youngsters within six months of each other. The second of the two was no doubt the more remarkable. Brother Lucard, on the strength of rather uncertain evidence, has suggested that the young Agathon continued his studies in the Scholasticate that had been in existence for a long time in association with the free residence school; and that he taught in turn at Noyon and in Rouen.[9] What is certain is that on the 22nd of September, 1756, a year before his older brother, Joseph Goulllieux wrote out and signed[10] his perpetual vow formula in the book at St. Yon. The Institute had certainly made an important acquisition[11]. However, it may well be that the newly professed Brother had still not achieved total mastery - if to judge only by the handwriting, which was so much less regular and firm (indeed, more difficult to read) than that found on the many documents of the man who would become Superior-general in 1777. The Motherhouse Archives preserves a beautiful set of "resolutions" that he took in 1760, when he was teaching mathematics in Brest: “I shall prefer my Brothers to myself...I shall immediately pardon whatever evil they do to me, so that I may say to Our Lord. ..I have pardoned, hence, I expect pardon.”

In 1761, he took his seat at the 8th General Chapter as the Director of the young residence pupils at St. Yon, where it was evident that work did not frighten him. The Director was also the bookkeeping teacher; he had planned a course that was still in use twenty years after he left. "Spend a quarter of an hour with the account books... he wrote on the 23rd of May, 1781, to a Brother whom he had criticized for negligence, "you can take a look at the lessons I gave at the residence school".[12]

His mind tended not only to theoretical studies; it was also suited to administrative matters. In 1761 the Bureau for the Poor in Beauvais asked Brother Claude for "four members of his Congregation to teach...in the charity schools" of that city. The initial refusal of this request provoked the intervention of the Bishop, Cardinal de Gesvres, who insisted that a Brother come to make an on-cite inspection of the situation. The Superior sent Brother Agathon. "It would have been impossible for me to have been more satisfied with Brother Agathon", the Cardinal wrote Brother Claude on the 12th of September. And he hoped that this eminent man, who "has seen it all for himself", who "is familiar with the administration of the Bureau", would be placed "at the head of the institution" that was being planned. But, doubtless, Brother Agathon had cast an unfavorable vote, since there was no Brothers' school in Beauvais.[13]

Brother Agathon's was a growing reputation. Vannes profited from his knowledge as a mathematician and "Hydrographer". This technical education, supplemented on certain days by instruction in piloting aboard a ship, was valued by the captains in the port. The Intendant for Brittany said later that this sort of training produced as many able sailors as the city needed.[14]

Having once again participated in the General Chapter (i.e., of 1767) Brother Agathon was to conclude his teaching career by becoming a distinguished associate in Angers. Elected to the Chapter of 1777, Brother Agathon was, at the age of forty-six, at the full maturity of his powers. Physically, he made a commanding appearance, with a full face, broad forehead, hair slightly curled, while intelligence and wit

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[9] Departmental Archives of Seine-et-Marne, L, 414, no. 5237. A facsimile of this document is reprinted in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January 1937, pg. 14, the first article published on La Vie d'un Grand Superieur general des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes, le Tres Honore Frere Agathon. We owe a great deal to these pages and those that followed. They are the product of much serious research

[10] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 395

[11] 2 As usual, with the family named spelled as above. Without anybody being able to supply a plausible explanation, the Superior-general changed the spelling and from 1777 to 1798 signed his name "Gonlieux". In the St. Yon catalogue the name is written "Gonlieu".

[12] Quoted in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January, 1937, pg. 20, following the Motherhouse Archives.

[13] Father Leborgne, Un projet d'etablissement a Beauvais, en 1761, des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes (cited in the Bulletin des E.C. for January, 1937, pp. 20-1)

[14] 1 Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 214, following the Departmental Archives of Ille-et-Vilaine

played on his lips and sparkled in his glance; it was a fascinating face, where trust, liveliness and frankness united with the suggestion of mastery and, indeed, of grandeur.[15] On this face, lighted by the reflection from the huge white rabat, and nearly as pleasant as the face of Brother Agathon's great contemporary, Pope Pius VI, we grasp something of the sense of a period in which people experienced "the charm of life". As with the Sovereign Pontiff, the severest trials would arise and, without affecting fundamental serenity and gentleness, would wear their passage into body and soul. Even prior to persecution and genuine martyrdom, there would be the cares and the concerns of the leader. Very early, there were attacks of illness: the Brothers feared for their Superior, whose generalate had hardly begun. As he reached his fifties, he was never free of those early signs of physical deterioration. At sixty he had lost the sight in one eye.[16] From time to time his infirmities would interrupt him, but they would never bring him down. At crucial moments he was always there. In the anxieties of 1789, 1790 and 1791, in the painful rending of 1792, in the imprisonment of 1794, in the precarious shelters and in the isolation of the final years, we see him courageous and calm, deeply concerned for his responsibilities and sustaining them without faltering, always preserving the attitude and the language of a convinced Christian and Religious, addressing his troubled, unhappy and dispersed Brothers with friendly and fatherly messages, with a heart at once sensitive and tender, but also with the heart of a Superior who had no intention of quitting.

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The General Chapter of 1777 brought together some remarkable men. Among the Directors of the principle houses were men who had already rendered great service to the Congregation, and who, in various posts and in successful endeavors, had gained administrative experience and educational competence, and, at the same time, they were good Religious, in the best tradition of De La Salle.

Brother Amand of Jesus (Nicolas Tupain) from Bourgogne, entered the Brothers in Dijon as a postulant on the 18th of December, 1742, at the age of sixteen; employed as a schoolteacher after a hasty, on-the-the-spot training and then sent to St. Yon in April of 1744, he there made a new and more thorough novitiate, and on the 8th of December, 1751, he pronounced perpetual vows, which he wrote into the Register in an elegant hand. In Bordeaux, where he had come in 1758, he was recognized by a Vicar-general as a man of decision and "ideas", whose head was in the right place. Both the Archbishop and the Intendant held him in high esteem. In 1775, he was the Director of St. Yon. In 1778, (as we have already seen) he was the Director in Nîmes and wrote an important historical account of that institution. Ten years later we find him organizing the schools in Toulouse. One of his younger Brothers, Brother Vivien (François René Gaudenne), praised his virtue and said that he was "an example" to his Brothers.[17]

Brother Benezet, the Director of Avignon, appeared as the prominent figure in the southern province. Born on the 12th of October, 1715, François Antoine Isnard, from the parish of St. Symphorian in Avignon, was an excellent candidate from the Brothers' school in the "City of the Popes". His teachers noticed him and turned him into the first of Brother Stanislaus' novices. He proved worthy of this choice and support. He had a capacious and quick mind, the spirit of initiative, taste and a sense of responsibility. We have referred to some of his views concerning the school in Toulon. He built a very important residence school in Marseille; and we shall witness the energetic and spirited way in which he overcame obstacles.

Brother Eunuce inherited Brother Agathon's position in Angers. He, too, was from the diocese of Noyon.[18] Born on the 17th of July, 1729, in the ancient episcopal city, in the parish of St. Pierre, Jean

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[15] This is the impression given by the portrait presented to the Institute by M. Lanier, the Superior-general's great-grand-cousin, which the family had preserved since the French Revolution. It differs considerably from other pictures (see the one reprinted in Ravelet, 1888 ed. pg. 471 and the 1933 ed., pg. 409). But it seems to be quite the most authentic and closest to the model. Cf. the Bulletin des E.C. for April, 1937, pg. 138, which supplies a copy which we have reproduced as the frontispiece to the present volume

[16] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4, letter of Brother Francis, Director of Mirepoix, 1st of November, 1787.

[17] In a small notebook of twenty-two pages preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, HA p. 1, which includes two lists with the following titles: "Names of Christian Brothers whom I have known since the month of June, 1773" (a list of 105 names including evaluations of thirty of the Brothers mentioned); "names of Christian Brothers with whom I have lived and have known both at St. Yon and other places" (143 names, including all of the foregoing). Biographical indications must be verified. In another volume we shall have to speak of the role of Brother Vivien during the French Revolution and at the time of the reorganization of the Institute. Concerning Brother Amand of Jesus, Cf. also Historique des Freres des Ecoles chreliennes a Marseille, Motherhouse Archives, HB t 38.

[18] His religious name is that of an early bishop of Noyon.

Baptist Honoré Crepeaux came from a middle-class family. His father filled a post in the city administration, and his mother was the daughter of a judge. As a child, he must have been sent to the Brothers' school upon their arrival in Noyon. He became one of them at the age of sixteen years and nine months: - the Register indicates his entrance date at St. Yon as the 16th of April, 1746. The Vow Book includes his formula and his signature, dated the 22nd of September, 1747. The handwriting is delicate and attractive. And his style was no less so, as the lines he addressed to the Director of the Community in Boulogne attest. Brother Eunuce had just completed a letter dictated to him by Brother Agathon on a rather serious matter that we shall recount in its place; and, then, of his own accord, he added the following: "For the moment I have the honor of being the Secretary to the Very Dear Brother Superior-general. Once this letter has been written, my honor comes to an end; and so it is that distinctions pass away; but in spite of that, I shall never cease to be, both in life and in affection, your very humble and obedient servant." That year his was the task of furnishing the residence school in "the Rossignolerie", a work the beginnings of which belonged to his predecessors: "Our work proceeds posthaste", he announced in another paragraph, which Brother Agathon signed without comment. In 1784 this excellent administrator was made responsible for the Community in Nancy. The French Revolution, which would not succeed in prevailing over his fidelity or his constancy, found him in Lorraine; and Brother Eunuce was to assume the stature of one of "the founding-fathers" in the re-established Institute.

Of Brother Leander, Director of the tuition-free schools in Rouen, we know from Brother Vivien's notebook that he was a "good shepherd". Brother Lupicin (François Joseph Chauffoureaux)[19] who directed successively schools in Nogent-le-Rotrou, Chateaudun and Maréville, won the respectful friendship and spontaneous praise of his young colleague, Brother Solomon. Born in Hary, in the diocese of Laon and the region of Thierache, on the 8th of January, 1708, he entered the Society on the 14th of February, 1732 and was professed on the 19th of March, 1737; and, in 1777, he figured among the eldest of the Brothers. The Superior-general sent him on confidential missions; and eventually he became the Director of the Motherhouse Community.

We have gotten a glimpse of the profile of Pierre Paul Bilhac, who began his studies in the tuition-free school in Carcassonne and who, called to follow in the footsteps of his teachers, received the name of one of them (Brother Macarius had died two years earlier) at the novitiate in Avignon in 1746. On the 4th of October, 1763, when he was twenty-nine years of age, Macarius made his final vows in the Institute. A southerner, short in stature, active and resolute, he was alert both in mind and body. We meet with him again at the residence school in Marseille in 1765. At the Chapter of 1777 he took his seat as the Director of that Institution.

Brother Maurillian (Étienne-François Bouhelier) was a man from the eastern part of the country. He was born in 1722 and entered Religion at the novitiate in Dole in 1753 and pronounced his final vows at St. Yon on the 22nd of September, 1760. He was among the leading Brothers in the Eastern Province. He so completely attracted Brother Agathon's attention and respect that the Superior did not hesitate to uproot him from his native region to make him the aide and firm support of Brother Florence who, after his resignation, had become the Director of the school in Avignon. A long letter sent from Melun, on the 24th of December, 1784, by Brother Agathon to his predecessor, ("his Most Venerable Brother") tells us both about Étienne-Francis Bouhelier as well as about the quite deferential, firm, cordial and frank way the new superior had of dealing with his predecessor.[20] Brother Agathon had been mulling over some problems which he decided to share with Brother Florence: there were deficiencies in some of the Communities; there were "weak personalities" where "good ...and especially religious men" were needed. Such and such a Brother "was only a worker of minor miracles". Educational preparation seemed inadequate: Brothers are

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His religious name is that of an early bishop of Noyon.

[19] Thus, his signature in the Vow Book. Brother Lucard contorts it into "Chaufourneau", Vol. II, pg. 432, note #2.

[20] In an earlier document (dated the 29th of October, 1779) the Superior-general "in a visit to the school in Avignon recommended that the venerable former superior, who was the Director of the school, and the Brother Procurator conform as far as they could, to the consignment and distribution of habits for our dear Brothers of this southern province, with the orders...advantageously and satisfactorily followed in the other two provinces".(Motherhouse Archives, BE y 4, Brother Florence file).

not being trained in your province; there is difficulty in locating somebody to teach penmanship; is it, then, impossible to make good teachers out of them?

The Director of Avignon was poorly supported: "Your Sub-Director has no mind". That was why Brother Agathon had decided to effect an important change, and why "Brother Maurillian was on his way... He has what it takes" to get the job done. He can be of great assistance to you; he understands everything, both in the temporal and the spiritual...I think that he will be just as happy to be with you as you yourself will be to have him with you. He is missed at Maréville, and quite rightly so.[21]

The Superior-general understood men: Brother Maurillian lived with Brother Florence in perfect union of thought, of will and of religious views, which were quite in agreement with the spirit of De La Salle. In the very worst of times, he shared trials with his Director, including prison and the long wait for the guillotine. Both having escaped the supreme penalty, they never thereafter parted company. Two marvelous and dauntless men, they formed a community of two in a hole-in-the-wall, which also served them as a hiding place. Brother Maurillian would close the eyes of the former Superior, who died peacefully as a genuine confessor of the Faith. And once the Institute was re-established, Maurillian, then an octogenarian, would go on to show the first Brothers in the nineteenth century the kind of heroism that inspired the scrupulous observance of the Rule.[22]

Like Brother Eunuce, Brother Pascal came from the same region as Brother Agathon. "Called in the world Louis François Demarquet, from the parish of St. Elias Martigny, in the diocese of Noyon",[23] Brother Pascal was born on the 13th of October, 1728 and entered the novitiate at St. Yon on the same day as Joseph Goullieux. Older, he made his profession on the 1st of November, 1754. He had assumed the direction of the school in Cahors when the Brothers in the South of France elected him to the Chapter. We shall examine his study "concerning the causes of defections among the young Brothers", and we shall be impressed with the insightfulness, the vigor of the argumentation and the loftiness of soul of this very modest man, buried his entire life in the obscurity of professional duties, but who deserves to be something much more than a name listed in a paragraph of the annales of his Society.

We have a less clear notion of Brother Sylvester (Barthélemy Thevenin), Director of the Community in Arles.[24] He was born in Grenoble in 1729, a former pupil of the Brothers in his native city and admitted to the novitiate in Avignon in 1748. According to a note written into the Register in Avignon, it was believed that he was sent to St. Yon for his scholasticate. He was therefore considered a candidate with a future. Professed at twenty-six, he returned to the Southern province. At the Chapter of 1777 the office of secretary devolved upon this subtle, thoughtful man who had the reputation for being a good "writer".

Brother Vivien describes Brother Vincent Ferrier as a "librarian and an excellent bibliographer". In order to get some idea of his "pleasant style", so fluent that "he could write letters all day without repeating a word", we possess the following brief letter sent in 1768 to M. and Mme. Le Clercq, the father and mother of Brother Solomon: “I can certify that...your son is in excellent health: he is quite happy with his vocation and we have every reason to hope that he will become a good religious. Rest easy concerning him and rely upon me for his well-being. Dear Brother Raymond, to whom I ask you to present my respects, will tell you that I am not ill-natured. And I hope to become better still with the help of your good prayers, to which I commend myself.”[25]

At the time Brother Vincent Ferrier had the young Le Clercq on his staff in the school at Rennes. It was genuinely fortunate for a beginner to be trained under the supervision of such a Director, wise, learned, pious, as well as exquisitely kind and gracious. Brother Vincent possessed the charm that belonged to his times, while he retained the seriousness and firmness that was an inheritance from the age of De La Salle. In the world, he was called Louis Bienaimé. With a happy slip-of-the-pen, the copyist of the Register at St. Yon wrote "Louis Le Bienaimé" on a page on which were indicated the date of the Brother's birth (the20th of August, 1738), his Normand origins (Most Holy Trinity parish, in Cherbourg) and his "entrance into the Society" (the 18th of August, 1747). Signed in his own hand the Brother's perpetual vow formula is contained in the St. Yon Register and dated the 22nd of September, 1759. The

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[21] Motherhouse Archives, BE y 5, original letter and copy certified as in conformity.

[22] We shall, of course, return to these events in a future volume

[23] Ms. 111222.

[24] See Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 414, note #2. The date, 1739, indicated as the year of birth, is certainly in error

[25] Motherhouse Archives, R-2 Blessed Brother Solomon's papers, 1st file, letter #1. Cited by Bishop Chassagnon, pg. 88.

Superior-general changed Vincent Ferrier from Brittany in order to appoint him Director of the schools in Rouen, and, later on, professor in the Scholasticate at Melun. Subsequently, he was sent to teach the young people of Angers at "the Rossignolerie". It was there that this fine teacher died on the 21st of December, 1789, in his fifty-sixth year. His was a premature death, but it delivered him from the terrors that were lying in wait for his confreres. The body was buried on the 22nd, in the vaults of the residence school, by Father Huchelon des Roches, the pastor of St. Julian, who had assisted the dying man in his last hours.[26]

With Brother Zacheus we come to the end of this gallery of portraits in which men speaking "northern French mingled with those who spoke "southern French". Like Brothers Amand of Jesus, Maurillian and Pascal, Jean-Philippe Legrand was a Brother from the northern province, transplanted to the South. In 1777 he was directing the prosperous school in Montpellier, where twenty-five years earlier he had already proved himself. In the interval, he had been the Director of the Community in Nîmes, and there arranged for the purchase of the "Caumetter House", a beautiful structure, the property rights to which were not secured by the Institute until after many legal skirmishes. He also signed the contract that established the school in Aigues-Mortes. Mediterranean subtilty did not disrupt the composure of this son of the North. Brother Zacheus came from the diocese of Cambrai. Born in Beaumetz, on the 22nd of January, 1720, he made his novitiate at St. Yon in 1736. But as early as 1742 he belonged to the southern province: the Vow Book in Avignon, for the 21st of September of that year, shows his formula of profession, cosigned by Brother Timothy. In 1787 he returned to his adopted region as Director of the Community in Montauban. He continued to live long enough to do the Institute by his indefectible faith during the Revolution.[27]

On the 10th of August, 1777, the question was to select, from among the dozen or so Brothers who were equally worthy, those who would become the new General's Assistants. The re-election of Brothers Anaclet or Exuperian was not seriously considered. As to the former, once his intention had become known, he ceased to take part in the Chapter. He would presently accept the direction of St. Yon,[28] and, then, in 1782, he received an "Obedience" for the school in Nîmes. Exuperian, by far the older of the two (in eight months he would be seventy-seven years old) had daringly fulfilled the job of "the good and faithful servant". Having battled for the glory of God and the freedom on the Congregation, in the peace of his final days, he wished only to give full scope in prayer to a genuinely loving heart. Of this venerable old man (whose candor had once offended and upset friend and foe alike) Brother Vivien has preserved the image of the grandfather anxious to do the right thing, to make himself useful and "to give good example". He describes how Brother Exuperian set out to acquire the "marvelously rich ornaments" that had belonged to the late Cardinal Rochechouart, for the chapel at the school in Melun. This institution (which the Regime would eventually make its headquarters) was the site of the final stage of the former Assistant's life. He died on the 17th of November, 1782. Brother Vivien writes that "he was the first and the last to be buried" in the vault that Brother Agathon had planned for the superiors. The cyclone of 1792, scattering the Brothers to every point on the compass, would leave the earthly remains of Michel Foure to await the angel's trumpet and the world to come in a solitary tomb.

Brother Exuperian and his colleagues had shared an immense work. It was such a heavy burden that not only did Brother Anaclet bend under it, but it even weighed down the robust shoulders of the First Assistant. It would be necessary to obtain from the Holy See the authority to increase the number of the members of the Regime. Toward the end of his administration Brother Florence had made provisions for such a move. On the 11th of July, 1777, a rescript from Pius VI granted the Chapters General the power of electing four Assistants to make up the Council of the Superiors of the Institute. (The papal decision also simplified procedures for replacing Assistants who, between chapters, died in office or resigned. Their successors were to be nominated by an elective commission, acting with the Regime, and remain in exercise of their functions until the expiration of the current ten year period.)

Given the quality of the men being considered, the Capitulants were justified in hesitating in their choice. After four inconclusive ballotings for the First and Second Assistants, it was agreed that votes

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[26] Taken from the registers of the parish of St. Julian in Angers and copied in the historique des Dablissernents des Freres en Bretagne et en A njou(Motherhouse Archives, HBS, 633).

[27] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 13, St.Yon Register; HA m 15, Avignon Vow Book; HBS 28-8, Historique de la province meridionale. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 189, 234-5,377,507. On pg. 545 et sq., we shall refer to another member of the Chapter of 1777, Brother Jeann de Marie, Director of Maréville.

[28] Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 419.

should go only to the three Brothers whose names led the list. In this way, Brother Pascal, and then Brother Sylvester were elected.

Once this voting was completed, the Superior-general read the petition addressed to Rome and the Pope's rescript. He declared that for the time being a third Assistant would be sufficient. The number of the Superior's immediate colleagues would thus correspond to the number of provinces. For this final election, the Assembly acted as it had in the preceding ones; and the name of Brother Zacheus obtained the majority.[29]

Apart from Brother Agathon the members of the Regime were all representatives of the southern province. Brother Sylvester alone, however, made his novitiate in Avignon. It should be pointed out that, prior to him, no Brother who had originated in the southeast or the southwest of France had ever been given higher responsibilities in the Congregation. The Paris region had supplied the headquarters in the South of France with men like Brother Stanislaus, Brother Timothy and Brother Claude: the last two had left the banks of the Rhone to govern the Institute. Brother Florence, on the day after leaving the generalate was to direct the Community in Avignon. The excellent vocations and the remarkable abilities that were not lacking in Provence, Languedoc and the Dauphine had not yet begun to overflow, nor indeed to fill, the staffs of the local schools. The Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, when it remained close to its roots in Rouen, when it maintained its principal novitiate in Normandy, recruited especially in the regions situated north of the Loire. Champagne, Ile-de-France,2[30] Artois, and Picardy, regions familiar and dear to the Founder, continued to produce harvests whose seed he had sown. It was there that Samson-Bazin had sprung up, as well as the du Lacs, the Nivets, the Foures and the Gouillieuxs, who shared many qualities in common with the Founder and who resembled one another in their ways of thinking, judging and acting. "Beyond Lyons" there was a whole other France, where northerners came, as to a colony, to learn how to rule minds somehow different than their own, where they shaped their characters and gained experience, where they broadened their horizons, and from whence they returned preceded by well-deserved reputations and ready for important positions. However, as the Institute, increasingly strong and popular between the Garonne, the Mediterranean and the Alps, grew, drawing to itself as it drew to its schools, zealous young people, an evolution began to take place. It attracted a growing number of intelligent and dedicated youths to its service: and in the regions where the Founder had suffered so bitterly in body and spirit during the years between 1712 and 1714 there arose from among the native population an élite that would provide leaders for the Institute. We have just mentioned the names of some of these men of the highest calibre; we shall meet with others in the years that follow. Their activity was the promise of intellectual and religious enrichment for the Institute without danger of deviation or schism. Brother Sylvester's election seemed like the first symptom of the changes that were already present. The blow at the end of the century would only serve to hasten the movement; indeed, it shattered the primitive axis whose poles were Rheims and Rouen. And the center of gravity of the Congregation slipped toward the South.

* *

Immediately after the installation of the new Regime, the Capitulants were absorbed by their fruitful labors from the 11th to the 18th of August. They changed, codified and completed decisions of previous Chapters. Out of their meetings there issued some 91 resolutions, which would be recast later on by the Chapter of 1787.

Their concerns centered at great length on the training of young Brothers. They detailed the qualities required of postulants: A physical constitution and energy capable of supporting the demanding functions (of the Religious schoolteacher), a passable appearance, a capacity to learn and a good, solid, sociable attitude; great docility, Christian simplicity, a genuine disposition for piety, talent and affection for the education of youth, orthodox views and zeal for the salvation of souls and for the glory of God. These educators and psychologists of the era of Louis XVI had retained the antique ideal of the "upright man" whose fundamental virtues served as the foundations for a thoroughgoing Christian life. The articles having to do with the novitiate enter into details:...Care will be taken to discourage (in the novices) everything that smacks of repression, affectation and singularity. A stiff, studied or artificial appearance will not be tolerated in them; they must be accustomed to adopt an easy manner, simple, serene, open and upright, and yet reserved, having them understand that genuine virtue is neither unsociable nor giddy; and

[29] Ibid., loc.cit., pp. 412-5, following the Capitulary Register B and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April, 1937, pg. 133.
[30] In the broad sense, including Orleans

that, in order to be well-grounded and genuine, virtue must be principally built into the mind and heart, and not merely in appearances, which may be nothing but illusory.[31]

Attention should be directed toward the reformation of the "insincere", the "uneasy", "informers", the "peevish", the "opinionated" and the "oversensitive". Such candidates, unless they change, "are nuisances in the Community".

Professional preparation was added to the improvement of character and was considered no less important: Resistance must be put up to an excessive desire to teach, that some novices may have, through a too hasty zeal to devote themselves to the education of youth, for which they can be neither too much nor too long prepared, if they wish to be in a position to do it well. Even if there are charity schools in novitiate houses, the novices may not be employed in them (even for only a few days as substitutes), until after the first continuous year of probation is completed, including the day on which the habit is taken.

In order to make as rigorous a selection of candidates as possible and to pursue in depth the religious and educational formation of those who were selected, it would be necessary to slow down the opening of new schools to a crawl. The General Chapter determined upon a period of ten years during which no new schools would be accepted, save cases of absolute necessity. A thoughtless overextension of the Lasallian family would in fact divert it from the goal that its Founder had set for it: to be useful to souls, the Christian school didn't need makeshift "tutors", but schoolteachers who were sure of their vocation, tested and experienced in the direction of youth.

This was why it was necessary, once the financial means permitted it, to plan for "sabbatical leaves" in the teaching careers of those Brothers who had shown exceptional professional skill. The Superior-general "would assign them exclusively to studies" for a period of time, the length of which he would be the judge. The "student Brothers" would be brought together under the direction of competent specialists, in houses especially designed for this purpose. They would study mathematics, drawing, and all of the sciences "the knowledge of which was a benefit to the Institute and the public". In these words we have the announcement of those "higher scholasticates" that Brother Agathon was quick to set in motion.

This is as much as to say that the Chapter and the Regime had attached considerable importance to technical and residence schools. These institutions continued and completed De La Salle's educational work. More than ever their existence was justified, and their success became necessary as the reformation of studies was being demanded, and people sought to add to (if not indeed to replace altogether) the classical humanities a program in which the vernacular, the natural sciences and their application were given an important role.

But the Brothers must never forget that their residence schools, besides their unquestionable educational importance, had a very special purpose: far from damaging the progress of the tuition-free schools, the prosperity of these big institutions guaranteed the future of popular education. Indeed, profits from them were set aside for novitiates, homes for retired Brothers and for the Motherhouse. It was in this way that the Institute preserved its autonomy, expanded its recruitment, and fed and cared for its elderly Brothers who had spent themselves in the service of youth. Payments and the use of funds were arranged through a series of resolutions made in 1777. In this way, we learn of the relation between the two conditions to which a Brother with a rather broad education might be called indifferently and/or alternatively: i.e., a teacher in a primary school where he taught reading, writing, arithmetic and catechism, while occasionally adding some geometry, drawing or bookkeeping; or a professor in the commercial classes, or in courses preparatory to the merchant marine, in the residence schools where (as we shall see) was provided both elementary education and a kind of secondary instruction, which was an introduction to science and had a practical orientation.[32]

Along with this variety of tasks the Assembly brought an essential project to a successful issue: the revision and final editing of the "Rule of government of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools", to which they appended the Rule of the Director of novices.

The original manuscript, preserved in the Motherhouse,[33] at the end of its twenty-one chapters, bears the following declaration: “The General Chapter...convoked and assembled at Rheims in the course of April, 1777...having thought it necessary, for good administration, that there be an unvarying rule of general government of this Institute and that it be known by all the members that compose it, put on display and carefully examined the present text, which has been put into the order it now has, following

[31] Another article requires that "lessons in politeness" be given the novices once a week

[32] Motherhouse Archives, History and Decisions of General Chapters. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 415-8; Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April 1937, pp. 133-4.

[33] ACL 1 and 2, bound ins., small format, in-quarto.

consultations and counsels with various doctors of the Sorbonne and (doctors) of Canon Law...all the pages of which, to the number of forty-six (not including the Rule of the Director of novices) have been initialed by Brothers Aubin, Amand of Jesus and Pacifique, the clerks for that purpose...This Chapter, deciding and legislating that the said Rule must be followed and observed by the Superiors it has elected, and by their successors, further resolve that the Brothers read it and know it before being admitted to vows and that, to this end, the copies of it mentioned in the Register of Elections be made...In testimony whereof we have signed, at our house in Rheims, the 18th of August, 1777." There follow the thirty-two names of the Capitulants, including those of Brothers Florence and Exuperian.

Included in this Rule, which has continued to be the constitutional law of the Institute,[34] are texts that were known in 1718: the rule of the Brother Director of a house of the Institute, prescriptions regarding the habit,[35] and regarding the food the Brothers should eat. Chapter VII, entitled "The Qualities of a Superior" enables us to verify the borrowings made by De La Salle and his successors from the Society of Jesus. Some of these passages are nearly literal translations of St. Ignatius Loyola's "Constitutions".[36] Like the Jesuits' General, the Brothers' Superior should have a great union with God, through prayer, an upright intention in all things, in order to obtain an abundant share in His Graces and efficacy of the means he uses for good government...a perfect charity; a liberation from passions and immoderate affections, which he must mortify and master, for fear they might preoccupy or trouble his judgment and reason; firmness and gentleness...a kindness which sympathizes with the weaknesses of his inferiors...a loftiness of soul and courage...which enables him to undertake and pursue to their term things that are important without being dejected or discouraged by opposition, adversity of threats. He is) superior in everything everywhere...able to suffer all things, when it is a question of the glory of God and the advantage of the Congregation.

His prudence and his experience of the spiritual life will aid him in the discernment of consciences and inspire him "to give (appropriate) counsel to each person. He "begins things opportunely...wisely leads them to their end and completion". He has to have "good health, energy required for his responsibilities and an external appearance and propriety that inspire respect".

The end of paragraph 11 is article 10 of the 9th part of chapter ii of the Ignatian text:[37] While some of the qualities mentioned above may be wanting in him), he must never lack an exceptional integrity, a genuine love for the Society, a suitable capacity for his functions and a sound mind; if he has these things, the assistance of those who are associated with him in government can supply the rest.

It would be easy to find similar parallels between many other pages in the two Rules -- for example, between the eleventh chapter of the Brothers' Rule ("The dependence of the Brother Superior on the Institute and the duties of the Institute with regard to the Brother Superior"), and chapter four of the 9th part of the Constitutions ("*de auctoritate vel providentia quam Societas habere debet erga Praepositurn Generalem"*).

We are sufficiently informed (both by Canon Blain's remarks[38] and by an examination of the Bull of 1725) of the extent to which John Baptist de La Salle was influenced by St. Ignatius in the centralized organization of his small Society, as well as in the establishment of the Regime, the General Chapters, and the Directors of Communities. A superior elected for life, a Council that assisted him, an Assembly that legislated, total subordination in spiritual as well as in material affairs of individual institutions to the Motherhouse - all of these topics dealt with precisely and clearly in eight chapters of the Rule of Government are based upon principles and arranged logically according to the system of the Society of Jesus. The enemies of the Jesuits were not mistaken when they noted the resemblances between them and the Brothers. And, in 1777, four years after the Brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, which was practically extorted from Clement XIV by the Catholic kings, there was no one among the Capitulants in Rheims to object to the Founder's sympathy and admiration nor to seek elsewhere for the model of their legislation

[34] General Chapters in 101 and 1923 only added changes of details

[35] Only three changes need be noted: the "robe" and the "mantle" were lengthened "to near the shoes"; and the hat is only five-and-a-half inches wide instead of six. The rabats were shorter. See Vol. I, of the present work, pp. 451-455.

[36] 1 Constitutiones Societatis Jesu... according to the edition in effect, Rornae typis vaticanis, MDCCCCVIII.

[37] Nona Pars, Caput II, gualis esse debeat praepositus generalis.

[38] 1 Blain, Vol. II, pg. 134.

than the Code of "the Company" that was in temporary eclipse.[39] The error was to regard De La Salle's original creation as a substitute for the work of St. Ignatius: since ends and means differed as palpably as did men and milieu. While both groups were equally orthodox in doctrine, and while there existed some points of resemblance in spirituality (fewer than in the external form of the two societies), the independence of the Brothers from the Jesuits was total.

On the other hand, schools and Communities remained "under the authority of the bishops". The 1777 edition, chapter 6, art. 1 preserved the clear and quite adequate definition, which seems to have been superseded in the 1717 text following Archbishop Saulx-Tavannes' complaints.[40] As schoolteachers, the Brothers had to rely for their teaching upon the Ordinary of each diocese; as Religious, they had to seek approval and submit to the control of the hierarchy. As we have seen, ties between the "secular" ("lay", in the obvious sense of the term) Congregation and the Clergy, of which it was the obedient auxiliary, were many and close. The seventeenth chapter of the Rule of Government prescribed that the Brothers Visitor, when they inspected houses and classes, visit "as soon as possible the Lord Bishops of the episcopal cities", where there were schools of the Institute, as well as pastors of parishes and the Brothers' confessors.

Less compelling obligations, which, in some localities, could be nothing more than gestures of politeness, existed regarding the civil authorities. "Depending upon places and circumstances," the Superior-general's deputies were to visit "magistrates, benefactors and other...for the benefit of the schools". It was thus that, in its wisdom, the Chapter decided, which, on the other hand, did not fail to caution against "the spirit of the world" Brothers who were responsible for official and external relations and to remind them that, since they were first of all Religious, they must practice humility, discretion and "keep themselves in the presence of God" .[41]

This rather "monastic" character of the Brother, as De La Salle envisaged him, is clearly emphasized in the "Rule of the Brother Director of novices". Lucard says that its author was Brother Serapian, one of the members of the General Chapter, and Director of the Novitiate in Rouen. From those upon whom fell the obligation of forming a spiritual elite he demanded all the human and superhuman virtues. The Rule dwells especially upon the spirit of mental prayer, the spirit of mortification, the love of the Eucharist and an ardent and tireless charity. The novices, directed by a man of God, "in imitation of the first Christians" will have the most upright and open affection for one another, and will have "only one heart and one soul"; they will become "the pillars, the ornaments and the glory of the Institute", if they live the most vigorous interior lives, in conversation with heaven.

* *

To what extent was this ideal realized? As Blessed Brother Solomon was to write a few years later, the Institute "is supported as far as numbers go." "God grant", he adds, "that it is supported as to regularity!"[42] Entrants to St. Yon were on the increase: from 19 in 1770, they went to 34 in 1775; and at the end of that decade they had reached 45. During Brother Agathon's generalate the average was about 30 vocations. But their effective contribution was drastically reduced by defections, which frequently reduced personnel by half.[43] After 1775 the Register usually mentions the reason why a Brother left. It seems that for some of them, the reasons were something less than honorable: not only "a lack of talent" or "unsociable temperament" or insufficient piety ("Basically, a genuine skeptic", we read regarding one of those who left.) but there is indocility, lying, drinking and even "scandal and theft". Opposite some of the names are written the words: "Should never have been admitted". For Maréville, where we can account for only the last three years,[44] we observe that of eleven admissions between October and December, 1787,

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[39] See above, pg. 309.

[40] Chapter XIX of the Rule of Government: The qualities that a Director of a house of the Institute must have

[41] II, pg. 416.

[42] Motherhouse Archives R-2, letter no. 85, dated November, 1788 to Miss Rosalie Le Clercq; (quoted by Bishop Chassagnon, pg. 284) On the 22nd of September, 1788, Brother Solomon attended the vow ceremony at St. Yon: on that occasion six Brothers pronounced perpetual vows and twelve pronounced triennial vows. The letter-writer informs us that "the night before, in different houses, there were thirteen professions" and "that twenty-one Brothers made triennial vows". Finally, in Avignon "there were four professions and fifteen triennial vows".

[43] Eighteen out of twenty-nine in 1770; nineteen out of thirty four in 1775; seventeen out of twenty-eight in 1780; eighteen out of forty-five in 1785. The same proportion was observed in Avignon

[44] On page 293 of the present volume we pointed out that Register A was lost in a fire. Register B begins in October of 1787.

there were eight defections. Of the 25 postulants received in the course of 1788, 18 left more or less quickly, four of whom were simply "sent away" and another "took off". True, the time was the eve of the French Revolution; and there was the young Brother, whose name was "Leger" who withdrew because of "the events of the moment".

The few who remained were doubtless of very high quality. They resisted the temptations of period and sustained the test of a novitiate that was always severe. On the whole, they came from families in which the morality and the faith of the France of by-gone days had been preserved. The primary schools provided excellent recruits; and the residence schools sent some valuable candidates, as a rule members of the schools' thriving Marian Confraternities. We shall meet with these young people again in the special to which Brother Agathon's confidence would call them, and, thereafter, among the reorganizers of the Institute under the Consulate and the Empire. A religious Congregation which, in the disarray of 1792, would witness to its Roman faith and which, during the approaching persecution, would have its martyrs, was not, on the whole, composed of slack and lax people.

Nevertheless, the losses quite correctly troubled the superiors. There exists a report written in 1786 by Brother Pascal, Assistant, which he entitled, "Essay Concerning the Causes of the Defection of our Young Brothers and the Means of at least Partially Preventing them". The Same Means would make them more Useful to the Body of the Institute and to the Public in the Schools" .[45] The author explains the reasons that may be at the source of unstable vocations. "Some young men" come to the Institute some to find a better physical existence than.. in their families; others to guarantee the necessities of life in perpetuity...others, in emulation, to do what a relative or a neighbor has done; others mean to liberate themselves from manual labor, for which they lack the taste; others, out of giddiness or sheer caprice, wish to experience all sorts of situations without being too much concerned to stick to anything; and still others, who sometimes feel something of a taste for piety, think that it is enough to wear the habit of a Community in order to achieve consummate sanctity. And then there are the genuine vocations, and they need to be cultivated and supported. For the want of a competent gardener, who is prudent and careful, they wilt and fade away.

Brother Pascal does not deny that defective vocations can be reformed, and that those that are chancy...can be strengthened...Divine Providence uses everything to arrive at its merciful purposes...The power and action of Grace can turn'. (steps taken under) a purely natural (impulse) to the profit of souls.

Whether then we are talking about serious aspirations or "ambiguous" dispositions, the master of novices plays a central role. He cannot take too many measures to discover...the purpose for which a young man has entered the novitiate...He may even use the very weaknesses (of the candidate) to direct him toward what is good.

But if he is content to use "palliatives against the sickness of the spirit and heart", what happens is the following: Those who join us for...security in the beginning are comfortable and say that they are happy; they write to their relatives, which sometimes encourages new candidates whose calling is about as genuine as their precursors. These, however, learn by heart the method of mental prayer, the conditions of obedience and the practices of the spirit of faith...They fold their arms, seem to lower their eyes and perform the customary public penances. Their novitiate comes to an uneventful close, and their prognosis is neither good nor bad.

Then they are sent to a school; and quickly they experience the weariness that goes with the occupation, and, meanwhile, they produce scanty results. "They lose sight of the little practices of modesty and silence that they had picked up". They see that they are earning their bread in the sweat of their brow, and from then on, they begin to long for the days of their carefree youth. If they do not meet with a gifted Director who resumes their religious formation, nothing stays with them except idle thoughts. They take triennial vows in order to have the leisure to become accomplished in penmanship and arithmetic. The more their "meagre talent" grows, the greater does the temptation to take off become more pressing. "The love of freedom gets the upper hand, and the poor young man can no longer resist. He seeks his fortune elsewhere."

The progress of someone who simply wants to avoid manual labor is pretty much the same thing. Brother Pascal then goes on to apply the clarity and precision of his analysis to the more complex

[45] 1 Motherhouse Archives, HA p 5, a Ms. notebook of forty-six pages. The text is in the handwriting of a copyist. Only the following closing lines are in the handwriting of the author: Sent to dear Brother Prudence, Director of novices at St. Yon, by his servant, the undersigned, according to the desire of the said Brother Master of novices and as he has declared to the author of this brief manuscript. The little that we can say on a matter of such importance proves how much more there is to be said on this subject. Perhaps Providence will supply it. In the meanwhile, let us take advantage of what is useful. Melun, 6th of June, 1786. Signed Brother Paschal. (The same file contains a modern copy of this study)

mentality of the young Brother who dreams of achieving an easy sanctity: If such a candidate is not carefully watched, and if he not wisely guided, his devotion is soon exhausted by the effort of both head and heart that he makes in order to attain and retain those consolations that are so agreeable to beginners; and he ends up "with a distaste" for all sustained attention to mental prayer and the examination of conscience. He "will despair" of attaining his illusory goal. And he will aspire "only to save his soul". And the distance he places "between salvation and sanctity" will be filled with those satisfactions which he thinks can be conceded to "nature". It is in this same spirit that he faces his professional tasks. In his slackness, he will act on the authority of the example of some of his confreres who are excessively attached to the "human side" of life. Repelled by the "monotony" of school work and weighed down by its boredom and its inevitable trials, he concludes that he can find his paradise elsewhere and at less cost.

What remedies then can be adopted to purify and rectify the novices' intentions, set their "education" on unshakeable foundations and arm them against the enemy within as well as against the seductions of the world?

The young Brothers must first learn "to know themselves". Courses in psychology and morality should precede "courses in religious perfection". Novices should know "what man is", why ("as such") he has obligations toward God and his neighbor. They should be faced with the decalogue, with the "written law", and, while they are being reminded of the aberrations of human conscience, they should be led to proclaim with St. Paul that "this law does not provide the strength to accomplish the good"; and thus they will be putting their finger, so to speak, on the necessity for Grace.

At this point they will be ready to learn "the marvels of Redemption". By studying the life, and being inspired by the teachings, of Our Lord, they will form a precise notion of "justice and holiness". once one has gradually "disposed a soul to feel and to savor this divine doctrine", then, and only then, can one open the Gospels and the Imitation to it. Without planning or without preparation these books are closed to young men who still reek of the prejudices of the world.

Premature initiation is futile and it produces a dangerous intoxication. A disciple who, from the lower valleys, has been correctly guided to the upper plateaus, seizes fully upon what holiness must be -- a total "spiritual transformation", a life "that lives by the life of Christ", the condition of the soul which no longer judges nor acts except according to the judgment of the Man-God and in continuity with His action. "Everything else" -- all the "devotions you please" are "simply useless" unless "they tend to effect such an interior renovation".

Knowing themselves and knowing God, the novices will be in a position to understand the reason for the Rule and the value of Religious obedience. Henceforth, their daily works will have a "soul". Brother Paschal refers to the principles and practices of the Jesuits: For the novices of a well-known group (he writes) which no longer exists, there was no action in the course of the day that did not have a fixed spiritual purpose.

He advocated "another of St. Ignatius' practices": the particular examen to be made very seriously, "several times a week, during the 10:30 mental prayer". To direct one's intention and frequently to examine its tendency and results -- this is a task that is indispensable to the spiritual life. "The entire behavior of a young man" is orientated, coordinated, made tractable and animated by a movement that is free of suprises and serious interruptions. Vocal prayer, confession and Communion find their place in this system, while it guarantees balance and progress.

There are certain maxims which derive from this ascetical doctrine dispensed to the young:
1) We do not progress in piety except to the extent to which we do violence to ourselves;
2) We must be satisfied with the common, ordinary tasks...but we must perform them in a way that is neither common nor ordinary.
3) We must never do thing with greater perfection than when we are alone and God is the only witness to our work.

Novices "thus trained" would be on their guard against relaxation. No doubt, it would be necessary for the Brother Director in the school "to fortify" and "complete" the work of the master of novices. No matter how austere the Brother Assistant was for the majority of his subordinates, in this respect he was not without hope. And, with a prayer that God might produce this effect, he concluded his treatise.

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At the moment of the publication of Brother Paschal's treatise, Brother Agathon, along with a select few of his associates, had been for nine years engaged in cleansing the Institute of the dross of the world and in encouraging the clear, living flame which, among some Brothers, had been nearly snuffed out.

In 1772, Brother Florence, with great gentleness and circumspection, had exhorted "many of the Dear Brothers Director" to watch over the members of their Communities more closely, to respect the Rule and have it respected, especially as regards the study of catechism, the playing of cards during recreation, and the drawing up of an "horarium", which fixed the hours and places for Mass and the obligations of each Brother in the course of the day.[46]

His successor believed that, from the beginning of his own generalate, he was going to have to speak more firmly. His instructions were caste in the form of "circular letters", the most important of which, by a fortunate innovation, were printed. The first one is dated the 19th of October, 1777.[47] Conveying to the various Communities the resolutions of the recent Chapter, the letter "complies with the 92nd (resolution) by recalling both to the Directors and the members of their Communities the major disciplinary lines which "have suffered too many infractions". It alludes to the existence of routine and negligence in the exercises of piety, failures in the matter of rising in the morning and (as the inevitable consequence of this "laziness") the total or partial omission of mental prayer, which opens and orientates the daily activities. The arrangements for recreation continued to create problems; here and there, the advertisement of defects was no longer observed. The spirit of poverty itself was suffering eclipse: even among De La Salle's disciples there were to be seen those "little", "innocently gratifying" personal "possessions", a taste for which had spread into the monasteries of the 18th century. The restless pursuit of self-love was revealed in the frequent demand for changes. "Rather than reform oneself", people dragged "their boredom from one city to another".

The evil did not go very deep and remained curable, since a leader might denounce it in plain language and expect to be listened to and obeyed. Nevertheless, firmness, vigilance and perseverance were necessary. Brother Agathon was not a man to be easily discouraged. After a "serious illness" which (throughout the winter of 1777-78) prevented him from answering personally the Brothers' letters, he insisted, once his convalescence was over on the 21st of February, on taking up writing again, as he thanked the Brothers for the signs of their attachment and their prayers. He recommended simplicity of heart to them; he had received some letters in which there was "perceptible (he said) the laborious activity of a tortured imagination", pomposity and insipid praise. The style would be more natural if the mind were more trusting and humble.

The Brothers had to furnish information concerning those who aspired to temporal or perpetual vows. It was a delicate responsibility, which had to be discharged as something involving the future of the Congregation. "Soft indulgence" was to be avoided as well as "false zeal": "to introduce the wolf into the sheepfold" was "to make oneself culpable of lying to God, betraying our vocation and of doing an injustice to the public."'

The "Circulars" of the 28th of May, 1781 and of the 6th of March, 1782 [48] deal with the same subjects, while stressing the qualities of the genuine sons of an extraordinarily good, pious, austere and learned Founder. The second of these sketches a stinging portrait of the "worldly Brother", obviously far removed from the ideal realized by De La Salle and the venerable "early Brothers": He is careful...to have his hair well-groomed or preferably curled, his hat braided, blocked and narrow-brimmed; (he wears) thin-soled, light shoes, well-constructed; a handsome, short rabat, properly pressed and carefully fitted; a mantle open at the front or attached at the neck with a cord, so as to give him a certain elegance and allow the garment to trail carelessly behind; and there is a studied attention to hide the sleeves of the mantle or tuck them up, mimicking the manner of the priests' long cape.[49] Clearly, the Superior-general is here recalling the famous "Memoir on the Habit" and is adopting the language of the Holy Founder writing to Father Baudrand.[50]

However, it must be confessed that what was here at stake were mere externals, although they revealed a state of mind. In the "Circular" dated the 1st of January, 1784, entitled "First Instructional Letter of Brother Agathon, Superior-general of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Addressed to all the Brothers of the Institute".[51] It is a powerful brochure, the purpose of which is set forth in its preface: 1) to

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[46] Motherhouse Archives AAB a 1, Superiors-general's Circulars, Ms. Circular, dated the 12th of December, 1772

[47] Ibid., "printed by Claude Simon, Paris, Mathurins Street". (49) Motherhouse Archives, AAb a 1, Ms. Circular.

[48] Motherhouse Archives, AAb a 1, Ms. Circular.

[49] Ibid., circulars completely in the handwriting of the authors.

[50] See Vol. I of the present work, Part Two, Chap. IL

[51] National Library own a copy, in file D 88966

dissipate the biases that had arisen concerning the stability of the Congregation; 2) to correct or to anticipate carelessness in teaching; and 3) to forestall the least abuse that may have slipped into the practice of tuition-free education. We shall return to the second and third points when we study the administrative and educational work of this great superior.[52] Taken together, the first ten pages pertain to his preoccupations as the leader of a Religious Congregation. Influenced by some of the leading figures in the Parisian Faculty of Theology, these pages constitute a sound treatise on the vows. The author defines "the obligation of the vow" and shows that there is no measurable difference, whether of nature or extent or guarantee between simple and solemn vows; and that as a consequence the Brothers must regard themselves as absolutely settled in their Religious life and entertain the loftiest idea and the most profound respect for their vocation. Furthermore, they would be wrong in thinking that this stability is somehow independent of their own will and of the perseverance with which they should maintain the principles, characteristics and goals of their society.

As long as they shall preserve the spirit of their vocation, the Institute will survive for the glory of God. But even if it should have roots as strong and branches as powerful as the more illustrious Orders in the Church, "sooner or later it would fall into decay", if its members stopped being faithful to their duties.

The Superior exhorted the Brothers to understand carefully the close relation that binds the prosperity of the collectivity and the purity of personal consciences. He was aware of their love for the Institute: it gave him the most justifiable confidence. As for himself, he would have gladly died for the salvation of his Brothers.[53]

The same sort of instruction was sent on the 1st of the following August to the Communities in the southern province, and, once again, on the 1st of January, 1785, to the entire Lasallian family. These writings are a vigorous commentary on the Rule and are totally penetrated with "the spirit of God".[54] This teaching is also abundantly developed in a manuscript notebook of 94 pages, whose virile style, as well as the shrewd psychological comments, the similarities to general notices, the personal references to the "instructional letters on the vows" -- all easily reveal the identity of the author.[55] It is addressed "to a young Director who asked him for his advice concerning some important points". It is concerned with letters that are to be sent to the Superior-general, "reddition" and how this is to be distinguished from Sacramental Confession, the daily "Accusations", Recreation, and the Advertisements of defects. The "fifth counsel" concerning "the way of spending recreation properly" is especially delightful for its good sense, its humanity and its religious wisdom. It forbids untimely rebukes and enforced seriousness (one may "laugh sometimes", however, with "moderation"), formal discourses, inopportune refinements (recreation is no place for lyric poets), tiresome pedantry (there's no need to exhaust the topic of conversation; recreation is not a spiritual conference, but "everything there must happen easily, amiably, politely and joyously").

Such teachings were repeated, confirmed and adapted in Brother Agathon's personal correspondence. From among the letters that have escaped destruction we shall here quote from two which witness to his paternal solicitude and his unremitting grandeur of soul. The first, dated the 23rd of May, 1781, was written to Brother Solomon who was then at Maréville where he was pursuing higher studies. First of all, there was advice concerning intellectual advancement: "If you only touch lightly on things, you will never get very far." But the ideals of this very dear disciple were more ambitious, and the master encouraged him and fortified him on his way toward religious perfection: You are right in always regarding salvation as the principal objective...Through the end that we set ourselves everything can be made to cooperate. Difficulties that are met along the way should not surprise us. The suffering we undergo in doing good is a consequence of sin, something to be worked on, struggled with and a source of merit. Brother Solomon should not be anxious about being apparently distracted from the paths of spirituality by his attention to science: his will to obey and to fulfill the duties of his vocation bring him only closer to his goal. Studies engulfed him; but once he becomes master of his knowledge, he will feel liberated.[56]

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[52] See below

[53] "In view of the importance of (the) object of the present letter", it must be "read publicly in all the houses of the Institute every year, at least once, which shall occur during the first week of Lent."

[54] Circular of the 1st of August, 1784.

[55] Motherhouse Archives, BE y 5, Brother Agathon file. The document is that of a copyist and is incomplete.

[56] Motherhouse Archives, Brother Agathon file, letter in his own handwriting.

The second letter concerned a man no less intelligent, enterprising and skillful, but more worldly and of whose future the Superior was somewhat apprehensive. Brother Damian (Dominique Mamel), from the parish of St. Rock in Nancy, entered the novitiate on the 18th of January, 1771, in his 20th year; he was professed on the 22nd of September, 1781. In 1788 he went to take charge of a school recently opened in Bayeux. Brother Agathon wrote him on the 4th of May: "You will have a pleasant house, a yard and a beautiful garden...I shall not repeat what I told you in Dieppe, you cannot have forgotten it; besides, you can read in the Rule...the Chapter propositions, in my general notices...and in my Circulars and instructive letters all that you have to do. And here you are on the way to fulfilling the work which is the purpose of our Institute and to manifesting the maturity of your years. You shall have good Brothers with you; in that way, you will be happy, if you wish to be, and regularity will be completely observed in your house. Do not forget that...the reputation of the Brothers in Bayeux depends upon the way you begin. In particular, do not depart in any way from the rules of the Community. I hope that God fills you with every Grace that you need and that you will strive to merit them by a perfectly religious behavior."[57]

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In Brother Agathon's character and ideas there was neither narrowness nor routine. He was a leader who was aware of the needs of his time; he lived as he wrote, with freedom, vivacity, decisiveness and boldness. At the same time, there was no one more attached to tradition. His intent to hold on to things, to see to it that the past fully lived, gave his judgment, throughout the vicissitudes of the years preceding the French Revolution, a remarkable boldness. As De La Salle's heir and a most submissive son of the Church, the fifth Superior-general was what his great religious successors would continue to be -- a contemporary mind that refused to deny its origins in ancient France and whose faith was protection against transient entanglements and questionable philosophies.

What was always an object for meditation and imitation by the Superior's contemporaries was the teaching and example of the Founder and the behavior of the most distinguished and edifying members of the Lasallian Society. Agathon frequently adopted the language of Father Garreau as he described the life of the Brothers in 1692 gathered around their Founder in the heroic poverty of Vaugirard: "Brothers who read this book can say: ...this is the way we once lived. What a reason to rekindle our fervor, if we have had the misfortune to fall off from the fervor of our Fathers!"[58]

John Baptist de La Salle's canonization always remained a hope, probably a distant one, but constantly discussed. It may be, as Brother Lucard claims, that a misleading interpretation of one of Pope Urban VIII's decrees was responsible for postponing preliminary procedures for the introduction of the cause.[59] Since the delay of a half-century, which the Holy See had thought in principle strictly indispensable between the death of a "servant of God" and his canonization, had expired in 1769, there was nothing standing in the way of opening an investigation. And, in fact, beginning the following year, under orders from Brother Florence, writings were examined which, in addition to Father Blain's book, might be used both for a history and for the glorification of the future saint.[60] The work had not been completed when the events of 1789 interrupted it. Father Montis' book was a secondhand account.

However, Brother Agathon's vigilance preserved important memorabilia. A resolution, dated at St. Yon on June 1783 forbad the giving away or removal of objects belonging to De La Salle (priestly vestments or ornaments, penitential instruments, etc). A "small room" in the loft of the church at St. Yon held these relics under lock-and-key.[61] Later on we shall learn how they escaped the iconoclasts to return to the Institute's treasury once religious peace was restored.

The Founder's colleagues and successors were not doomed to neglect. In 1774, Father La Tour published his biography of Brother Irenée. Along with other writings by this priest from Montauban, the book was a gift that the Brother Superior made to friends and benefactors. Father Pichat, who preached a retreat at the Motherhouse in 1782 would accept no other honorarium except these books.[62] At the

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[57] Ibid., letter written by a secretary and signed by the Superior-general.

[58] Garreau, op.eit., pg. 248.

[59] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 445.

[60] Hem., ibid., pg. 446.

[61] 1 Motherhouse Archives, BE y 5, St. Yon permission notebook

[62] Ibid., HA m 18, Daybook, Melun, 23rd September, 1782

beginning of the same year Brother Agathon invited the various Communities of the three provinces to gather materials with the view of writing the lives of Brothers Timothy, Claude, Raymond and Adrien.[63] Assuming that these documents were assembled in due course, their loss must have been due to the turmoil that had so rapidly, and so unexpectedly, arisen.

Holiness never failed to move and attract the Christian Brothers, even when it shone in all its brilliance outside their own "circle". They were among the first to venerate the memory of Benedict Joseph Labre, the humble beggar who, in the midst of a pleasure-loving age, proclaimed the value of absolute poverty. Benedict Joseph died on the 16th of April, 1783, in Rome, under the roof of a hospital butcher, named Zaccarelli; and his remains received the honors of a genuine triumph in the church of Our Lady dei Monti. The Brothers' Community, which was located nearby, was evidently caught up in the enthusiasm of the Roman people. Very quickly the marvelous story of the vagrant crossed the Alps and delighted Christians everywhere, including the Brothers and especially Brother Solomon for whom Labre, the son of a Boulogne farmer, was a neighbor. The Motherhouse collected some "devotional objects associated with the servant of God". On the 21st of October, 1783, it was noted in the "Daybook" that, in this connection, 47 livres were owed to "the Madames of the Second Monastery of the Visitation in Rennes" and to a "Mlle de Cice".

A manuscript dating from 1776 and written by a Brother in the schools in Paris witnesses to the existence of the mystical and ascetical life among the better ones of De La Salle's disciples prior to the thrust supplied by "the Great Generalate". The author did not have to look very far afield for his title: it is nearly identical with the *opuscula* of 1711, *Collection of Various Short Religious Treatises.*[64] Its three parts are obviously inspired by the Founder's text: Exercise of the Holy Presence of God in order to sanctify one's actions. — Passages taken from Holy Scripture, which may assist the Brothers to perform all their acts in a spirit of faith. — Practices of Mortification in order to arrive at perfection in a brief time, which not injurious to health, but quite useful to holiness

The original Collection remained the Brothers' indispensable *vademecum*. The Superior-general undertook to publish a new edition. In this instance, he was betrayed by his excessively didactic spirit. He thought he had to introduce "more energy and clarity" into the book. He set up a plan which, by grouping the small volume's scattered "reflections" in a rational way, he reduced the thirty-two parts into which it had been arbitrarily divided to nine chapters. He changed a number of passages and developed certain themes that were only summarily suggested in the original. What had been a simple "Collection" became a "treatise" properly so-called. "*Treatises on the Obligations of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*" was the title selected for this publication, which appeared in 1783. The intention was a good one: it sought to present old and immutable truths in a new form and to write the most practical text to conform with the needs and the tastes of a generation that had absorbed a critical spirit. But the original text, which was an historical document and the legacy of a saint, deserved greater respect. The filial piety of the oldest and the most delicately scrupulous Brothers expressed such understandable sorrow that in the following century the 1711 edition was restored to its place of honor.[65]

It was nonetheless true that everywhere and always the direct line with the Founder was sought out and maintained or re-established. In this connection, we quote the approval given by Brother Agathon on the 10th of April, 1782, to the "Coutumier of St. Yon":...Several articles do not agree with those of the ordinary schools...nor even, in regard to some matters, with the Common Rule: but.. since they were presumably established by our Founder, De La Salle, and preserved by our predecessors, certainly for reasons of a greater good, convenience and propriety and in consideration of this sort of school, (they) deserve that we do not depart from them...[66]

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[63] 3 Ibid., AAB a 1, handwritten circular for the 6th of March, 1782. Brother Adrien (John Frere) had been Visitor in Avignon (see above, pg. 382). He had just died in Arles on the 28th of October, 1781, at the age of seventy-seven.

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[64] The document is deposited in the Motherhouse Archives. The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes mentions it in its issue for April, 1911.

[65] Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 521-3; and Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for April, 1937, pp. 142-3.

[66] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 5, St. Yon Coutumier.

In its prescriptions regarding the Liturgy this *Coutumier* is particularly noteworthy. It reveals the intensely religious life of a large Community of Brothers, a piety genuinely Catholic and inspired by the most orthodox teachings, bringing together in corporate prayer the enthusiasm of each individual, refreshing themselves and advancing within the Church's cycles and rhythms: The Sunday after the Octave of the Feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament the Feast of the Sacred Heart is solemnly celebrated to the sound of "the big bell", with "doubled" antiphons, and Benediction after Vespers accompanied by bright lights around the "Ostensorium". Besides being one of the most beautiful Marian feasts, the Assumption was especially significant for the Brothers, because it commemorated the date of the reception of the Bull *In Apostolicae dignitatis solio* and the profession of vows by the Capitualants of 1725: "Communion is received and the Te Deum is sung" in thanksgiving. The Feasts of St. Louis and St. Michael were the occasions for more fervent prayers for "the king and the royal family", while the reception of the first "Letters Patent" were also recalled. There was a great day for St. Joseph at St. Yon, not, following the custom at Rouen, on December the 12th, but, "conforming to the Roman Breviary", on the 19th of March.

December the 8th was especially the day on which the religious joy of the Brothers burst forth. On that day, as at Easter, "everything lovely" was placed on the altar; they obtained permission to "expose" the Blessed Sacrament; and they received Holy Communion during the entire Octave. How could they forget that their devotion to the Immaculate Conception had triumphed over the obstacles of 1721-24, with the legal recognition of the Institute? Another of their solemnities, the 15th of December, commemorated the anniversary of the day when their principle novitiate was placed under the patronage of the Most Blessed Virgin: the novices prayed before a statue erected by Brother Irenée; and the entire Community recited the formula of consecration composed by him, which declared "the Most Blessed Virgin the first Superior of the Society and of the house, after her Son...the first Mistress of the Novitiate".[67]

On many of these feasts the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the church was an "immemorial" tradition. It was the responsibility of the Brother Director of novices to alert the Brothers, both professed and non-professed, for their assigned turns "to stand watch".[68]

Eucharistic and Marian, the Faith of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools continued to live by its Roman roots. Brother Agathon, informing Pius VI of his election on the 29th of October, 1777, declared his "obedience" and his "inviolable adherence to the Holy See"; he besought the Holy Father to "continue his kindness" to the entire "small Congregation" and in particular "to the poor school in Rome".[69] In his Circular of the 21st of February, 1778, Brother Agathon recalls "the complete submission the Institute has always had" to the Head of the Church, "and from which, with the help of God, it will never depart"; he was happy to declare "the esteem" that the Pontiff exhibited for the Brothers and to notice the paternal welcome and generosity he extended to the Community at *Trinita dei Monti*.

He had wanted Pius VI to grant a plenary indulgence on the occasion of the centenary of the founding of the Institute. The Indulgence would have been gained in all the chapels of the houses of the Institute. However, the Pope thought it would be better to wait until the year 1835, the date which would commemorate the first century of the Institute as canonically approved.4 On the 19th of January, however, an equally abundant Grace was lavished on all the faithful who, having gone to confession and communion, said a prayer in the church of St. Yon on the Sunday within the Octave of Corpus Christi and on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Brothers also obtained the same indulgence for the 24th of June, the Feast of St. John the Baptist, their Founder's patron saint.[70]

In exchange, the Brothers were eager to yield to the exhortations of Pius VI, who, on several occasions, asked for their moral support "in the difficulties of his apostolic responsibilities". The Superior-

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[66]. Motherhouse Archives, HA m 5, St. Yon Coutumier.

[67] See above,

[68] Motherhouse Archives, St. Yon permission notebook.

[69] Archives of the Brother Procurator to the Holy See, I, 13.

[70] According to Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 447-8. The favor was probably sought in 1781 by Brother Louis Augustus, at the time Directorof the Community at Trinita dei Monti. 1 Collection of Bulls, Briefs and Rescripts granted by the Holy See to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Versailles, Lebon printer, 1891.

general transmitted these "affectionate" requests from Rome to the Brothers. At the beginning of each year he sent New Year's wishes which touched the Holy Father's heart and increased his kindness toward the "pious Institute", and his determination to improve the living conditions of the teachers who taught young boys in his territories.[71]

The times were fast approaching when the Sovereign Pontiff would possess the most convincing proofs of the Brothers' heroic, religious fidelity and when he would intervene in order to snatch St. John Baptist de La Salle's work from extinction and protect the tiny breath of life, the humble spark, whence would blaze forth new and innumerable instances of dedication.

[71] 2 Brother Agathon's Circular of the 9th of March, 1782; letters Pius VI to Brother Agathon, on the 7th of the Kalends of February, 1785 and the 10th of the Kalends of February 1788 (published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January, 1913).

CHAPTER TWO

The Administrative Task

As the Superior-general of a lay Congregation known throughout France and inevitably involved in temporal affairs, Brother Agathon found himself obliged to combine with his concerns as a religious leader the powerful and tireless activity of an administrator. At the beginning of his term of office he had to seek out and provide decisive solutions to problems which had been raised over the years and concerning which his investigation and personal concern were implicated even before he assumed his role as head of the Congregation. The Edict of 1749 called into question the legality of acquisitions made or about to be made through the "Letters Patent" particular to each school. The problem was principally one of stabilizing the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools over the immense territory in which the Parlement of Paris exercised its judicial powers and controls. If the higher officials headquartered in Paris were ultimately to decide, not only to tolerate but to approve of the Brothers, who for so long been regarded with suspicion, frustrated in their demands and sacrificed to their adversaries, the future would seem to be assured. The provincial Parlements that were least favourable to De La Salle's work would no longer find in the attitudes of their more influential colleagues encouragement for their severity.

Furthermore, total legal recognition would have the effect of fixing the geographical center of the Institute. Since Brother Florence left Rouen in 177, the residence of the major Superiors was annoyingly precarious. The Holy Spirit House on the Rue Nueve did not offer the conditions required for a general headquarters: the extreme lack of space was an obstacle to a convenient establishment, independently of the local Community and of the general services, of the convocation of General Chapters and to the creation (even in the absence of a novitiate) of educational and scientific courses, the need for which was being increasingly felt by some of the young Brothers: it lacked the space and quiet so precious to religious life, for the teachers' annual retreats and for the deliberations of the Superiors. A return to Normandy was not contemplated: even though the attitudes of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities might have changed, St. Yon was still too far removed from the eastern and southern provinces. Agreement had been reached to select a cite, if not in Paris itself, at least in the neighborhood of the capital, for convenient gathering, a place which would facilitate both relations of the Regime with all the schools in France and the transactions it had to pursue with the royal government, with the officials of the judiciary and with the Bishops, who were so frequently detained by personal or diocesan business at the Court in Versailles. Although the 1777 Chapter had been convoked at Rheims, this city did not ultimately lend itself to the best hopes of the disciples of its illustrious son. It was agreed on all sides that what was wanted was a broad, quiet, permanent estate, where the Superior and his Assistants might preside over the destinies of the entire Lasallian family; and where, besides, the western province could assemble retreatants, students and retired Brothers, just as the southern province assembled its own at Avignon, and as the eastern province did at Maréville. In 1774 Brother Florence had set his heart on a town near Paris, less expensive than a Parisian headquarters, while having easy land and water access to the royal capital: it would be left to Brother Agathon to bring this most important matter to a successful issue, and, at Melun, to inaugurate the Motherhouse, the haven of grace, where, after so many tribulations (had not unimaginable storms overtaken it) the barque of the Institute would have ridden securely at anchor.

On the bridge the captain toiled relentlessly. To all points he transmitted his orders, never hesitating, should the case arise, to move around personally in order to be exactly understood. The fundamental law of the Christian Brothers must never be impaired: none of them was stricter than the law of gratuity, since it was bound up with the very vows of the teaching Brothers as defined by the Bull of 1725. But some cities, for financial reasons, misconstrued the rule and urged the Brothers to violate it or circumvent it. What more simple and, in appearance, more legitimate than to alleviate the expenses of a Commune by obligating the heads of families to contribute to the costs of educating their sons? But in that case popular education would be missing the goal assigned to it by De La Salle. Among those who benefited from it there would be distinctions and differences. Could the Brothers let themselves be confused with tutors who taught reading and grammar for a fee? Commitment to the Founder's principles was enough to justify Brother Agathon's intransigence, even if he were not obliged to pronounce, in the light of his vow and in the absence of any permission from the Holy See, the most formal sort of "*non possumus*".

In the face of this truth, secondary considerations vanished. The Brothers would rather be reduced to "bread and water" than to live at the expense of their pupils in the primary schools. However, where

necessities were wanting, their Superior could not allow them to die of hunger. And so it was with sadness that he saw pretty nearly absolute destitution threatening many of the more modest Communities. These were the ones which, in the course of the century,[1] had experienced many a horror story. The income from endowments had remained at the same level for fifty or sixty years, while the cost of food, clothing and housing had continued to rise. To requests for readjustments, proposed and repeated by former superiors of the Institute, the bodies responsible for the maintenance of plants and teachers lent a deaf ear or responded grudgingly. Distressful discussions upset the lives of those who wished to do nothing more than to serve God and Christian youth. We have already described some of these conversations. To repeat them all would tax the attention of the most patient reader, and, even more, would distort historical perspective by giving prominence to the most untoward, rather than the more constructive, incidents. But after 1777 the time had come for auditing accounts and for radical solutions. Either the Brothers had to receive the income they needed or the schools would have to be closed. There was little danger that the Brothers would be banished into idleness; there were enough bishops and city councils seeking their services to give employment to all available workers.

These, briefly, were the principal problems to which Brother Agathon would have to apply his clear sightedness, his determination, his logical mind and his knowledge of men and the law. It took twelve years to realize the program. The Revolution would destroy the well-planned, well-constructed edifice, adequately equipped and arranged in such a way that there was room and support for future additions. But it would not succeed in upsetting the plan nor in undermining its foundations.

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A plan to transfer the school in Angers was the beginning of a process which, not without delays and obstacles, ended in the legal recognition of the Institute within the jurisdiction of the Parlement of Paris. We have to go back to the period during which Brother Agathon directed "St. Joseph's House of Providence", an old institution in the Faubourg Lesviere. It had been badly suited to its purpose. Set upon a hillside and along a bank of the River Maine, it was too small, and it lacked room to expand. The residents in its reformatory lived in unhealthy quarters; and, what is more, their facilities gave easy access to the free resident pupils. It is superfluous to dwell on the serious inconveniences that such a proximity involved both for order and discipline. The Brothers were so discouraged that they declared that they "could not satisfy the demands of the government" and they contemplated closing down their residence school. Bishop de Grasse of Angers-a good administrator, although he left something to be desired in his conduct, teaching and the assiduity with which he fulfilled his episcopal ministry[2] -- refused to allow his diocese to be deprived of such a useful auxiliary. He informed Maupeou, who thought that the question was of sufficient importance to be examined by the Privy Council. The Chancellor then wrote to the Director of St. Joseph's school: Since the king is satisfied with your services, choose a site. His Majesty will grant you "Letters Patent". Do not reject his kindness.[3] He also informed Brother Florence that such a refusal would involve bitter consequences for the Institute.[4]

The "site" had already been found. It belonged to the bishop, who was only asking to get rid of it. It was the "Rossignolerie", the situation of which we shall describe in a future chapter, along with the uninspired use to which it had been put in 1771 and its marvelous transformation in the hands of Brother Agathon and his successors in Angers. Before "Letters Patent" would give the Brothers the right to acquire it, it was necessary to extract an agreement out of the City Council. The middle-class in Angers had shown something more than distrust over the years for the men whom they called the "Ignorantins". In 1763, when the Intendant had urged the Council to cede a piece of land in the middle of town to the Christian Brothers, he received the following reply: The Brothers entered Angers without the consent of the Mayor or the supervisors. Their institution is prejudicial to the good of the city. And when the city officials were called upon to provide some details, they alleged that the pupils of those fellows "were nothing but the

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1 In some places, in order to get income, the Brothers "waked" the dead -- an abuse which the Superiors stamped out.

2 Concerning Bishop James de Grasse, see Sicard, op. cit., pp. 83, 296-7, and 604.

3 National Archives, L. 963. Report to the king (undated, probably written in 1777); cf. Lucard Annales, Vol. II, pp. 396-8.

4 Brother Exuperian's letter of the 23rd of May, 1774, to Sutaine-Maillefer.

children of the dregs of the population" and that because of the racket the kids made they had "occasioned the death" of a certain M. Jominiere, "whose horse they frightened" at the entrance to the riding academy![5]

The sentiments of these gentlemen remained unchanged when Brother Agathon, in February 1771, as a preliminary to the "Letters Patent", sought for his Community admission to the list of religious establishments enjoying the privileges of the city, or, more or less, a certification of good conduct. "The Assembly, having read the resolution...of April, 1763" decided "that its duty was to oppose 'Letters Patent'...as well as any acquisitions" that the Brothers might have in mind, and, "for any certification, to issue" to them "a copy" of this refusal.[6]

But the intentions of the royal government were too clear for the Angevins to be obstinate in their opposition. In the next three years they made a complete turnabout: not only had they to recognize that it was important for the Brothers to take over the "Rossignolerie"; but they went so far as to require the services of two Brothers for "the children of the parishes of the city"; and this became the condition (in the language of the letter addressed by the Mayor to Brother Agathon on the 19th of July, 1774) they stipulated for finally giving their consent to the procedures for the "Letters Patent" .[7]

Confident in the king's support, the Superiors of the Institute in concert with the Bishop had already drawn up the papers which would assure them ownership of the estate (23rd of March, 1773). And the "Letters Patent" of December 1774, signed by the new monarch, approved of this contract.[8]

But it was nothing but a fortunate first stroke, and difficulties were lying ahead. When Louis XVI's decision was presented for registration with the Parlement of Paris, the Procurator-general questioned "the legal existence" of the Congregation in the kingdom. The Brothers added to the second the Bull and the "Letters Patent" registered in Rouen fifty years earlier. The response they received was that these documents were invalid within the Court's jurisdiction.[9] They turned once more to the king, who, in the year of grace 1775 "and of his reign the second", and referring to the acts of his predecessor, declared that he confirmed them and extended them from Normandy to the entire region placed under the jurisdiction of his "beloved and faithful servants, the people serving in his Court in the Parlement of Paris".[10]

It would indeed be a misconstruction of the attitude of the "beloved and faithful" judges if one were to imagine that they concurred without argument in the "wishes" of their prince. They had become intoxicated with their recent success. Having been fired in January of 1771 by Maupeou, they had just been reinstated by the young king who was following the unwise advice of Maurepas. They had set themselves up as the defenders of civil liberties and as the heroic victims of persecution who had been finally vindicated.[11] They thought of nothing so much as to restore their privileges, of fully exercising their "right of censure" and of making their power felt among people whom they perceived as unfriendly.

The Christian Brothers had undertaken the business in Angers under urgent orders from Maupeou. This was one of its less fetching features in the eyes of the judges. And we are familiar with the prejudices of Rolland Erceville and his associates against the Institute.[12] During the final phases of the negotiations, the Rheims lawyer Sutaine-Maillefer visited Father Espagnac, who was the ecclesiastical adviser in charge of the report. At the end of the interview the priest wrote that Parlement had sifted the Bull of 1725 and had discovered "abuses" in it; further, the Brothers "displeased the gentlemen (of the Court); in the past they had been useful to the Jesuits"; some of them were thought to have expressed opinions in opposition to the exiles of 1771 (a capital offense!). Sutaine added that, without himself being bitter about the Brothers who were suspected of having boycotted the negotiations (since, as matters went, Rheims was as much involved as Angers), he pleaded the Congregation's cause before the chairman, praised the Brothers' "method" -- "simple and sufficient for instructing the common people" -- and testified that it was impossible for them

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[5] Deliberations of the 15th of April, 1763, Ibid.

[6] Deliberations of the 15th of February, 1771, Ibid.

[7] Municipal Archives of Angers, BB, 126, fol. 124

[8] See above Part III, chap. v.

[9] Copy of these documents inserted in Historigne des Maison d'Anjon et de Bretagne

[10] National Archives, L, 963, report cited.

[11] Ibid., confirmatory "Letters Patent" of August, 1775, copy verified by Mirbeck.

[12] Arnould, op. cit., pp. 135-37

(since they did not receive Holy Orders, and Latin was forbidden to them) to become "as powerful as the Jesuits" .[13]

At the end of 1775 Brother Florence obtained a hearing and support from the Keeper of the Seal, Hue Miromesnil, the former First President of the Parlement of Normandy. However, the Procurator-general did not agree to request the registration of the new "Letters Patent". He was satisfied to point out the formal errors in their composition, which, in his opinion, rendered them void: 1) they assumed that the Brothers were established in Angers, which, juridically, was not the case; 2) they mentioned St. Yon, but the Parlement of Paris had no official knowledge of such a place; and 3) they alluded to "bulls, rules and constitutions", which had never been submitted to the Court's scrutiny.[14]

Everything had to be begun over again. The officials demanded an "historical and detailed description" of all the petitioners' institutions within the jurisdiction of the Parlement. That was done. A resumé of the work achieved through "the zeal and piety of De La Salle...under the authority of the bishops", and, since, his death, by his followers, "in a great number of cities throughout the realm" headed the list of thirty-eight foundations opened in the Ile-de-France, Picardy, Champagne, Orleans, Berry, Bourbonnais and Anjou.[15] Meanwhile, the new draft of the "Letters Patent" took into account the Procurator-general's criticisms: it made no reference to the Papal Bull nor to the Institute's Constitutions. On the contrary, the document emphasized the role played by "the bishops, pastors and city officials" in the foundation of tuition-free schools. It stipulated that everywhere the teachers must be granted the necessary approbation and approval: the Institute was not to be disassociated from the French church as represented by the hierarchy, chapters and pastors of parishes, nor from civil authority exercised by "the principal officers of the bailiwicks and seneschals" and the "city officials", nor from the school system, regulated by all "those who might have the right of jurisdiction" over schools opened to the very young. Thus, every sort of appeasement was offered to allay the sensibilities of the jurists.

The problem was no longer exclusively that of the Community in Angers. Its existence would be regularized along with the houses in Paris, Rheims, Orleans, Chartres and Bourges. The recognition being sought would have general validity and retroactive power, since all institutions were to be authorized and "all purchases" of property and income were intended to receive "their full and total effect", regardless of the Edict of 1749. In Paris and in provinces dependent upon the same Court of Justice, the Brothers (as in Normandy) "would enjoy all civil and ordinary rights which legally established bodies and Communities enjoy".[16]

Could the good will and the docility of the "petitioners" be doubted? "The Procurator-general has not proposed any other conditions for his approval apart from those we have just mentioned": the Institute fancied, then, that there were no longer "any obstacles in its way". And it was crucial in the highest degree for it that the matter not drag on any further: the lumber bought for the "Rossignolerie" was in danger of "rotting away", if it were not quickly put to use. Similarly, there was an urgent need to shore up and furnish the "ancient and dilapidated" property of the Ursulines in Melun purchased (as we shall presently describe) in conformity with the royal authorization; and it, too, was in the process of being registered.[17]

Haste, then, was of the essence, and Louis XVI's ministers knew it. The Secretary of State, Amelot, to whom Brother Florence had entrusted the idea of the "Letters Patent" once the plan had been finalized, received an invitation from the Keeper of the Seal, Miromesnil, on the 7th of March, 1777, to send the document "as quickly as possible".[18] Three days later the Superior was in possession of the "Letters" signed by the king.[19]

But more than fourteen months would pass before the Parlement decided to register them. Gallican and Jansenist hostilities (precisely those alluded to by Sutaine-Maillefer) continued to take their toll. Meanwhile, there was Brother Florence's resignation and the election of Brother Agathon. The new Superior had been in on the beginnings of this undertaking and had followed its labyrinthian turnings from

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[13] .Cf. above third part of chapter 3

[14] Arnould

[15] Ibid.

[16] National Archives L, 963, report cited.

[17] Ibid., loc. cit., draft of "Letters Patent".

[18] Ibid., report cited

[19] Ibid., copy of a letter to "Bishop Amelot".

both Angers and from Paris. He would have the distinction of effecting its conclusion and the pleasure of hailing its splendid outcome.

The decree of the Parlement of Paris, which gave executive force to the decision of March 1777, bears the date of the 26th of May, 1778.[20] The Brother Superior was obliged to set in motion influences in official circles over which he had control. Even then he was unable to avoid a number of restrictions that were introduced at the last moment. The magistrates demanded that the instruction given in the Institute's schools be reduced to reading, writing and calculating, while they excluded from the program every "language" and every "other science". They would not permit the presence of resident pupils except in institutions that also included a reformatory.[21] In practice, these irritating restrictions proved inoperative.

The essential was achieved. Crowning the work of his predecessors, Brother Agathon had liberated the Institute from the tight leash to which it had been tethered by the Edict of 1749 and from the tyranny already suffered and ever to be feared in the cities in which the Brothers' legal status had been poorly defined. The documents of 1777-78 constituted a charter that was even more precious than the initial approval in 1724. At a time when the ancient religious orders were declining and disappearing, the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle had become a corporation of acknowledged public utility, well situated and breathing easily in most of the realm.

Henceforth the schools in the "western province" enjoyed the protection of the law. Of course, the Brothers could not open new ones without getting founding documents confirmed by the Court of Justice.[22] But they would always be able to invoke the very generous arrangements of the "Letters Patent", which proclaimed their "settled existence" and bestowed upon them the most extensive "civil rights", while recognizing their work at its full religious and social value.

The decisions of King Stanislaus had guaranteed the security of the "eastern province", centered in Maréville. In this connection, nothing had changed since the annexation of Lorraine by France.

Avignon, the headquarters in the south, lived placidly under the croziers of vice-legates and archbishops. There, in 1784, Brother Agathon convoked the final provincial chapter. Outside of the Papal Territory the Brothers' schools took advantage of a variety of legal statutes. There had been the granting of special "Letters Patent", in particular, for Montpellier in 1754 and for Marseille in 1757.[23] Only the Parlement of Toulouse would register a more general regulation, which occurred in January, 1778. At the outset of this affair, there was a desire to crush a dangerous offensive directed against the Brothers in Nimes: a piece of property acquired in 1759 by Brother Zacheus was, after ten years, reclaimed by its former owner, a M. Caumette, who, in order to regain his property, adduced the legal incompetence of the Community in Nimes, and, as a consequence, the invalidity of the contract of sale. The procurement of royal letters seemed the surest way of saving a school for which the Institute had paid cold cash. Indeed, the steps undertaken in this instance lead to the same results as those occasioned by the purchase of the "Rossignolerie" in the western province. The Superiors managed both of them in the same way and with equal success. Actually, the Parlement of Toulouse turned out to be much less difficult to please than the Parlement in Paris; on the 11th of March, 1778, it ratified, without restrictions, a declaration of legal recognition for the twenty-two institutions the Brothers operated within its jurisdiction, and furthermore, it regularized the contract made with Caumette.[24]

After these prolonged negotiations, so many difficulties and such a happy result, Brother Agathon could give full vent to his joy. On emerging from such a thicket, how not thank heaven and the king in lyric terms?

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[20] Ibid., original letter

[21] Ibid., Date of delivery, "10th of March, 1777", on the Brothers' petition. The copy of the "Letters Patent", in box S 7046-47 in the Archives, is identical with the draft.

[22] Motherhouse Archives, Hb t 1, Histoire de l'administration de la Maison de Nimes and HBs 28-8 Historique de la province meridionale; cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 392-4 and 423-5.

[23] Motherhouse Archives, Hb s 28-8, Historique de la province meridionale and HB t 38, Historique de la maison de Marseille. See below, pp. 559 and 563.

[24] Motherhouse Archives, Hb t 1, Histoire de l'administration de la Maison de Nimes and HBs 28-8 Historique de la province meridionale; cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 392-4 and 423-5.

How good is the God of Israel, my very dear Brothers, to those of upright heart! How good He is to those who serve Him and place all their hopes in Him! So wrote the Superior-general in his Circular of the 28th of May, 1778.

For nearly two years the registering of the "Letters Patent" of our Institute in the Parlement of Paris has excited our concern and your own. Divine Providence, by its most marvelous protection...after having first obtaining our registration in the Parlement of Toulouse, has finally crowned our work...

It was fitting that to their prayers of thanksgiving the Brothers should add prayers for the king, and for the people in high places whose diligence had proved productive. It was fitting that their gratitude redouble their zeal and that their teaching raise up for the Church and the State a band of faithful servants .[25]

* *

If circumstances were right, the Regime's move to new headquarters would depend only upon the completion of the work of reconstruction. In 1778 the Brothers had been looking longingly toward Melun for five years.

On the 15th of November, 1773, the municipal authorities in that city wrote Brother Florence to ask him to send two Brothers to open a primary school. On the following day a letter from Cardinal d'Albert de Luynes, Archbishop of Sens, supported the request from Melun, which was in his diocese. Why, after the lapse of half-a-century, did the people in Melun follow the example of their neighbors in Meaux? Primarily, because they were complying with a royal order.

Cardinal de Luynes, a prelate of irenic character and calm disposition, but, still, with a will that was firm in the fulfillment of his duty,[26] on the 24th of May, 1772, closed an Ursuline convent in which Jansenism had given rise to discord and rebellion. Concurring in the Archbishop's decision, the government awarded the nuns' property to St.Nicholas Hospital, while making the administrators of this institution responsible for the setting aside of 600 livres of annual income toward the support of a school: the teachers were to be appointed by the Mayor and the Supervisors. And the Christian Brothers happened to lead the list of those recommended to the city officials.

The former reception rooms in the Chatelet were selected as classrooms; and a small house, situated near the Hospital, seemed a suitable place to lodge the Brothers. Brother Exuperian rented it after having come to an agreement with the city. But this was only the beginning of an operation that was to take on quite different dimensions.

The monastery buildings remained empty. Archbishop de Luynes received authorization to sell them. Would they not provide a headquarters for the Superior of the Institute? At the same time, negotiations with the City of Rheims had been dragging on. At an opportune moment, Melun became an alternative site.

Both parties entered into an agreement at the Cardinal's residence in Paris on the 18th of August, 1774. While waiting for the "Letters Patent" that were required for any acquisition of property, Brother Florence and his Assistants signed a lease in return for a rent of 1,000 livres to be paid to St. Nicholas Hospital and 233 livres *in quit rent* to various persons having claims. The tuition-free school probably opened in September.

The Regime was not yet ready to move into the "houses, courts, gardens and cloistral areas" of the "former Ursuline convent". The lease was nothing more, in this instance, than a way of preparing for the future. The repairs that would make the place habitable and suited to its new purpose promised to be too great to undertake in the course of a temporary occupancy.

True, the "Letters Patent" had been rather rapidly drafted. And Louis XVI had signed them in November of 1775. But their recording was to be subjected to the delays that we have already described. Brother Florence, as Superior, never crossed the threshold of the house, which, named for the "Holy Child Jesus", would express the Congregation's devotion and its initial relations with Father Barré's religious Community.

As in so many other instances, at Melun it was Brother Agathon who got things done. He adopted the path that had already been traced out, and he joined his efforts to the action of those who had preceded him. When he resumed the interrupted project, he did so with such a clear notion, with such a precise

[25] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 426-7, according to the copy of manuscript from the St. Ambrose Community and included in the manuscripts of the municipal library of Avignon.

[26] Sicard, op. cit., pg. 544.

program and with such a vigorous spirit that the whole idea seemed to have been his from the beginning; and that once the work was finally completed it certainly seemed to be nobody's but his own.

The royal authorization of November, 1775 was registered immediately after the "Letters Patent" of March, 1777 -- on the 3rd of June, 1778. On the 6th of July the Institute became the legal owners of the former Ursuline convent. On the same day, the Superior-general, who had signed the deed of ownership, payed an instalment of 8,000 livres to Cardinal de Luynes' attorney. The total cost (20,000 livres) was rather modest, but that figure represented only a part of the capital to be invested in construction and remodelling. Once again, the resident schools contributed hugely to the purchase: there is no figure for St. Yon, which was doubtless generous (since the Director had received the advice of his council to be generous); Nantes gave 5,000 livres and St. Omer 15,000. Even Marseille, although it had been subsidizing the novitiate in Avignon, wanted to cooperate in the setting up of the new Motherhouse. The account-book at Melun preserves at least one proof of Marseille's assistance: on the 1st of February, 1781, there was a gift of 628 livres sent by Brother Macarius, "Director of the resident school in Marseille", in a Cayenne banknote, payable by the Treasurer -general of the Colonies.[27]

The Archbishop of Sens quite graciously granted his permission for a chapel in the Holy Child Jesus House. His friendship for the Institute was unfailing: two of Brother Solomon's letters[28] mention the very cordial visits that Archbishop de Luynes paid to the Superior, who had become a member of his diocese. Certain of support from this quarter, Brother Agathon overcame certain ecclesial difficulties, similar to the ones that De La Salle and Brother Timothy had encountered earlier at St. Yon. The problem revolved around the rights that the pastor of St. Ambrose parish, and the chapter of which this priest was a part, could exercise with regard to the Brothers' institution. After a rather long controversy, the matter was finally settled amicably.[29]

The Regime moved into the estate toward the end of 1780. It was a vast, placid residence, situated between the garden of the Visitandines, the parish church and the city moat. One of the buildings, which had a facade of some 234 ft. in length, ran along Rue St. Ambrose; another, of about the same length, rose up behind the first, beyond a courtyard that was about 117 ft. long and which was surrounded by the two principal buildings. Brothers Martin and Louis had drawn up the plan and had directed the construction. By adapting additions to the character of the former convent, they achieved an ensemble that was both simple and severe -- nevertheless, monumental and, inside and out, suited to its purpose, according to the norms so successfully applied in the great religious and civil architecture of the 18th century. To the north, east and west, stretched some seven-and-a-half acres of land planted in trees and vegetable, the walls of which enclosure traced a peculiar zig-zag shape, due perhaps to the subdivision of the property or to an arrangement of ancient ramparts. It offered spectacular views: one side it looked toward the open country, with its limpid, pleasant horizon, from whence the highroad emerged; on the other side, the estate opened upon the Seine and the whole of the ancient City of Melun, rising out of the river, as far as the amphitheatre on the right bank.[30]

A decree of the king's council, dated the 18th of April, 1780, succeeded in making the Brothers masters of their own house by ceding to them "the Eperon or Bastion", which formed part of the public domain. The decision was recorded at the same time that the Parlement confirmed the deed of purchase of the convent (the 10th of May, 1780).[31]

It remained to furnish and decorate the house. The furniture for the cells and rooms, certainly not luxurious, was initially supplied from the Holy Spirit House. From there also came the nucleus of the library, which, in 1790, comprised about 1600 volumes.[32] Brother Martin, a competent engineer, as well as

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[27] The daybook, or cashbook at Melun, bound in parchment and comprising 520 pages, 473 of which are used, is preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, HA m-18. It was begun prior to the moving of the general services to the new headquarters. It was signed and initialed "in Paris, at the Holy Spirit House, the 26th of August, 1778", by Brother Agathon and by his secretary, Brother Philip of Jesus. It is an extremely important document, not only because of the financial information it contains, but because it enables us, in a way, to reconstruct the daily lives of the Brothers in the Motherhouse until 1792.

[28] Letters quoted by Bishop Chassagnon, Vie du Bienheureux Solomon, pg. 262

[29] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 429-32

[30] Essai historique sur la Mats on-Mere (by Brother Paul Joseph, 1905, pp. 81-88. On page 87 of this book there is a copy of the design of the Holy Child Jesus House, according to documents in the municipal library of Melun. Nothing remains of this former Brothers' property

[31] Motherhouse Archives, Melun daybook, for the 9th of June, 1780, and Brother Agathon's file.

[32] Essai cited, pg. 85, note #1.

a good architect, built a clock.[33] Robert, a metal worker in Melun, delivered the bells, "three for the clock, and a fourth for Community exercises", for which he received 1,716 livres on the 15th of May, 1780.[34] The principal expenses involved the decoration of the chapel: its altar was made of marble, with a huge painting representing the Blessed Trinity; six medallions, representing the Apostles,[35] were also sculptured in marbles On the 14th February, 1781, 3,153 livres were again paid to "M. Guyard, carver and builder, at the Notre Dame bridge, opposite the Gesvres wharf, in Paris" for "garlands and vine-leaves", "palm boughs", "sprigs", "laurels and ribbon bows", a "base for a monstrance", a variety of mouldings, the "lining for the tabernacle door" and a balustrade.[36] Decked out in these splendors the chapel of the Most Holy Infant was blessed on the 14th of May by Father Maurey, the collegial cantor, assisted by the pastor of the parish, Father Pastoris, in the presence of Brothers Agathon, Paschal, Sylvester and Zachary.[37]

A sculpture by the name of Surugues did a statue of the Infant Jesus in terra-cotta.[38] And because the work was a success, the same artist was commissioned to do "the devise" to be placed "over the entrance", another statue of the Child Jesus; but this one was in stone. In this connection, the daybook includes the comment by the Procurator-general of the Institute that is genuinely touching, in language that as a rule scarcely ever finds into way into account-books: Surugues was paid more generously than was specified in the contract. Brother Dositheus wrote: I had agreed with him for a price of 100 livres but the stone turned out to be so hard...that he would have lost money, if we had dealt with him strictly; besides, he is so simple, so Christian, so crippled, and his work is so well-done, I thought I had to pay him beyond the agreement he made with dear Brother Superior and the first Assistant .[39]

A portrait of De La Salle was painted by the artist Le Maitre, the copy of an original that had been obtained from the school in Mende, and which was itself "repaired" at the same time. It cost the Motherhouse 69 livres and 11 sols, including freight.[40] These works, as well as others, witness to the spirit of initiative, to the sense of organization and to the artistic taste of an administration, both punctual and liberal, which presided over the fitting out and the decoration of the new Motherhouse.

In a most exquisite way Brother Agathon knew how to please people who, whether in the spiritual or the temporal order, did a favor for his Congregation. In return, he won gratitude and affection, evidences of which can be noticed here and there while leafing through the account-books. We have seen that Father Pichat, who preached a retreat, was satisfied with Father La Tours's books as an honorarium.[41] In 1781 the Father Prior of the Carmelites, who had received 200 livres for six months of chapel service, refused "a Christmas gift of money", because the Brothers' budget was over-spent.[42] On the 24th of January, M. Barth, the physician, received 120 livres: "The Most Honored Brother thought" that it was fitting to raise his fee from three `louis' annually, which had been stipulated, to five; since he made, in fact, "so many" visits; and the sick had been zealously "supervised and cared for" .[43] A priest, Father De La Baume, was

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[33] Saved, doubtless by its maker (whose name is written on a bronze plaque) and repaired in 1822 by Lepeautre, Brother Martin's clock still works, in the office of the Parisian Procurator of the Institute, 78 Rue de Sevres (See Essai, pg. 85, note #2.)

[34] Daybook.

[35] They now reside in the parochial church of St. Aspais.

[36] Daybook.

[37] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 428, following the Departmental Archives of Seine-et-Marne

[38] Daybook for the 15th of September, 1781.

[39] Ibid., 13th of July, 1782.

[40] Ibid., 1st of January, 1784 and 21 of July, 1786

[41] Cf. Above .

[42] Daybook for 16th of October, 1781.

[43] Ibid, 24th of January, 1782

living at the Holy Child Jesus House: he was comfortable and surrounded with attention; he seems to have been most friendly with Brother Agathon and, in his gratitude, was very generous with his hosts.[44]

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After 1780, then, the figure of "the great Superior" emerged energetically on the noble, if sober, scene on the banks of the Seine. He was the "real leader" and the father of the family, surrounded by his sons, collaborators and aides of every degree and kind, in a house which was an exclusively religious and administrative center, in which activities were thoroughly regulated. The hive buzzed methodically, silently and without idle glances directed to the outside world. There novices were trained for their calling, and "Scholastics" (to whom we shall have to return) arrived to spend some months at intellectual tasks before being assigned to special work in the principal Communities, in the resident and/or technical schools. It was no longer the straightened existence of the Holy Spirit House, between narrow walls, with strangers to whom several of the areas of the property had to be rented; nor was it as at St. Yon, cheek-by-jowl with a reformatory, involving all the unpleasantness we have described -- meddling officials and calling out the troops; and it was completely removed from the Archbishop's office in Rouen, with its interference, imperious and painful, and so contrary to the liberties defined by Rome.

Under the gentle protection of Cardinal de Luynes and bathed in the sympathies of a population that witnessed its own children being taught by the Brothers (at the direction of the superior a third teacher was added to the school at St. Nicholas Hospital without additional expense to the city), the Regime prayed, deliberated and governed; Brother Dositheus kept his books; Brother Lupicin directed the Community; Brother Vincent Ferrier managed the treasures in the library and gave the Scholastics courses in French, while his colleague, Brother Maur, set up a program of courses in science.[45]

Brother Agathon had a huge task: "Circulars" to plan and write, correspondence with Communities, cities, bishops and ministers, and the responsibility of making final decisions. He always kept a secretary with him, a handpicked Brother, attached personally to the Superior, but whose functions, increasingly consuming, became those of a Secretary-general of the Institute. These functions were successively held by Brothers Philip of Jesus, Lothair and Solomon. Even when the Superior made a round of visits to the houses spread throughout France, the work did not stop, and directives dictated to the secretary or to a Brother living in one of the Communities flowed from places of passage.

Thus, in 1780 and 1781 a sensational controversy developed over tuition-free education, which was called into question by the City of Boulogne and defended by Brother Agathon in letters dated from Caen, Angers and Melun. The problem, arising out of a local incident, was posed in language that was at once most general and most specific. It had (and it always has had) a direct relation with the Rule and with one of the Christian Brothers' vows. Indeed, it transcended a mere corporate policy and took on a universal validity and involved the principles of sociology. It should not come as a surprise, then, if we analyze it here in some detail.[46]

From its very inception, the matter was closely bound up with a number of things that had been challenging the concern of the Superior: the Boulogne Community was seriously affected by an inadequate income. With a salary of only 200 livres, it was impossible to supply a Brother "with simple food" and "decent" care. But what was worse was that the source of this meagre income was, at least in part, "an assessment collected in the schools under the eyes of the teachers". This had to be stopped, because the Brothers' "Constitutions" forbade it.

This was the message of the Brother Director "to the Mayor, Vice-mayor and the Supervisors of Boulogne" in a letter that is not dated but which was certainly written at the beginning of April, 1780, on orders from the Superior-general. Because the city failed to guarantee the teachers a regular and normal salary, only four Brothers would be retained in a school of 200 pupils. (The "commercial class" and its teacher were not involved, since they were supported by a special fund.)

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[44] Ibid., passim, especially for the 5th of October, 1785, 23rd of October, 1785, 1st of August, 1787

[45] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 432.3.

[46] The documentation relative to this matter was deposited in the municipal archives of Boulogne. The Christian Brothers made a copy, which fills a student's notebook and bears the signature of Brother Assistant Louis of Poissy. Because of the importance attached to it, this document remains in the hands of the major Superiors. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 446-73

"The Assembly of the Commune" was convoked on the 14th of August "to debate the issues". It was unanimously acknowledged that, "far...from reducing the number" of Brothers, "it would be hoped" that new members would join the ten who formed the Boulogne Community. A commission was named to examine the ways and means for an amicable settlement. It simply proposed to collect tuition outside of class and without the cooperation of the Brothers. Brother Maur, who was then directing the school, thought the arrangement ingenious and acceptable. But on the 5th of October Brother Agathon notified him in no uncertain terms that he was mistaken. Doubtless "the gentlemen in the city government" have shown that "their zeal for the education of youth" has remained "as ardent as ever"; and of course "it is embarrassing" to upset them. But transcending questions of personalities, there is the question of principle. It is of small importance that the tuition is collected inside or outside the classroom, or that the tuition is moderate or large...When it is proposed to collect tuition from well-to-do children in order to be admitted to the schools, the schools are no longer tuition-free. No compromise is possible.

The maintenance of our primitive situation is essential to the preservation of the Institute...The intention of our wise and venerable Founder was that children, without distinction as to rich and poor, be admitted tuition-free to our schools. Besides, this is what has been constantly and universally practiced up to now...

Brother Agathon had posed a dilemma for the Director and the Supervisors in Boulogne: either tuition-free schools for all, or, if income did not allow for a sufficient number of teachers, instruction was to be dispensed only to poor children, the primary beneficiaries of De La Salle's work.

The letter dated from Caen on the 5th of October stated the principle in all its rigor. The letter of the 22nd of October, written from Angers, developed an argument that the Superior had borrowed from one of the "doctors of the Sorbonne...quite familiar with the Institute...whose learning is well-known". (Five days later, the Brother Secretary to the Superior-general identified him to Brother Maur as Father De La Baume.)

"The doctor of the Sorbonne" analyzed the Rule and the vow. The Rule as contained in the Bull, which is the law, is formulated as follows: fifthly the Brothers teach (tuition-)free, and they receive neither compensation nor presents from their pupils or their parents. Earlier, the Bull explains the spirit of the Institute by saying that the Brothers must have the greatest care for the education of children, and especially for the poor, and that this purpose constitutes its distinctive character...It follows that (tuition-free) instruction is a point essential to the Institute...To impair that feature would effect the very essence of the Institute and strip it of its reason for existing.

The vow re-enforces the Rule by binding the conscience of the Brothers through a personal commitment undertaken in the presence of God. However, it must be noted that the matter of the vow is less extensive than the Common Rule. The vow has to do, not with tuition-free education in general, but only with the education of the poor: -- *Pauperes gratis edocendi,* as the ninth article of the Bull specifies. For the Brother to receive a salary or a compensation for teaching the rich would be a violation of their religious obligations; the same violation in regard to the poor would make it a sacrilege.

Hence, concerning the problem in Boulogne (and in any other city which contemplated similar solutions) the following conclusions can be drawn: By agreeing that their "well-to-do (real or otherwise) pupils" be admitted only after the payment of a fee, the Brothers "would be sacrificing the general good of the Institute to the particular good" of a civic community. Of course, "they do not violate their vow..., but they do transgress an important rule, one that is constitutive" of their Society. To plead that it is the cities, and not the Brothers, who receive the money would be frivolously casuistical. *Qui facit per aliam est perinde ac si faciat per ipsum.* Who, indeed, would be paid in the end, if not the Brothers? Having recourse to "subterfuge" is still a violation of the Rule.

In February of 1781 the situation remained unchanged. In a letter dated the 14th of that month the Superior ordered Brother Maur "to send" him "the names of the Brothers" who must be "withdrawn". The kindness that the people have always shown the Brothers in Boulogne makes this decision a regrettable one. Pupils would be admitted to the remaining classes on the basis of "poverty certificates" issued by pastors and public officials.

The City, however, did not consider itself defeated. It sent Brother Agathon a "report" that was intended to be examined by the doctors of the Sorbonne. When, on the 25th of April, the Superior-general acknowledged the reception of their report, he wrote: I am aware, gentlemen, of the force of your remarks. But no matter how conclusive they may be for you, it continues to seem to me that they would not justify me in abandoning my views...

Furthermore, handpicked referees were to declare whether "the methods used" in Boulogne can be squared with the Rule, the spirit of the Institute and with the primitive, constant and changeless purpose of those who embraced the profession of Christian Brother. Since the matter was urgent (there was

another city ready to follow Boulogne's lead, the brief was sent immediately to those who were meant to examine it.

The theologians consulted were Fathers Jolly, Gayee Sansale and Asseline. (The last named was the future Bishop of Boulogne.) They submitted their opinion on the 4th of May. The "City's arguments" and the "Brothers' arguments" were placed in the balance. According to the city officials, the Brothers had nothing to do with the collection of tuition; they were in fact unaware of those pupils who paid and those who did not. There was no difference in the "admissions certificates" issued to both, after the payments which were made to a collector in the Fall and at the beginning of Lent. Besides, a city was altogether free to tax its inhabitants for the support of schoolteachers, whose salaries are fixed in advance, without regard to the exact amount of the contribution.

"The Rule", replied Brother Agathon, "rejects" any system whose effect would be to make their pupils responsible for the support of the Brothers. Rather than being likened to mercenary teachers (and, thereby, "inspiring grumbling" and odium"), the members of the Congregation would prefer to leave a school. "Their genuine end is to teach the poor", and while they open wide their classrooms to all children, the reason for this is that they do not wish to identify "the sensitive poor" and because they want to be able to dispense Christian instruction without running the risk of partiality. Even to require more or less voluntary contributions from parents involves the severe inconvenience that it creates distress for many families and undermines fundamental equality.

Everything required for an evaluation had been supplied. The Sorbonne did not hesitate. It embraced the thesis supported by Father De La Baume and the Brother Superior. Indeed, it went a little beyond them. The method proposed by the City of N... (is) contrary to the arrangements in the Bull of Benedict XIII, to the formula of vows that the Brothers pronounce and to the tenor of their Constitutions. There can be no equivocation about the word "free": education is free only if pupils and their parents "pay nothing to the teachers for instruction received". In this connection, the referees made a comment the importance of which would not escape the strictest jurists and which quite appositely refuted the apparently strongest argument of Boulogne officialdom: It is easy to make the distinction...between a tax that one imposes on the citizens of a city to support the Brothers' needs and the arrangement (suggested by the petitioners). In the latter case, a portion of the pupils...each pay for the Brothers for the instruction given, which absolutely destroys (tuition-free) instruction. In the former case, on the contrary, other taxpayers cooperate in the support of the teachers, which in no way damages "gratuity".

It is worthwhile recalling (in spite of Brother Agathon's silence on this important point) that the Institute's Rule did not run contrary to the royal declarations of December 1698 and May, 1724.[47]

A copy of this "consultation" was sent to Boulogne on the 24th of May. The city officials took the time to think it over. That the Sorbonne had, unilaterally, capitulated to the Regime ruffled them. They did not want to act *ab irato*, and, on the 10th of August when they convoked the City Assembly, reason prevailed. "It was unanimously decreed" that an income of 2,700 livres would henceforth be set aside for the Brothers and that the portion contributed by the Commune must eventually be reduced by casual gifts and legacies. In this way "the Brothers would be committed" to maintain "the commercial class, three classes in their house, two in the "Buttery" and two in upper-town."

This resolution was approved on the 24th of August by the Intendant of Picardy, to whom it had been pointed out by one of the Supervisors, M. Belterre, that Boulogne's finances would not be damaged, since a publisher, M. Charles Battut had just bequeathed an annual income of 600 francs for the support of the Christian Schools. And so ended, with a complete victory for the principle of tuition-free education, this struggle into which Brother Agathon had thrown every ounce of his energy against adversaries who were, on the whole, courteous and kind, worthy heirs of De La Salle's friend, Abot La Cocherie and worthy fellow-citizens of Brother Solomon (Nicholas La Clercq).

In his "instructive letter" of the 1st of January, 1784, the Superior-general, without returning to the details of the controversy, illuminated the ideas that had guided his own conduct.[48] "The obligation of tuition-free instruction", he wrote, "is certain and essential". It was born with the founding itself of the Society of the Brothers; it is prior to the vow, the formula for which was decreed by the Bull of 1725, and it achieved its strict and exact confirmation in that decision by the Holy See. "To permit the least infraction of it would be, beyond a doubt, a crime." The gentlemen of the Sorbonne, on the 14th of May, 1781, had

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[47] See above, Part II, chap. i.

[48] The third part of the first instructive letter "on gratuitous education". On the subject of this letter see the preceding chapter, pp. 465-466.

perfectly defined in what tuition-free education consists: from their commentary, as well as from the Common Rule, it follows that the Superior cannot in conscience "turn to the profit of their schools nor of that of any particular Brother anything supplied by the pupils...whether for heating" or for "school supplies"; any profit, if there is any, must be "applied...to the profit of the pupils."

It is impossible to overestimate the value of this rule. It enables the Brothers to tell parents what St. Paul told the Corinthians:[49] "And when I was with you and in want, I did not burden any of you". It "maintains" them "in a holy independence", in order to be able "to instruct, exhort, advise, reprove...establish and preserve order and act with regard to all with impartiality..." It enables them to work for God alone.

Brother Agathon deplored the abuses which occurred. Some 'founders' deemphasize or disguise anything that would seem contrary to tuition-free education. The Brothers are not sufficiently on their guard against deceptions.

The Superior's task seemed quite clear: he faced it "without being terrified whether by the number or by the magnitude of the difficulties". He displayed a will to close schools that ignored the "rule of gratuity". And he prevailed. He would be patient only in "a case of extreme necessity" -- an assumption, by the way, which did not bear scrutiny. Obviously, there were Communities that would have to endure hard times. But had not the Brothers taken a vow of poverty? And what merit would they gain from it, if, at least sometimes, they did not suffer from following the example of our Divine Savior and the Apostle Paul?

How, then, explain the existence of residence schools? But in these institutions it was not the education that was compensated; rather the residents paid for food and lodging and "the special or exceptional care". No one would doubt the legitimacy of such arrangements. The teachers were not failing in their duty except in so far as they personally accepted some present or some monetary compensation from their pupils.

When a teacher belongs to the Institute, although he has not yet taken his vows, he is still guilty if he violates the Society's fundamental rules or conditions of his calling. And even when a benefactor sends his children to the Brothers' school, they must accept nothing from him. Some confessors overlooked these points, because they tended, especially if they were mendicants, to confuse De La Salle's rule with their own. "They would think differently", if they were thoroughly acquainted with the obligations of the people they were advising.

All these warnings, arguments and definitions were expanded and arranged in profuse paragraphs. The circular's general conclusions regarding tuition-free instruction is summarized as follows: "Tuition-free instruction" is like a rare gift that has been faithfully handed down to us from the origin of the Institute...It is our patrimony, our inheritance, our real treasure: without it, we have nothing; with it we have everything.

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To be poor while teaching the poor was the plan of life that the Superior continued to preach to the Brothers. But the doctrine had its necessary counterpart: since the school must not support the teacher, the religious educator's food, clothing and shelter must be supplied by the local authorities who assumed the responsibility for the education of the common people. Of course, in special cases, the Institute, from its general treasury, would not refuse to come to the assistance of some of its members who were overwhelmed by debt and distress. The Motherhouse or the resident schools supported with their own funds impecunious establishments set up on their doorsteps or under their protection. John Baptist de La Salle gave the example for such institutions when he founded the school connected with the "Grande Maison" in Vaugirard and the school in St. Sever. His successors contributed to the support of the Brothers in Rouen, who received ridiculously low salaries from the city; and one of the Brothers in Melun was put without charge at the disposition of the municipal officials. The costs of these generosities were covered by the profits from tuitions in resident schools. The Brothers in Rome, whose situation was always precarious, benefited from time to time from alms coming from the southern province; and the precedent set when the Brothers in Avignon helped Brother Gabriel Drolin created a sort of tradition. In 1780 the resident schools in Montpellier and Marseille sent 1,000 livres to the Procurator-general of the Institute to pay the Italian creditors, Pizzulo Associates.[50]

These exceptions were not meant to be a rule. The Christian Brothers were not an organism of the state nor a ministry of national education, nor a foundation for funds appropriated for schools and everywhere responsible for their construction and for the salaries of the people who taught in them. Each Community enjoyed financial autonomy or lived in complete dependence upon the civil collectivity. It would be

[49] II, Cor., XI, 9.

[50] Daybook, 14th of April, 1780.

obviously iniquitous if a Poor Bureau or a civic Assembly called the Brothers and then abandoned them to their own devices.

But there are selfish people who can come to terms with injustice. They forget their promises, close their eyes to affliction (so as not to have to worry about it) and imagine that enough has been done because someone has made a "grant" of a few hundred livres, "without risk" (as they used to say).

A prospectus dated 1783[51] specifies the conditions under which the Institute would accept a new school. The Brothers' residence must be "suited to regular Community life", and include a parlor, guest-room, kitchen, pantry...bakery, dining room, cellar, wood-house, attic, a room for Community exercises, Director's and small library, laundry, dormitory, infirmary, and oratory or small chapel...There must also be "classrooms that are well lighted and ventilated, contiguous, communicating and sufficiently large..." Finally, the property will include a courtyard and garden "an, if possible, a small stable for the horses of Brother Visitor and his companion".

A thousand livres would be enough to buy the furniture. As for "the board", if it was "all in money", the minimum would have to come to four or five hundred livres, "depending upon the city and the cost of food".

More often than not the older Communities were under-subsidized. The five Brothers in Moulins were only paid an overall salary of 1100 livres.[52] "The gentlemen in the Bureau borrow in order to make up the required amount", we read in a report dating from the time after the "Law system" . These deep economic cuts were particularly burdensome to those who had to bear their consequences. The inventory of their furniture, drawn up in 1792, showed that they owned "a very poor armchair", "a small desk with a cardboard top", "fifteen earthenware plates", ten pair of sheets and two dozen towels.[53]

In 1780, in La Puy the Community declared that they had an income of 1800 livres and expenses of 2796 livres. On several occasions the Regime had to vote advances for this Community. In order to pay off their debts the Brothers were temporarily forced to exploit a lime quarry on their property.[54]

The Brothers in Bollene, a Papal Territory, received "50 écus a year", and they, too, were obliged (outside of class time) to "gain a livelihood in the sweat of their brow". The good bishop of St. Paul-Trois-Chateau, Bishop Reboul Lambert who presided over his diocese from 1743 until the Revolution) had to plead the Brothers' cause with the Cardinal Secretary-of-State: "The Treasurer of Carpentras refuses them all assistance" and the Commune of Bollene "calmly toys with the notion of paying them the 200 livres increase" that Pius VI ordered it to pay. (Letter dated the 23rd of October, 1780). After this effective intervention, the salaries of the two Brothers were raised by 100 écus each. [55]

The situation in Bourg-St. Andeol in 1784 was no better: extreme poverty had reduced the school to two Brothers, one of whom was "unwell".[56]

Funds allotted to the schoolteachers by cities were not always paid regularly. There were instances of this was the case in Mens with its Calvinists. Elsewhere, financial difficulties resulted in the suspension of payments. In 1776 Brother Vincent Ferrier complained that in Rennes the tax-collector had stopped paying anything: "My position terrifies me", the functionary wrote, because he had to make "heavy advances" to his own employers: he "needed the funds to man the navy". Of course, the Brothers' claims were not the sort that ruins cities; but if he paid them and "refused others...who, perhaps, had more influence", he

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[51] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 5, copy of a printed document in the municipal archives of Avignon.

[52] Brother Gustave of Mary, les Freres des Ecoles chrelienes a Moulins de 1710 a 1792 (in Bulletin de l'Association des Ancien Eleves du Pensionat Saint-Gilles, 1933-34.)

[53] Quoted by Anatole Charmasse, Etat de l'instruction primarie dans l'ancien diocese d'Autun.. 1878, pp. 43-44.

[54] Departmental archives of Allier, Q t 65, Description of the condition of the furniture and effects found in the Christian Brothers' house in Moulins (cited in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for April, 1912, pp. 158-9. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January, 1934, pp. 33-4. Report of the Brothers of Puy to the Mayor and the members of the Council.

[55] (I.e., 300 livres). Historique de la province meridionale; and Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 484.

[56] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 2, Bourg-Saint-Andeol file, report of Brother Francis of Mary, Director

"would lay himself open to the charge of partiality".[57] The statement was tantamount to saying that popular education did not seem to be of the first order of importance.

To the lack of funds was added the pitiful condition of the physical facilities. We recall in this connection the disaster in Grenoble. In Dole the house was "crumbling with age" and the class rooms were too small and unhealthy.[58] In this instance no time was lost in putting up new buildings. But in Compiegne the physical plant was below standard for as long as the school existed: "All children who apply cannot be admitted", wrote Matthew, the Dean of the Charity Council for St. James parish in 1790; the pupils "were nearly on top of one another"; the Brothers in the writing class "were unable to move from desk to desk"; and the whole place gave off a "fetid smell". The teachers whose health was being compromised (as was that of their pupils) were refused the food that would restore their energy: They are not yet quite starving, but they don't have far to go. Restricted as much by necessity as by virtue to the ordinary and very monotonous diet...they drink only cider, and what cider![59] It was a dull drink for people who had worn themselves out in the classroom from morning until night.

Such evidence was enough to justify the Superior-general's decision. No longer would each Community struggle daily with hunger, cold, the inconveniences of its quarters, and all the ills that follow upon extreme want. The Directors in the schools, however, were badly situated to make their point: their complaints undermined the good relations that should exist between the municipalities and the teaching personnel; "reports" to be written and measures to be taken were excessively preoccupying and they took up time that belonged to spiritual exercises and duties of state. And many of these efforts ran the risk of being wasted. Brother Agathon forbade the Directors to take the initiative in these circumstances.[60] He himself became the judge of the ways and means, and he brought to the negotiations the full force of his wisdom and his authority.

With several parishes he came quickly to terms. In 1788, the pastors of Notre Dame, St. Laurent and St. Hilary in Nogent-le-Retrou, with support from the municipal authorities, drew up an "arrangement for funding the Brothers' schools". The three teachers were to reside in a house purchased by the City from the Ursulines; and the pastors would pay them an annual salary of 900 livres. At the same time a maximum number of pupils was decided upon: 61 in the penmanship classes and 48 in the beginners classes.[61]

On the 1st of January of the following year the pastor of St. Malo received the following in a letter from the Superior: Upon my return from a journey into Lorraine, I learned...that (our Brothers) are not getting the income upon which they depend and that now their only hope is your zeal...I confess that it has been extremely painful for us to see them languish for so long...They cannot do all the good of which they are capable unless they have the necessities of life...We can't see how it is possible for them, given the cost of living, to provide for their food and maintenance for less than 400 livres each...

All that Brother Agathon could promise was the postponement of the closing of the school as a consequence of the pastor's "kindness". [62] In any case, either "expectations" were met or at least the pastor contrived from one year to the next to gather the absolutely essential funds, because the Brothers were still at their post in St. Malo in 1792.

On the 8th of August, 1783, the Brothers in St. Germain-en-Laye received an increase of 300 livres from the pastor, Father Legrand. Further gifts allowed the addition of a third, and then a fourth, Brother, and, finally, in 1786, a fifth.[63]

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[57] Departmental Archives of Me-et-Vilaine, C 1317, letters of the collector, Le Boucher, dated the 12th of January, 1776, and of Brother Vincent Ferrier, dated the 21st.

[58] Brother Agathon's letter to the "Magistrate in Dole", May 11th, 1781, cited in Bulletin des Ecoles chreliennes for October 1926, pg. 320

[59] 3 Quoted by Plion, L'Instruction publigue a Compiegne avant la Revolution, pp. 22-4

[60] Motherhouse Archives, AAb a 1, circular in ms., dated the 16th of February, 1783, copy addressed to Brother Andrew, Director of Caen.

[61] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 8, Nogent-le-Rotrou file.

[62] Municipal Archives of St. Malo, GG, no. 336. Cf. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January, 1910, pg. 6.

[63] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 9, St. Germain file

Conversations with civil administrations were more complex and agreement more difficult to come by. In the first place it was crucial to settle the touchy business in Rheims. Fortunately, the groundwork was pretty well laid with the grant of royal letters in 1777 and with the renunciation of the plan regarding the Motherhouse. There remained the financial question, and arbitrarily joined to it by the city officials, the question of the closing of the residence school.

In the year 1778, on the 19th of February, the Superior-general of the Institute and his three Assistants, having deliberated on the arrangements to be made with the City of Rheims in order to guarantee the Brothers working there a fair living (decided upon the following principles):

1. "In spite of the high cost of living", they agreed that the salary of the Brothers be fixed at a bottom figure of 350 livres each;
2. "Out of regard for the City...the cradle of our Institute", they renounced the 940 livres yielded annually by real and personal capital allotted to the house in Rheims by the Founder, his heirs and various benefactors. This income would form a common fund along with the subsidies to constitute the salary mentioned above;
3. Under present conditions, the disposable funds raised by rents and back-interest, along with the annual payments by the parishes of St. Hilary, St. James and St. Timothy amounted to only 2,270 livres, with deductions for taxes. To support 14 Brothers (i.e., nine teachers, in addition to a Director and serving Brothers), 4,900 livres were needed. It would be up to the City to contribute the difference.
4. The suspended classes would not be resumed until a salary of 350 livres was guaranteed to an additional team of three teachers.[64]

The City continued to put off its decision. In the following December it received the registered "Letters Patent" from the hands of Brother Agathon himself. The People's Deputy told the City Council in its meeting of the 28th of that month: You see that the Institute is restricted to educating the common people; ...and that, since the residence school in Rheims is not a reformatory,[65] it must be closed.[66]

That closing, no matter how regrettable, had already been part of the Regime's plan for the restoration of peace. However, it remained subject to the city administration's voting for subsidies, since, up to that time, the profits from the residence school were covering the Community's deficit. Rather than pledging their own money, the officials in Rheims hit upon a scheme that had failed once before: they petitioned the king to support their schools by appropriating property that had once belonged to the Jesuits. This was the Priory of St. Preuve, in the diocese of Laon, an estate with an income of 3,000 livres, plus an annual sum of 675 livres levied on all confiscated property. Thus, without spending a cent, the City would obtain the funds necessary to support seventeen Brothers.[67] It was an inspired idea and legal, although hardly commendable. However, the Minister Bertin vetoed it (in November of 1780).

At this point the municipal officers could see only a single solution: reduce the number of pupils (and, thereby, the number of teachers) by refusing admission to the school to children whose parents paid only the minimum of four deniers of poll-tax. Further, the tax would be increased in order to eliminate a larger number of prospective pupils. Again, ways were sought out whereby the Brothers would be obliged to assume the sole responsibility for the school in the "residence" on the Rue Neuve and the Rue Contray.[68]

To pursue this policy to the bitter end would have been to refuse to recognize services already rendered and to displease the population. The City Council had to resign itself "provisionally" to the continued existence of the residence school. In this way was safeguarded the income upon which the Brothers in the four schools lived. And then, a variety of gifts and legacies made their timely appearance, so that not only were the three classes (closed since 1774) able to reopen, but a new school was established in St. Pierre's parish. On the eve of the French Revolution De La Salle's disciples had finally consolidated their field of action and zeal in their Founder's native city: besides the residence school on the Rue Contray, they supported thirteen tuition-free classes frequented by 1500 children.

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[64] Arnould, op. cit., pp. 131-2.

[65] An allusion to the restrictive clauses included by jurists in the formula for registering the "Letters Patent".

[66] Amould, pp. 141-2.

[67] The overall income was 2,275 plus 3,675 or 5,950 livres, equal to the expense for supporting 17 Brothers at the rate of 350 byres each.

[68] Arnould, pp. 151-3.

In other cities of Champagne, similarly, conditions had improved. In 1781, Brother Agathon had vigorously encouraged Brother Fabian, Director of St. Menehould, to obtain the essential minimum of 350 livres from the City.

Do not lose courage (he wrote him). The fear you seem to me to have that your school is going to collapse must not be very great; the good that you do at St. Menehould you can do elsewhere...We want the Brothers to live in accordance with their vocation, and not be in the situation of depending upon anybody for the necessities of life, nor of receiving anything as a present or as charity. Those who work must be fed. People must give you what is necessary or allow you to go elsewhere to get it and use it where it will be given to you...[69]

Similar negotiations were conducted elsewhere with varying success: the schools in Brest found Bishop La Marche, the last Bishop of St. Pol-de-Leon, to be a warm and energetic advocate; the schools in Bourges, recommended by the city officials to the generosity of the provincial Assembly of Berry in 1781, were comforted by the reopening of the residence school in buildings on Rue Ambrose in 1782. The schools in Moulins were moved in 1786 to Newmarket, to the former residence of the Daughters of the Cross, provided with extra funds and hailed by the City Council as a refuge "of virtue and Christian simplicity". The school in Arles was dealt with more parsimoniously; at Estavayer, beginning in 1785, the Brothers received free medical care and medication; in Rethel, Mayor Roges, on October 19th, 1787, assured the Brothers of "the community's regard and concern" and won for them an addition to the income from their property -- a subsidy which was raised from 250 to 500 livres; regarding the ancient school in Vans, the once hostile, southern market-town, there was nothing but praise and kind attention for "the good men" sent by the Superior, "who distinguished themselves by their regularity, their wisdom and their learning", and who were thoroughly deserving of the raise they were seeking, as we learn from a municipal decision of the 1st of December, 1787. The City of St. Omer granted the Brothers a raise of only 100 livres, which it attempted to have paid by the Fathers of Christian Doctrine, who had become the beneficiaries of some Jesuit revenue. In February, 1788 the Brothers in Vannes, following the vote for a raise granted by the city magistrates to a marvelous teacher, Brother Albert, instructor in hydrography, received the following beautiful testimonial from the sub-Deputy Freneau: The Brothers here are most serviceable;...they have a singular talent for curbing and forming children;...to them we are indebted for our very find workers and our excellent pupils. Their school of hydrography provides the greatest service to shipping within a radius of ten leagues; daily it turns out the finest workers...

A year later the Procurator of the Commune, while asking for another annual subsidy for the same Brothers, pronounced the final words of public recognition: "The venerable Brothers" work "earnestly"; they are "tireless", "heroic"; and to rescue them from adversity is to do the right thing. And, at the same time, it guarantees the youth of Vannes an excellent education, and the city, "the headquarters of the fleet", training for "young sailors", brought up in "the true principles of their calling".[70]

After the vehement discussion that filled the years between 1772 and 1776,[71] one might have expected at least sympathy and generosity on the part of the City of Rouen. However, the agreement that had been reached at the end of Brother Florence's generalate was up for review. The 2400 livres paid to the Brothers in the Normand capital by the General Hospital and the College was clearly inadequate to support the Community on Rue St. Romain Vigor and precision had served Brother Agathon well in most of his undertakings. Following up on the work of Brother Exuperian in Rouen as well as in Rheims, he wished to

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[69] Motherhouse Archives, BE y 5, Brother Agathon file, autograph letter, dated the 17th (of October?), 1781; two more preceded on the 12th of January and the 17th of May.

[70] References: for Brest: Historique des etablissements de Bretagne et d'Anjou (Motherhouse Archives, HBS, 633); for Bourges: Historique des etablissements des Freres a Bourges (Motherhouse Archives, HB u 42); for Moulins: article by Brother Gustave of Mary in the "Bulletin de Saint-Gilles", previously cited; for Ales: the book by Brother Theodatus Germain,1908; for Estavayer: the file on that institution in the Motherhouse Archives, HA n 11; for Bethel: the municipal archives (abstracts verified by Mr. Lefrancq); for Vans: Historique de la province meridionale, Vol. I (Motherhouse Archives, HB S 28-8); for St. Omer: the book previously cited by Canon Bled, 1906; for Vannes: Historique des etablissement de Bretagne et d'Anjou; and Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 541-6.

[71] For the want of an exact date, we believe, according to all probability, that this occurred before the Superior-general came on the scene. The original document belongs to the "Belbeuf source" in he Archives of the Lower Seine. A copy exists in the notebooks of the Brother Archivist in the Motherhouse, HA p.

liberate his Institute from genuine bondage. He had perhaps not bargained on the litigious Normand spirit: to the demands of the Superior-general the people in Rouen responded with a legal summons. But a native of Picardy is no less tenacious than a litigant from Bray or Rouen, as Brother Agathon made it evident. The struggle lasted five years. Parlement, ministers and the Privy Council were set in motion until right had triumphed.

Brother Vincent Ferrier's petition to M. Belbeuf, the Procurator-general for the Parlement of Normandy, seems to have been the opening shot.[72] The Director of the schools in Rouen had asked for a salary of 350 livres for each of the twelve Brothers .who composed his Community at the time, which represented an overall increase of 1800 livres.

People (he wrote) pointlessly remind the Brothers in Rouen of the imaginary wealth of St. Yon. The fees from its resident pupils are already very much over-deployed; and even if the situation were less serious, St. Yon owes nothing to the city schools. The same thing is true for the small pieces of property (belonging to that institution) which a blind, and perhaps jealous, public has exaggerated...Yet, the Brothers in that house voluntarily contribute a sum of 3,000 livres a year to lodge the Brothers on Rue St. Romain and to assist in their support; and they do the same for the Brothers in Darnetal, and they supply...a charity school (in the Faubourg St. Sever). These contributions were insufficient, but they couldn't be increased.

Once the warning was launched, the moment came for the Superior-general to announce his decision. On the 18th of July, 1783, he informed the administrators of the hospital that unless there was an agreement on salaries, he would withdraw the Brothers in September. The Bureau and the City sent this letter to Parlement: a decision could not be delayed; the Court, with all Houses assembled, ordered the Brothers, on the 29th of the following August, "to teach the primary schools as usual". In its deliberations of the 2nd of February, 1784, the Regime concluded that there were grounds for appealing this decision. From the magistrates they obtained a new inquiry into the matter and then commissioned Father Bonissent, Ecclesiastical Counsellor, the attorney Ducastel and the Procurator Marcassin to draw up a supporting brief,[73] which resumed all the known arguments: the mutual independence of St. Yon and the city schools, and the General Hospital's obligations with respect to the Institute. M. Belbeuf, having read the documents, found in favor of the Brothers, cleared them of the condemnation of the 29th of August, 1783, and proposed a meeting of the city Assembly, which would deliberate upon an increase of salaries. (July, 1785)

But the Normand Parlement refused to follow its Procurator-general: on the 5th of August it confirmed its earlier decree. Brother Agathon then went to the Privy Council. His attorney in Paris, M. Mirbeck, presented to Count Vergennes on the 15th of December the grounds for annulment: formal errors in the decree, disregard for "public right" and for "religious policy" as defined and regulated by the royal letters of 1724 and 1725. The representatives of the City and the Bureau could reply with nothing more than invectives. In their Remarks they accused their adversaries of employing "tricks", "ruses", and of being motivated by "cupidity" and "ambition". To hear the people from Rouen, the Superior of the Institute was a grim gentleman who went from flattery to threats! The minister preferred to leave the matter to the wisdom and the coolness of M. Belbeuf. And M. Mirbeck's report was basically the work that was presented to the Council.

On the 14th of July, 1787, the Brothers obtained a decision in their favor. The Privy Council set aside the Court's decree. Nevertheless, it required the Brothers on Rue St. Romain to continue serving the schools for three months. After this period, it was up to them to withdraw if the hospital failed to provide for their support. Its administrators were required, within four weeks, to submit to the minister the condition of the endowments allotted for the support of the primary schools in Rouen.

As the result of the verification of titles there was available a capital of only 40,000 livres and capable of producing 2,000 livres of income. This income was to be given to the Brothers. The 12,000 livres which continued to be paid by the College since 1776 and the same amount promised by the Cardinal-Archbishop would supplement the subsidy. Finally, on the 26th of April, 1788, the Mayor and the Supervisors agreed to supply equal shares for the current year, for auditing purposes, but without any commitment to the

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[72] See above, pp. 353-361.

[73] This document was printed in 1785 by the widow of Laurent Dumesnil on the Rue Neuve-Saint-Lo, in Rouen.

future.[74] The future belonged to nobody. But the Brothers' bread was assured for the days that remained to life until the great turmoil.[75]

[74] To this man we owe several important "verified copies" preserved in box L, 963, in the National Archives, and in the Motherhouse Archives

[75] Motherhouse Archives, Record of the Deliberations of the Regime; Robillard de Beaurepaire, Recherches sur !'Instruction publique dans le diocese de Rouen, Vol. II, pp. 358-60; Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 449-66.

Chapter III

The work of the schools: little schools and boarding schools

A "Report on the Order of the Brothers of the Christian Schools Founded by John Baptist de La Salle", for the year 1779, claimed a personnel of 760 Brothers teaching 30,990 pupils in 114 institutions. The figures are probably not rigorously exact, since the details supplied in the columns of statistics that follow the summary statement add two more schools and raise the total number of pupils to 33,000.[1] However, approximations are sufficient for us to become aware of the development of the Lasallian family and of its activities during the first years of the reign of Louis XVI. Subtracting the working-Brothers and those employed in administration, we can calculate that each teacher was in charge of about fifty pupils. It was a maximum that would have been unwise to exceed. The curb imposed by the General Chapter of 1777 was therefore justified. There had to be some concern for the Brothers who were tired or ill, and, at the same time, to be sparing with "substitutes".[2] And time was needed to train recruits for an educational mission that had become increasingly more sensitive and complex than in the days when the Founder's first followers gathered into their classroom unkempt little boys, who had been abandoned to the temptations of the streets. There was a perceptible difference between these young barbarians and their successors who frequented the Brothers' schools at the end of the 18th century. The Brothers had fulfilled their task as civilizers. We are not now talking about the residence schools: for, in the first place, there was the catechizing that went on in about a hundred primary schools -- young people shaped to the moral life, instructed in their religion and who were, at the same time, being prepared to be socially useful. There were youngsters studying commerce in Boulogne or handwriting in Brest or hydrography in Vannes and Nantes; obviously, they bore little resemblance to the sailors' sons who, in 1706, roamed the streets of the Old Port in Marseille; there were many of these boys who, through a continuous ascent, approached the middle-class, penetrated its ranks and, with their newfound skills and fresh activities, renewed the central structure of the nation. We have referred to the uneasiness of some of the *beati possidentes*. In Nantes in 1782 the marine engineer, Pierre Leveque, "royal professor of hydrography and arithmetic" objected to the competition provided by the Brothers and pleaded with the magistrates to keep an eye on this "Community that has all the defects of monks without their learning", and to restore it to "its primitive state".[3] These were some of the endless claims and calumnies of those who feared to lose their privileges and their monopolies. The Brothers' initiative was a response to the challenge of the masses and to the progress of society. They matured slowly, and they entered upon the scene only at the right moment, when the Institute could contribute to the public good, without wasting its forces and without having to compromise the character and reputation of the instruction it gave.

Brother Agathon was a determined adversary of routine. He was endlessly preoccupied with refining methods, verifying and broadening the base of education, insisting upon excellence in intellectual work and alerting the minds and consciences of teachers. He flatly turned down several offers -- as in Perpignan and at Mazan in the Comtat-Venaissin. On the 19th of August, 1783 he wrote to the leading citizens of the latter small town: “No longer are we in the position of our earlier Brothers, the object of whose zeal was primarily the spread of the Institute.”[4]He would send only thoroughly experienced teachers; besides, he refused (as we know) to inject his Brothers at random into areas in which it was imagined that a "primary school" might be improvised or where the existence of the Community would depend upon the fickle intentions of benefactors or city officials.

In Chalabre, in the Toulouse region, and at Pont St. Esprit, on the Rhone, in 1777 and 1778, he completed undertakings begun by his predecessors. Similarly, negotiations were in progress with the City

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1 Motherhouse Archives, HA q 7, report prepared at Mirepoix on the 24th of August, 1779.

2 Sixth proposition of the Chapter of 1777.

3 Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG, 664.

4 Quoted by Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg.490, according to the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse.

of Aurillac: their promoter was Bishop Barral of Troyes, the brother of the former bishop of Castres. An Abbey of which he had been the administrator joined the prelate to Auvergne. And in concert with several other clerics, he made a point to obtain "Letters Patent" for a school which he had endowed. The royal decree came on the 6th of June, 1778, and the opening of classes was probably postponed until 1780.[5]

According to the terms of the Edict of 1749, "Letters Patent" were required whenever funds or capital were given to a Religious Community. This is why Bishop Condorcet of Lisieux had asked that his school be "incorporated". But since he had only mentioned three Brothers, and, seeing that five would be required to supervise the children in his episcopal city, the Bishop had to appeal to the good offices of his friends in the Parlement of Rouen so as to spare himself the trouble of beginning the process all over again. On the 25th of July this appeal produced the registration of the "Letters" delivered in 1776 on the most liberal terms. The school in Lisieux, from then on legally secure, included classes in the parishes of St. Peter's and St. James'.[6]

Up to this point the Superior had done nothing on his own, except to ratify contracts drawn up prior to his generalate. Arras was the first city to sign a new contract with him. It was a significant event: and a reading of the contract reveals the Superior's vigilance and foresight. It was surprising that the capital of Artois did not have a Brothers' school, although its neighbors, Boulogne and St. Omer, had them since the beginning of the century, and the entire region was wide open to the Brothers' influence. One of Brother Exuperian's letters, dated the 6th of April, 1774,[7] informs us that at that time the Bishop of Arras wanted to open a residence school that would also serve as a novitiate. The Regime, however, was unable to comply with his proposals. In 1778 the problem was viewed more systematically: what were needed were tuition-free schools; and there were to be no fewer than five such schools, with a total of fifteen teachers. The buildings were to be put up with the approval of Brother Agathon; and funds that belonged to the Confraternity of St. Jacques would be put at the disposition of the new Community. The Brothers would receive "all male children in the city, town and suburbs of Arras", beginning at the age of seven who had certificates from the pastors. The Commune was to supply the furniture and school materials. The teachers would provide their own lodging through a compensation of 700 livres paid by the founders for the first fifteen teachers; there would be a subsidy of "six measures of wheat...and 300 livres in silver" each, and all of it tax-free. The city was to reimburse the cost of the first journey, be responsible for remodelling, cover the expense of minor repairs, and each year it would pay the occupants a lump sum. After thirty years the furniture was to become the property of the Institute, without any restitution by way of indemnification for its purchase. As for indirect contributions, there would be the same exemptions for the Brothers as for the "gentlemen of the clergy". The Community "would live according to its Rule and Constitutions", and "instruction would be conducted...according to methods in use" in the Congregation.

This agreement was accepted on the 26th of May, 1778, by the Superior and then sent on "to the episcopal palace" on the 5th of June. Bishop Louis Conzie, the Cathedral Chapter, the Royal Abbey of St. Vaast, the Mayor, the Supervisors and the Regime (represented by Brother Zacheus) were the contracting parties. The opening of the first two schools was anticipated for February, 1780. The other two were to be in operation when construction was concluded. Everything worked out according to plan, and the Brothers had more than five hundred pupils in twelve classes.[8]

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Six years past without a change in the Institute's condition on French soil. In 1784 Brothers were sent to Commercy;[9] and a gift of 15,000 livres from Bishop Machault of Amiens gave rise to another

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[5] This is the dated indicated by the 1790 statistics. Aurillac was not included in the statistics of 1779. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 497-500. Our source does not say where he learned that the school began in October 1776

[6] Mother House Archives, HB s 246, "Historique des maisons de Normandie", Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 367-8, according to the Archives of the Court of Appeals in Rouen.

[7] Quoted by Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 349, following the municipal Archives of Rheims.

[8] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 2, Arras file, copy of the contract, verified at Melun on the 26th of April, 1779 by Brother Philip of Jesus. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 491-5.

[9] Ibid., LI t u v, statistics for 1790.

school in Montdidier: the king authorized it in January, 1785, but classes did not begin there until October of the following year.[10]

In the interval there was a foundation in Langres from the initiative of people who have otherwise attracted history's attention. Indeed, there were two prominent names: Diderot and La Luzerne. There was a man who gave 13,000 livres for the acquisition of a piece of land for the Brothers on Rue Chavannes in September of 1785; he would also build another school, and on the 11th of June, 1786, he purchased some land on Rue St. Barbara from the Dominicans. This was Didier Diderot, an Archdeacon in Langres, the youngest son of the cutler, whose eldest son, Denis, was the author of *Jacques le Fataliste*, *le Neveu de Rameau* and *La Religieuse* and the man who had choreographed the *Encyclopedia*. Didier, like Denis, was educated by the Jesuits, remained faithful to the beliefs of his home and teachers. On the mountain on which Langres rests, which Didier never left, and where, according to his brother, the monster winds make the weather-vanes go around forever, the younger Diderot kept a steady head. He was a good priest. Under the shadow of the Cathedral, he lived a life of piety, study and charity. One can imagine the extent to which the boldness and the dissoluteness of his older brother distressed him. And yet, sometimes, the hearts of the two Diderots beat to the same rhythm. Sprung from the lower classes, they preserved an affection for the common people, along with the memory of their childhood years in the dark shops and narrow streets of old Langres. Denis had insisted on education for everyone;[11] and the atheist, who had taught catechism to his sister, had no intention of driving religion out of the popular schools. Didier invited the Brothers to serve the children of his fellow-citizens just one year after Denis' death. It was a priestly preoccupation; but perhaps it was also the desire of a man who wanted to realize in a Christian way whatever good was concealed behind the countless, contradictory designs of an erring mind; it was the desire to repair the scandals of a dangerous genius, and to root up at least some of the evil shoots strewn by the fistful by one whose eternal destiny made one shudder.

The Archdeacon shared his work with several of his clerical confreres. To one of them, Canon Neret, out of humility and/or discretion, he left the title of "founder". He had the complete confidence of his Bishop. Caesar William La Luzerne was bishop and Duke of Langres since 1770. He was a man of learning, of unerring doctrine, with a paternal heart. With a practical sense and a taste for "philanthropy", which characterized many prelates of the 18th century, he became the organizer of mutual fire insurance in his diocese.[12] But temporal concerns did not absorb his attention. He attached special importance to the educational problem. In about 1781 he wrote a report on the administration of colleges.[13] During the Revolution, as an exile, he would lecture in Venice, at the *Academia di Philareti*, "on the necessity of religious education" -- a lofty paper in which he condemned, after the manner of Christopher Beaumont, the sophisms of Jean Jacques Rousseau.[14]

It was he who, in 1785, obtained "Letters Patent" for the foundation in his archdeanery. The Brothers took possession of two schools on the 1st of November, 1786. And on the 8th, Bishop La Luzerne announced the opening of classes. In his instruction, he wrote: How often the most virtuous among you have come to us to bewail the sight of children...upon whom Jesus bestowed a special affection, abandoned and scattered in your streets like sheep without a shepherd...[15] The new teachers were expected to vanquish ignorance, establish discipline and defend the faith. On the 5th of December Didier Diderot sung the Mass of the Holy Spirit. The children were led in procession through the school buildings as these were being blessed.

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[10] Darsy, Les Ecoles et les colleges du diocese d'Amiens, pg.183.

[11] See above.

[12] Sicard, op.cit., pg. 96.

[13] Report published by J. Carnandet, in his Tresor de pieces rare et curieuses de la Champagne et de la Brie, Chaumont, 1863.

[14] Complete works of Cardinal La Luzerne, published by Father Migne, 1856, Vol. VI, co. 782-90. Resigned from the bishopric of Langres after the concordat, G G. La Luzerne was elevated to the cardinalate in 1817; he died, in his eighties, in Paris in 1821

[15] Sicard, op.cit., pg. 96.

Sicard, op.cit., pg. 96.

After a few months of "trial" the contract for the institution was drawn up; it bears the date of the 22nd of March, 1787. With the concurrence of the Bishop, the Supervisors, the members of the Cathedral Chapter and Brother Rupert, Director of the Community, set their signatures to it. This agreement, conceived along the same lines as the one in Arras, also expressly stipulated that the "children of artisans and the poor...would always be given precedence". And, assuring the five Brothers a salary of 450 livres each, the contract guaranteed them against monetary inflation by establishing a relationship between their income and the cost of living.

Father Diderot had only to murmur the *Nunc dimittis*. At the age of 65, he died on the 17th of November, 1787.[16]

This was an instance of the revival, in the final hours of ancient France, of charity and mercy for the lowly masses. Brother Agathon, who kept a firm hand on his Congregation, backed more liberally and more frequently the activity of churchmen. At the very time he was dealing with Langres and Montdidier, he was awaiting a call from Touraine.

Archbishop Francis Conzie of Tours[17] "proposed" to the city Assembly to extend, finally, to the people of eleven parishes an extensive program of tuition-free education. Up to then they had been satisfied with the respectable but timid initiatives of private charity. Recourse had to be made to the Christian Brothers who were well-known for their excellent methods, their sensible behavior and their "frugality". By February 1785 the Archbishop was in possession of "Letters Patent", but the final formalities extended into August of 1786. Five schools and a Community residence were to be constructed. But *pendent opera interrupta*, the disaster happened before the finishing touches were put on the enterprise.[18]

Similarly in Bayeux, the work was late in starting. But it was through no fault of the Bishops. In 1731, Bishop de Luynes, who during this period was improving the lot of the people of his diocese by promoting the lace industry, sought to provide the children with a Christian education. In this matter the people in the Beaujolais region had been quite content with the extremely modest efforts they inherited from their ancestors. They pleaded with their Bishop not to pursue his plan: they thought that the parochial clergy, the tutors in the primary schools and the college were education enough for their youth, and that there were enough Religious Communities in the city.[19]

The whole matter was forgotten for half a century. Bishop Joseph Dominic Cheylus, a prelate inclined to lavishness and princely gifts, [20] revived it in 1780. He asked Brother Paschal for a design for a school; and on the 7th of December he had the City Council deliberate upon a practical realization, toward which he himself was to contribute 30,000 livres. Once the principle was accepted, it was seen that the costs would greatly exceed the estimated ones, because of the necessity of tearing down an existing building that was in advanced stages of decay. The Bishop was not discouraged by the difficulty; he took responsibility for a major portion of the expenses and committed, it was reported, as much as 100,000 livres to the construction. The citizens could not refuse such a magnificent gift.[21] With their consent, "Letters Patent" were sought, received and registered. But the municipal officers, the architects, the offices in Versailles and the Parlement of Normandie required seven years. The registration was not officially dated until the 18th of January, 1788. Bishop Cheylus and Brother Philip of Jesus signed a contract on the 4th of April. A month later the Superior-general entrusted the direction of the schools to Brother Damian,[22] who, on the 8th of June, along with his colleagues, Brothers Wilfred, Edmund and Toussaint, appeared before the Mayor and the Supervisors. He had the intelligence and the resourcefulness demanded for

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[16] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, July 1914, pp. 256-63; "La Fondation de Ecoles chretiennes de Langres au dix-huitieme siecle". Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 495-6.

[17] The brother of the Bishop of Arras

[18] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 500-03, following the municipal Archives of Tours.

[20] Sicard, op.cit, pg. 96.

[21] Decision of the citizens' Assembly, 7th of March, 1731 in the historique des maisons de Normandie, Motherhouse Archives, HB s 246.

[22] See Sicard, op.ciL, pg. 95.

See Sicard, op.ciL, pg. 95.

success. And he received everything he wanted from Bishop Cheylus. Quite settled into his functions, he saw nothing in the events of 1789 that could frighten him. In June, 1790, he opened a fourth class and a handsome chapel.[23] But prosperity, pride and ambition turned his head as he proved extremely ungrateful to his bishop and neglectful of his Superior's advice.

One of the last cities in Normandy welcomed the Brothers in 1788. At the foot of the hill of 'Notre Dame de Grâce', amongst ancient churches and the picturesque, gabled houses that lines its sail-filled port was the tiny city of Honfleur. Four years earlier the citizens of Honfleur had decided to open a tuition-free school, and in 1786 a priest, Father Lefevre, provided a house for that purpose. He added revenue which was supplemented by a gift from Seigneur Paulmier Equauvill. The king, the bishop of Lisieux and the Duke of Orleans approved the undertaking. Three teachers taught about sixty pupils until the impending moment when the skies would darken.[24]

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At first glance it was strange, but one of those who conjured up the clouds and who appeared to draw down the divine wrath was involved with the beginnings of the Institute in Toulouse. We leap over the entire length of France from the Estuary of the Seine to the banks of the Garonne. There Étienne Charles Lomenie Brienne was still Archbishop, when, in 1784, a wealthy business man, Jean-Jacques Esparbes, left 18,000 livres to the pastor of the metropolitan church, Father Bernadet, "to meet the initial expenses" of a Brothers' school. Brienne called a meeting of the pastors of the four principal parishes in order to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a project. What did he himself think? Louis XVI suspected him of no longer believing in God. Indeed, the prelate had lost his way in the Church. Indifferent to dogma, completely contemptuous of the spiritual and ascetical ideals of the Gospel, he did not shrink from conniving with the enemies of the Faith. Ambition had determined his career. The clergy stood for power; and abbeys, as benefices, and a fine diocese conferred on the son of a great family, who was intelligent, competent, and, for the rest, unscrupulous, not only meant wealth, but also the means of displaying administrative talent - the stuff of which statesmen are made. In the See of Toulouse, Father Brienne succeeded Artur-Richard Dillon, who had been transferred to Narbonne and who, as opposed to prelates faithful to their oath, remained typical although (it must be said) exceptional, of the scandalous prelate who was also the lord with the haughty look, the distinguished President of the Estates of Languedoc, and a genuine leader full of foresight, initiative and influence.[25] This was the man whom the new Archbishop took as his model. Like Dillon, he understood great works for the public good. And like Dillon he meant to spread the "light" and open libraries and schools. It was to him that his Archiepiscopal city owed a school for young girls, as well as a junior Seminary.[26] As he very well knew, Voltaire would not have disowned him: in the eyes of the patriarch of Ferney, a clergy that counselled the people and that practiced "beneficence" appeared to be the pledge of public order. In old France, the Church was so closely joined to the nation that those who denied and deserted its supernatural mission did not dream either of contesting its social role nor of shunning the obligations that resulted from that role.

At this secular level Lomenie Brienne operated easily. He indicated no dissatisfaction with his pastors' project, since they saw the Brothers, not as some sort of revolutionaries, as La Chalotais would have him believe, but as high class collaborators. At the Archbishop's office it was decided to ask for fifteen Brothers who "would reside in the same house" and would to go into the parishes to teach school. Brienne, besides, conducted a personal investigation. Brother Agathon wrote to Brother Florence on the 24th of December, 1784: The Archbishop of Toulouse visited our Schools; he has seen in detail our house in Maréville, and, in his letter, has sent me a glowing report of his visit; he came to Melun explicitly to visit out Community here.[27]

Negotiations, then, went on without a hitch. The attitude of the municipal officers was no less conciliatory: in a decision dated the 15th of February, 1785, they allocated supplementary funds for the

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[23] Motherhouse Archives, Hb s 246, Historigne des maisons de Normandie; Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 527-34.

[24] Ibid.

[25] On Dillon see the report of his grandniece, the Marquesse La Tour du Pin, Journal d'une femme de cinquante ans, (1788-1815), Paris, 1907-1911.

[26] See J. Perrin, le Cardinal Lomenie de Brienne, archeveque de Sens, Sens, 1896.

[27] Quoted by Brother Lemandus, Histoire des Freres de Toulouse, 1789-1850, Toulouse, 1909, pg. 46.

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support of the "Ignorantins". Toulouse was finally following the example of Marseille and Bordeaux. "Letters Patent" were quickly obtained. Louis XVI wrote in March:...that there be organized in the (said) city one or several (tuition-)free schools for the benefit of the children of the common people, as citizens in straightened circumstances...[28] We desire that the schools enjoy all the privileges and advantages granted by us and by our predecessors to institutions and houses of charity in our kingdom, and especially that they may be able to benefit from associations of ecclesiastical welfare, according to civil and canonical norms, as well as legacies and endowments...We desire further that the Archbishop of Toulouse, in order to be able to operated these schools, but subject to his own oversight and authority, might call upon as many Brothers of the Christian Schools as will be thought by him to be suitable and under conditions that can be specified with them...The provincial Parlement, as accommodating as it had in 1778 for the houses of the Institute in Languedoc, recorded the new document on the 23rd of April, 1785.[29]

In 1787, an Edict authorized Brienne to suppress the Trinitarian Order in his diocese and appropriate its unused revenues for schools. In May of 1788 Brother Agathon and Brother Sylvester came to look at the property acquired by Father Bernadet. The contract was signed the month following. Until further notice, there would be only five Brothers in this Community, who would receive salaries to teach 450 pupils. The First Director was the distinguished educator, Brother Amand of Jesus.[30]

In March of 1789 the Brothers moved in and classes began. Brienne was no longer in Toulouse: having without success attempted to rescue the nation's finances, he made a lamentable end to his ambiguous career in Sens. His successor, Archbishop Fontanges announced in St. Étienne's church "the prelude to the services preparatory to public education". The Archbishop,...deeming that (the Brothers') school was for the good of religion, humanity and the country, exhorted fathers and mothers to enroll their children. High Mass was celebrated on the 31st of March in the Church of St. Jacques, and a Te Deum was sung. The head of the diocese gave Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.[31]

With this Benediction and Te Deum the story of the opening of tuition-free schools during the first century of the Lasallian Institute was complete. There were a variety of tentative projects that would have no future. Before obstacles could be overcome or before a certain tepidity could be dispelled, the right moment would have vanished. We should note, however, that here and there a seed had been sown that would spring up in the distant future. Thus, in 1787 Bishop Themines of Blois volunteered to assume complete responsibility for the support of a Brothers' school.[32] In 1788 a school might have been established at Pont-l'Eveque, if the municipal officers had shown some good will;[33] and at Pontarlier, a Renault legacy of 4,000 livres went unclaimed.[34]

There are documents that suggest that the Belgians, prior to 1789, were interested in De La Salle's disciples and had thought about inviting them to their country. In 1774 the pastor of St. Hubert's, in the Ardennes, planned to entrust the education of boys to two "little Brothers" who were to come from France. In 1786 the administration of the Austrian Low-Countries was looking for teachers who would be able to take charge of normal schools. A chancellery report read as follows: In France and especially in Nancy, Metz and Amiens there is a kind of Brother (some sort of Religious) called the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, whom the common people refer to as the "Ignorantins", because they do not teach Latin...These Brothers are dedicated to primary schools, both public and private, and their methods are basically quite analogous to those of our common schools.[35] Perhaps we could use them, especially in view of the fact that

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[28] The king even seems to envisage the opening of a residence school: the children, he says, will be taught "either while remaining with their parents or in a residence school designed for them".

[29] Departmental Archives of the Upper Garonne, Series B, Edicts register (quoted by Brother Lemandus, pp. 49-50).

[30] See above, pg. 44; Lemandus, op. cit., pg. 51-4.

[31] Motherhouse Archives, Ha q 10. relation de l'ouverture des classes dans la paroisse Sainte-Etienne de Toulouse, printed document the substance of which is contained in Brother Lemandus' book, pp. 55-9.

[32] Bergeron and Dupre, Histoire de Blois, 1847, Quoted by Sicard, pg. 425, note #1.

[33] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 534, note #1.

[34] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for January, 1935, pg. 13.

[35] From the Latin trivium which in the Middle Ages referred to the first stage of education.

their Institute has a reputation for not being expensive...They have the name of being the best teachers of penmanship and arithmetic. [36]

Thus, outside of France, a Catholic and French speaking nation was looking at men upon whom, in modern times, it would bestow such an important role.

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The high point of the residence (boarding) schools

In the triptych representing the work of the Brothers the primary schools occupy the whole of the central panel. They are the height of the accomplishment of the holiness and genius of John Baptist de La Salle. If an observer were to neglect them, he would understand nothing of the thinking that guided the work nor the plan that ordered the details and preserved the unity of the whole. If this great project of popular education were damaged or destroyed, there would remain nothing but scattered pieces -- no doubt very interesting and thoroughly admirable in themselves, but they would almost surely mislead us regarding the direction and the scope of the enterprise. The residence schools, of which we must now speak, are represented on the wings of the triptych; they are the complementary extensions, the protective parts of the central segment, and they were realized by the same hand and in the same spirit, with the same colors as the principal theme; and, as a consequence, they repeat and reinforce its harmony. To separate them would be a presumptuous and mischievous mutilation.

We have already explained the origin of these schools, their purpose and many of vicissitudes that surrounded their history. We have described the sturdy paradigm that was modelled at St. Yon by its matchless creator.[37] Its overall lines were so distinct and so successful that De La Salle's successors did not have to improve upon them. We know that prior to 1751 barely viable instances of this sort of school had been multiplied, and that the General Chapter of 1745 worried over the burdens and the disorders occasioned by the existence of residence schools operated by small Communities.[38] The Assembly, which had been convoked to accept Brother Timothy's resignation, reduced the number of residence schools to nine, while leaving to the wisdom of the Superior-general full latitude to authorize well-funded institutions which answered to indubitable needs.[39]

Of these schools, one (in Montargis) disappeared a few years later.[40] Another, in Die, does not seem to have gotten off the ground: there were only two Brothers in that city during Brother Agathon's generalate.[41] Nantes, on the other hand, had a residence school for forty years, and, after 1753, Rheims had one (both of them institutions of average importance). And in Martinique the Brothers assumed the direction of St. Victor's College.

St. Yon, St. Omer, Angers, Maréville, Montpellier and Mirepoix were the older institutions which survived. The operation of a reformatory in three of these earned a rather large income, along with, on the other hand, some rather unpleasant liabilities. It will be enough for us to add a few remarks to what we have already said concerning "the major residence schools" and "the royal residence schools" entrusted to "the people at St. Yon", to the Brothers at Providence-St. Joseph, and then to the Rossignolerie and the men at the huge and populous institution in Lorraine.[42]

We would rather prefer to emphasize "the free residence schools", whether coexisting with a reformatory or growing up without needing that sort of support. The regulations and programs at St. Omer and Marseille combined with those at St. Yon and Angers provide material for educational reflection. They

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[36] National Archives of Brussels, File 1100 B (for the of the pastor of St. Hubert's) and the archives of the Austrian Chancellery, Register 656, document D, 100/x, 3/1: transmitted by Brother M.

[37] Cf. Vol. I of the present work

[38] See above

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.. On the other hand, we have seen (pp. 236) that a residence school was associated, prior to 1767, with the tuition-free school on Rue St. Euvertus in Orleans.

[41] Statistics for 1779 and for 1790

[42] Concerning the reformatory at St. Yon, see above, pp. 302-303, 323-326, 350-351; concerning Mareville, see pages 274-279; ; concerning Angers, see pages 256-258, 478-482

show that the Brothers of the 18th century, moving along ways opened up by the Founder, had gone beyond their contemporaries. While philosophers and politicians theorized and planned, the teachers in these residence schools were proving, for example, the possibility of an education directed toward practical knowledge, which dealt with real things and prepared youth to enter with both feet into the harsh and laborious life which is the lot of most people. Over the theoreticians of the new education, the Brothers held the advantage of experience and the superiority of tradition; for their part, they employed the light of an integral Faith and the power of total dedication to souls.

When we analyze Brother Agathon's writings we return to first principles. But that will be the object of another chapter. It is important that we first take a look at the living reality. Our task is one of recalling with the assistance of witnesses the teachers and pupils in the most important of the residence schools. Setting the scene, of course, will take us back to a period prior to the generalate that began in 1777. The only residence school in Carcassonne, known as the "Charlemagne Residence School", owed its beginnings to Brother Agathon. We shall return to it at the end of our account. But in order to obtain an overall view of the others, it is from the point of vantage of the leader that we shall be best situated. The high-water mark of these institutions coincides with the period immediately preceding the French Revolution. It was then that the building of the "Rossignolerie" was completed and Maréville appeared in all the fullness of its possibilities. Everywhere there was felt the impetus of the eminent administrator and educator.[43]

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Our geographical descriptions are going to require some explanation by way of an introduction. Brother Agathon's residence schools, like the primary schools, were given a teaching personnel and textbooks perfectly adapted to their role. Replying to questions raised in 1780 by the Assembly of the Clergy,[44] Bishop La Luzerne pointed out that "the flaw in the administration of colleges" (since the suppression of the Jesuits) was "a lack of unity": people were "assembling a machine" made up of disparate pieces. On the one hand, there was a Bureau into which was admitted "citizens of every class"; and, on the other hand, there was a "principal and teachers who had practically no communication with one another" .[45]An especially well-informed man, Father Proyart, assured the board of inquiry that the remedy lay in opening a sort of normal school in the College of *St. Louis le Grand*, which would provide a "hundred candidates" an educational training at the same time that it gave twelve other carefully selected candidates, following a special preparation, entrance into school administration.[46]

The Brothers had long since become a homogeneous teaching body with administrative unity. The establishment of "higher scholasticates" had been supplying the residence schools with teachers for selected pupils similar to what Father Proyart had recommended for "University colleges".

The Superior-general very quickly followed in the ways so clearly laid down by the General Chapter of 1777.[47] St. Yon presented him with the outline of a plan of action: from the very beginning the young Brothers were trained there for teaching through polite debates-- the "attacks" of the "Academy".[48] And in each novitiate, under the guidance of the "master of novices" there were at least some practical lessons, aptitude tests for teaching, and a beginning of normal school for the benefit of those future teachers who had been through the initial stages of the religious life.[49] The "higher scholasticates" involved only a small number of very talented Brothers whom it was important "to occupy exclusively with studies"

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[43] See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July, 1937, pp. 209-235 for a thoroughly documented article on "l'Oeuvre pedogogique du T.H. Frere Agathon"

[44] Report published by Carnandet, see above pg. 516, note #3.

[45] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[46] De l'education publigne et des moyen d'en realiser la reforme projetee dans la derniere Assemblee ?generale du Clerge de France, by Father Pryart, Principal of the Royal College of Puy, Paris, 1785.

[47] See below

[48] See Vol. I of the present work

[49] Ibid.,"the training of new teachers".

in designated houses appropriate to this sort of "intellectual retreat" and for a period of time determined by the Head of the Congregations.[50]

Blessed Brother Solomon's letters enable us to glimpse the gradual development of the system. In November of 1780, Brother Solomon, who, at this date, belonged to the Institute for more than thirteen years, was relieved of his task as Procurator at Maréville in order to devote himself immediately to an intensive study of the sciences. At the time there was no program of courses in the school in Lorraine, since Brother Solomon sought instruction in mathematics from one of the "reformatory" residents who, learned if not wise, had gladly assumed the duties of professor.[51] After seven months of solitary study, sustained by the Superior-general's encouragement,[52] Brother Solomon was sent to Rouen: in the huge institution in the Faubourg St. Sever he found a fully functioning scholasticate. The Director of Scholastics was Brother Anthereus, who was described in Brother Vivien's notebook as “a (teacher) of great talent: writing, arithmetic, drawing. Painter in pastels, painter of miniatures in enamel; but especially in the education of youth and the training of people in how to teach school without getting excited, punishing, and how to get across one's views without severity. I was trained by him, and, under God, I owe him a great deal and recommend him to God's mercy.”[53]Under Brother Anthereus no one wasted time. "I'm over my head in work", wrote his student, Nicholas Le Clercq on the 25th of December, 1781. And with profound humility he adds: "I am studying a science which is way beyond the scope of my talents."[54]

Brother Agathon did not think so: in a visit to St. Yon in March of 1782 he decided to entrust this incomparable confrere with a course in the "higher scholasticate" at Melun. After having accompanied his Superior in visits to the northern Communities and visited with his family in Boulogne, the new professor was at his post in June of 1782. He taught four hours a day. Refining his instructional materials, he said, cost him a great deal.[55] The daybook at Melun accompanies his name with the title "master of students".[56] Through the same document we learn the names of some of the students whom he initiated into the secrets of mathematics: Brothers Martin, Samuel, Juventian, Damian and Emery, who had been provided with "travelling money" in April of 1785 to go, the first, to Versailles, the next two to Angers and the remaining two to St. Yon.[57]

The Superior's plan seems to have been: first of all, the training of individuals; and, then, once these efforts proved successful, the definitive establishment of centers of study. Brother Lucard believes it possible that Maréville and Angers had scholasticates modelled on St. Yon and Melun.[58] The one in. Marseilles was certainly in operation in 1786: Brother Guillaume of Jesus writes in his "Collection of Customs" that The Most Honored Brother Agathon “sent to the residence school (of this city) seven or eight candidates, professed or on the point of becoming so, who studied under the guidance of Brother Jubin, 27 years of age and an excellent calligrapher.”[59]

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[50] The seventh proposition of the General Chapter of 1777.

[51] Letter dated the 25th of December, 1780, quoted by Bishop Chassagnon, pp. 176-8.

[52] See above

[53] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 1, Brother Vivien's notebook; Cf. Chassagnon, pg. 182..

[54] Quoted by Bishop Chassagnon, pg. 182.

[55] Letter dated the 27th of September, 1784, Chassagnon, pg. 262

[56] "January 25th, 1783: 4 livres, 19 sols given to Dr. Bro. Solomon, Master of Students, for a journey he had to make to Paris, about the 9th of December."

[57] The 1st, 5th, 11th and 27th of April, 1785, funds given to "student" Brothers.

[58] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 420-1.

[59] Brother Guillaume of Jesus wrote this "residence school schedule" from memory after the Revolution. The date he gives for the organization of scholasticate courses (1780) is certainly inexact, since Brother Jubin had not arrived in Marseille until 1786 (Motherhouse Archives HB t 38, Historique des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes a Marseille).

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Through the textbooks published in accordance with the Superior-generals instructions and by way of teachers' and pupils' notebooks preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, we are in a position to reconstruct a rather exact notion of the Scholastics' programs of studies and followed in most of the Scholasticates. A "general privilege", dated 1786, authorized the Christian Brothers to "have printed and sell for a period of fifteen years" (besides *The Conduct of Schools*, the *Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation, Chapter Decrees, Circular Letters and Notices* by the Superior and *Meditations for Retreats* an "abridged French Grammar" and a "Treatise on Arithmetic" for use in their primary and residence schools.[60]

The first of these two books was published three years earlier by the widow of Laurence Dumesnil, under the title, *Abridgment of the Principles of French Grammar, for Use in the Christian Schools.* Through Brother Vivien we know that the author was Brother Fulgence, who was from Anjou, a former pupil in the residence school of Providence-St. Joseph; he entered the Institute at twenty-six years of age, in the year that Brother Agathon was elected Superior-general who, according to Brother Vivien, greatly appreciated "his virtues and his talents" and employed him as his secretary -- the Superior's "right hand",[61] as the author of the notebook writes. A quotation will convey the direct and familiar style of this textbook: “When one is thoroughly acquainted with the various syllables, the sounds of the tenses and the "persons" of the verbs, one knows more than half of orthography. Learn the tenses of the verbs, and spell these words by heart. You cannot do better than to take the different tenses of the verbs to practice handwriting...Because they fail to observe the above, artisans, girls, women, people who read very little and those who read without reflection do not know orthography, which comes to about three-quarters of everybody. If children are thoroughly practiced in the conjugations of the verbs, they won’t speak so poorly...Corrupt language is an insurmountable obstacle to orthography.”[62]

The Treatise on Arithmetic for Use of Residents and Pupils of the Brothers of the Christian Schools had the same publisher as the grammar and is dated 1787.[63] Brother Alberic (François Pierre Sylvester), who made his novitiate in Maréville, was, if not the author of the entire book, at least the one who revised it and prepared it for publication.[64] In a long preface he specifies his purpose: he wished “to spare young people the trouble of using textbooks which are frequently inexact, but which still rob them of time that might more usefully be employed in studying other subjects or in improving themselves in the art of calculation.” Practical problems are included with the explanation of principles: "superfluous...(and) unusual questions" are avoided. Once the four fundamental rules are taught, the book immediately takes up the study of fractions: “Fractions are not difficult: frequently the very name of a science will strike terror, although given the light provided by principles thoroughly understood, nothing is easier. Indeed, what is the problem here? Addition? Subtraction? We already know how to do these. Multiplication or division? Those who have thoroughly understood what has gone before will have no difficulty in performing these operations. Perhaps we imagine that these calculations will be difficult, because there are two numbers, one above the other, separated by a line. But the fact is that we operate on only one number at a time...”

In this way the teacher instills confidence in his pupils. "Regarding the rules of `Interest' and `Discount" he "proposes formulae that experience has proved quite useful", and which exercises the reason. In the extraction of "Square roots" and "Cube roots" he "finds a way to approximate the true root" by giving an account of decimals, which can be used in other operations as well; and although frequently we only obtain a result that approaches the true root, the error may be so small that it can be regarded as inconsequential...

Brother Guillaume of Jesus wrote this "residence school schedule" from memory after the Revolution. The date he gives for the organization of scholasticate courses (1780) is certainly inexact, since Brother Jubin had not arrived in Marseille until 1786 (Motherhouse Archives HB t 38, Historique des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes a Marseille).

[60] Motherhouse Archives, R 1.

[61] Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 515. "In the world" Brother Fulgence's name was Mathurin Viau.

[62] Abridgement, pg. 80. The Motherhouse, under the heading Ej e, owns a copy of this book.

[63] Motherhouse copy, Ej e.

[64] Lucard, Vo. II, pg. 513. Two of Brother Frumence's letters suggest that Brother Agathon himself supervised this work. (See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July, 1937, pg. 222.)

Whether he deals with the money system, weights and measures or foreign exchange, Brother Alberic remains faithful to his program: to combine "sufficient clear and precise principle" to the relations and calculations that a young man, become bookkeeper, merchant or manufacturer, will need and for whom his teacher's book would always provide a handy reference.

Even if it were the only one published by the Brothers prior to 1789, this was an excellent textbook; but it was not an isolated instances. We have examined three others, voluminous manuscripts, carefully bound.[65] One, in octavo, square, of 665 pages, is a sort of catechetical arithmetic, which employs questions and answers; it contains, besides, many problems and their solutions. "Done at St. Yon in the year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-sixty-nine" and "concerned with business and finance", it was probably written by Brother Maur, the renowned teacher at St. Yon and, thereafter, at Melun and Boulogne.[66] A second textbook, in quarto, of 344 pages and dateless, presents a "table of relations and connections of weights of the principal cities or provinces". It opens with the delightful lines: “Since arithmetic occupies one of the first places among the human sciences, and its object is of such a vast scope, it is generally required for all the arts and it frequently preoccupies the attention of great men; by its means Archimedes alone and over a long period of time wore out the Roman army. St. Jerome proved its excellence when he asserts that numbers have a wonderful power. Holy Scripture seems to impose upon us the necessity of learning arithmetic, with the example of the unfaithful servant as well as the example of the innkeeper to whom many talents were entrusted”.

To Brother Florentine of Jesus (Jean Rousaud) is attributed by a reliable authority the third manuscript -- a complete course of marvelous calligraphy comprising no less than 894 pages. Brother Florentine was the third Director of the school in Aurillac. After the "diaspora" of 1792, he became the tutor of the young Delzuns, the son of the future Baron of the Empire. His manuscript was a compendium of the instruction given his pupil. It bears indisputable testimony regarding study programs prior to the Revolution.[67]

The student notebooks are themselves convincing proofs in favor of the quantity and quality of the work done in Brothers' schools. A youth, practicing to keep a commercial account book, writes on the first page: "Let it be done in the name of God. Amen". There follows a journal for January-June 1776 and then a ledger index. The journal is resumed for July-December and leaves room for another index. The transactions indicated throughout these pages suggest that the document originated in a city where maritime commerce occupied an important place -- Boulogne, Rouen or Nantes. Similarly, there is a "double-entry cash book" headed by the words: ‘In the name of God and under the protection of the Glorious Virgin Mary, I undertake commerce, in this year one-thousand-seven-hundred-and-ninety.”[68] There is also a notebook of 250 spotless pages, in a beautiful handwriting which deals with theoretical and applied arithmetic, with an account of bookkeeping added. On the first page we read: "Auget, de Saumur, dealer in windows"; and on the last page: This arithmetic book was finished on the 31st of January, 1786, at the Christian Brothers of the Rossignolerie, in Angers.[69]

While the knowledge of numbers had always been cultivated with the greatest success by the followers of John Baptist de La Salle, and while their specialty, already acknowledged by the 18th century, had been unhesitatingly extended into algebra and geometry (as another beautifully written document of 220 pages testifies), and while astronomy, especially in connection with navigation,[70] occupied them, they were far from being strangers to literature. There are two interesting texts that acquaint us with the Brothers' classes in literature and literary style. One of them is entitled *Elements of Rhetoric or Eloquence*;

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[65] Motherhouse Archives, Ej e.

[66] According to Brother Lucard, Brother Maur published an abridgement of his arithmetical treatise in 1785. We have found no trace of it. On the other hand, it is quite probable that (as the same author suggests) Brother Maur's manuscript served as the basis for Brother Alberic's work. (Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 513).

[67] Today this third manuscript, like the two preceding ones, belongs to the Motherhouse (E j e, 26). Brother Florentine's pupil, the Baron Delzons, become a judge in the Aurillac courts, made a gift of it to one of his teachers' successors in that city, Brother Amancius. (Unfortunately, several pages (from pg. 878 to 891) are missing.) See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for July, 1922, pp. 264-65).

[68] Motherhouse Archives EG e 7.

[69] Ibid. Pointed out in the Historique des etablissements de Bretagne et d'Anjou

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it explains "invention", "arrangement" and "elocution"; it teaches how to assemble ideas, to compose a theme in French, and how to use "turns of thought" and "figures of speech". The other text seems to be an abridgment of the preceding document: and while the theory is reduced to a few paragraphs, the quotations, on the other hand are numerous and well-selected. The Elements refers especially to books of Graeco-Latin antiquity; while the Abridgment eagerly borrows its example from contemporary authors, not only Bossuet and Fenelon, but Corneille, Racine, Boileau and La Fontaine, as well as Milton, Voltaire and the "lyricist" who was in fashion in the 18th century, Jean Baptist Rousseau. The fly-leaf informs us that this little book in 1782 had been used by Brother Olivier. And the inside cover bears the following, which is ample indication of its origin: St. Yon (where Brother Olivier taught with Brother Anthereus).

There is not one of these books that does not witness to the intellectual value and the technical competence of the teachers, who made the sincerest and widest appeal to their pupils' reason. They accorded only its normal place to memory in education, including the education of the youngest children; they regarded the memory as an auxiliary faculty, which prepared the ground, and which, after the indispensable operations of the mind, helped in the retention of acquired positions. Ever ready to use the Socratic method championed by their Founder, they sought by means of questions to enable minds and consciences to discover the truth which resided in their depths. As the author of the abridged grammar remarks, the entire value of study is lost when children attempt to do nothing more than remember words.[71]

The same principles were applied to the study of religion. With zeal for the apostolate and the most persevering and most detailed study entering into play, these principles secured an immense success for the "catechism classes" taught by the Brothers.[72] Within the Institute there was no deviation from the lines so successfully traced out by De La Salle himself. Opening the little book, probably written in Brother Agathon's time and still in use in the 19th century, that might have been called "Brother Primael's Catechism",[73] we find that its questions are brief and clear, and the answers are also couched in concise sentences and filled with the purest essence of Christianity. Striking stories, borrowed from the Old Testament, speak to the imagination of the child. Conclusions are summarized in a few axioms. No concessions are made to the world's errors and illusions. The teaching is severe; and without beating about the bush, the book declares that the Christian is a man who struggles, sacrifices and suffers. In connection with the Seventh Commandment, it presents an excellent lesson on social morality, which reminds merchants of their strict obligations regarding honesty, "servant" and "day-laborers" of their duty to fulfill their tasks well; it formally condemns usury as well as commercial "monopolies". The teaching was a direct preparation for its young audiences' future activities. For the rest, in the commentary on the virtue of hope there was a quite characteristic opposition to the narrowness and harshness of Jansenism:
(To the despairing) we must reply that...God has created them for Himself and that Jesus Christ suffered and died for them; that God does not will the death of any sinner...

The same cluster of ideas, developed more broadly and offered for the meditation of more mature minds is met with again in the "lectures on philosophy" .[74] Doubtless we are here dealing with material for the use of novices and scholastics. If Brother Paschal is not the author of it, his 1786 report must surely have inspired it. In it we find psychology and morality explained in the light of revelation. It is first and foremost a depiction of the greatness and the misery of man, an analysis of his intellectual operations, an explanation of the role of Grace in his life, and an elucidation of free will. The section dealing with morality also ends up with considerations concerning the Faith: it affirms that human virtues, in order to assume their genuine value, must transcend the natural order, become "theological", rely upon metaphysical certitude, and ultimately be the manifestation of a love that responds to the greatest love -- that of the Creator for His creature.

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[71] Motherhouse Archives EG e. In Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 516-21, there are other important quotations, but too numerous to be reproduced here.

[72] See Vol. I of the present work

[73] In fact, according to a remark in the manuscript, Brother Primael "used" it: it seems that another Brother (Dacian?) whose name is crossed out owned it first. The date, "the 16th of October, 1832" on the inside of the cover seems to suggest merely a more recent use.

[74] In the "Memorandum concerning what is necessary for the founding off a Christian Brothers' school", a manuscript on file in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse; there is a verified copy in the Motherhouse Archives, L j n-1.

Frequent references to the Christian Brothers (the educational mission, moderation of, and discretion in, the desire to teach, the union of an exalted ideal and a profound humility, obedience to the Evangelical counsels) betray the special audience intended for this book. The extensive refutation of atheism and the associated doctrines of "eternal matter" and of the "materiality of the soul" fix the period of its composition to a time after the publication of the *Encyclopedia* and the books of Helvetius and Holbach. And, in this connection, we find an adequate suggestion in the lines wherein is branded "the dark and infernal project of modern philosophy", namely, "the abolition of the Christian religion and the monarchy in France". It may have been written about 1789: “The first part (of this scheme) is already quite advanced. The contagion of irreligion has touched all orders of the citizenry, all are infected with the poison of unbelief. Teachers imbued with the tenets of the new philosophy...corrupt tender youth...and by turning out raw Deists and materialists they prepare a monstrous generation for the future.”

In the face of his enemies, the Christian teacher must be securely armed. Throughout his career he will strive to perfect the spiritual capital that his Directors provided him with in the course of his formation. To aid his study and reading, a "library" was set up in each Community of the Institute. In a manuscript dated 1783 we note a list of books which must be procured when a house is opened.[75] This was not an exhaustive catalogue, and, as we shall see, some institutions were more generously supplied. Included in the list, along with the *Royaumont Bible*, the *New Testament* and the *Imitation of Christ*, were Father Berruyer's *History of God's People*, Flavius Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, Father Choisy's *Ecclesiastical History*, various writings by Jesuits, such as Rodriguez, Crasset and Saint-Jure, the "*Spiritual Works of Fenelon*", the *Catechisms of Grenada and Bellarmine*, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and Grenoble's and Bonnal's Theology. In addition, of course, there were the books which constituted the Institute's patrimony, especially the Duties of a Christian, called "De La Salle's Catechism", and the Life of the Founder under the abridged title, Bleyn (sic). Against Jansenism, one could always have recourse to Father Patouiller's "Index". And, finally, professional obligations required at least Barreme's "Arithmetic", a dictionary and a French grammar.[76]

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A hundred years after the first Brothers' elementary school in Rheims, after Father Barré's legacy in the Parisian parish of St. Sulpice, and sixty years after the death of John Baptist de La Salle, the Brothers were still part of the tradition of the precursor, the austere Minim priest, as well as within the tradition of their Founder, the priest who had sacrificed everything in the service of souls. They had not yielded to the spirit of the times. Their names were still buried in obscurity as, like their predecessors they, they aspired to perfection, while determined to preserve their faith and that of their pupils in all its integrity. Their vocation remained one of "Evangelical education", i.e., ordered to man's supernatural goal, which has its beginning and its term in revealed truth. And while they developed to some extent their initial program, they did so in order to achieve their goal, to shield their pupils from heresy and sophistry and to broaden and consolidate the foundation of a social structure which, for the want of faith, was crumbling and was on the point of collapsing. Unfortunately, there were too few of them for such a nearly superhuman task. Nevertheless, they worked, without pride or discouragement, but rather with the optimism of those who trust in Providence and expect that the Good will triumph in the end.

Totally at the disposition of their Superiors, they went where obedience led them. Should they give evidence of special talents, should they add to their early studies an intellectual accomplishment that translated into greater knowledge and authority, they might (certainly not demand it as a right or as a favor, but) be given a new responsibility -- a transfer to a residence school. Leaving a small Community and already professed ("or on the point of being so"), fresh from a "higher scholasticate", or again, selected from among many after their novitiate, they began or resumed their teaching in major institutions in Normandy, Anjou, Lorraine, Province or Languedoc.

For the moment, we shall observe the Brothers at St. Yon. We are acquainted with the huge estate in the Faubourg St. Sever, its buildings, its gardens and the Chapel which contained De La Salle's remains.[77] The "Regime's" departure in 1771[78] had not altered the many strictly regulated activities of this

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[75] See above pp. 125 ei.sq.

[76] Ibid. pp. 342-344.

[77] statistics in 1779. In 1790 the statistics showed a decrease: the Community included only 75 Brothers at that date. Brother Solomon, in 1788, writes of 125 Brothers living at St. Yon.

celebrated institution. The Directors of the "small residents" and of the reformatory, Prefect, Procurator, Deputy-procurator, teachers, Director of novices, Scholastics, working-Brothers, the elderly and the infirm who, in prayer, were closing out their days -- in all, perhaps a hundred Brothers lived here. Thirty or forty postulants and novices prepared here for their calling and followed the Rule of the Institute.

Here work was the universal law. A contemporary document reads: “Regardless of the hour of the day one visits St. Yon, outside of periods of recreation, which are brief, the Brothers, like ancient monks under their primitive conditions, are at work...Even old men who are not completely feeble have occupations proportioned to their energies...There are no servants, except for one or two who groom and drive the horses and perform external tasks.” The food was frugal, the clothing poor and coarse and the furniture worthless. Each one, considering himself (in the post he occupied) "as a head-of-household", practiced the strictest economy.

In 1779, this policy permitted certain improvements in the buildings that had been constructed in haste and with cheap materials.[79] And it alone explains the accumulation of a modest fortune in real estate: farms and tillage in Grand and Petit Quevilly, at Petit Couronne, at St. Pierre Manneville and at Sotteville; a house on Rue St. Romain; four huts (apart from the estate's outbuildings) on Rues Brouettes and St. Julian's [80] It's a great mistake to speak of the institution's "wealth". The total value of its acquisitions did not exceed 100,000 livres. The several buildings allocated for the Community, the Chaplain and the schools were nonproductive. Rents and additional incomes came to 6,640 livres of "sure revenue". Upon this was levied (apart from taxes and several pensions) the expenses of supporting the school and the teachers in St. Sever, rent for schools in Carville (Darnetal), Coutances and Cherbourg, the annual subsidy to the schools in Rouen and the Chaplain's honorarium. These expenses nearly equalled the receipts from landed capital. This was an opinion, the Brothers admitted, that some people might regard with suspicion but which could not be contradicted by any evidence.[81]

The general budget was balanced only by resident pupils' tuition. On the 18th of February, 1776, the reformatory had seventy-four inmates -- feebleminded, fanatics, insane, people ruined by debt and debauchery, "black sheep" who had dishonored their families and priests and Religious against whom their superiors had strenuous reasons for complaint.[82] In 1786 their number rose to eighty, of which twenty-three, mostly insane, had been at St. Yon for ten years or more.[83] By that time the ordinary cost of residence at St. Yon had risen to 500 livres. The regulation had not changed in the course of a century: remanded to the care of the Brothers by a *lettre de cachet*, "residents by order of the king" were first of all stripped of whatever objects with which they might make an attempt upon their lives. The more reasonable and the calmer ones among them worked in their rooms at writing or at manual tasks, or they were authorized to go to the shops, or follow courses in grammar, arithmetic, bookkeeping or drawing. They recreated in groups of ten or twelve, presided over by a Brother. Religious exercises followed one after the other, from morning prayer and Mass to meditation in the evening, according to a schedule that paralleled that of the Community. Nightly rounds in the corridors, the parks and gardens prevented disorders and escapes. Rebellions were an ever-present danger: the most recent had occurred in July of 1774; and it required the intervention of M. Crosne and the confinement to the dungeon of its three instigators .[84]

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[78] Tableau du temporel de la Maison de Saint-Yon, 1783; Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 537.
Tableau du temporel de la Maison de Saint-Yon, 1783; Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, D, 537.

[79] Ibid., 1783 and the Motherhouse Archives. Cahiers des permissions de Saint-Yon, 20th of February, 1779.

[80] Tableau cited. Cf. Canon Farcy, Le Manoir de Saint-Yon, pg. 93.

[81] Tableau cited.

[82] Departmental Archives of the Lower Seine, Chartrier de Belbeuf, B 13.

[83] Ibid. From 1728 to 1790 125 residents died and were buried in the cemetery at St. Yon; sixteen were less than twenty years old and fifty-six were over sixty years (Municipal library of Rouen, Ms. 847-857, Obituary record.)

[84] For more details, see the book already referred to, by Canon Farcy, pp. 117-183. Robillard. Beaurepaire's Notice sur les Maisons de force de la generalate de Rosen avant 1790 should also be consulted. In the Motherhouse Archives (H n 3-2)

The boys and youths in the free residence school, fortunately, heard only the diminished echoes of these riots. The intermediate section of the "libertines", the unruly and incorrigible, whom De La Salle had at one time accepted at the request of parents,[85]no longer existed. A royal letter of the 14th of December, 1757, had forbidden the Brothers to yield to the unilateral initiatives of parental authority.[86] Families had always to be furnished with *lettres de cachet;* and all rebellious inmates, whatever the cause of their detention, must be subject to reformatory rules. As the "Rouen Bulletin for 1774"[87] notes, there was complete separation between the two types of residents, both in the classrooms and in religious services and throughout the day and night. The actual statistics for this school population must have varied from 300 to 500 pupils,[88] who were admitted "from the age of seven years to seventeen exclusively".[89] Publicity in 1774 certifies that pupils were taught everything having to do with commerce, finance, the military, architecture, mathematics, and in a word, everything a young man can learn except Latin.[90] Of course, this cannot be taken literally. A "Regulation for the Primary residence school" (which seems, however, to be dated twenty-four years earlier) lists the subjects taught as grammar, arithmetic, the reading of "contracts", commercial account books and catechism.[91] These are also the subjects found in Brother Emery's manuscript list.[92] Drawing, he observes, was optional. In 1787, during one of his visits to St. Yon, the Superior-general decided that "free residents who wished to be admitted to drawing classes would have to pay twelve livres..." At the same date a supplementary payment was demanded for "mathematics class" ;[93] obviously, the reference is to special mathematics.[94] Hence, it must be concluded that over and above the program of studies common to all pupils (the one referred to in the "Regulation" and in Brother Emery's manuscript), a good number of advanced courses were gradually organized, at the request of families and because the institution was employing expert teaching personnel. History, geography, French literature and rhetoric, architecture and music constituted the cycle of secondary education that had a rather novel look. But the great achievement rested with the sciences, upon which depended the future of many a young person.

The General Regulation of St. Yon, which had been brought to Melun by Brother Agathon, disappeared after 1792.[95] The texts analyzed below will enable us to learn something of it. Besides, there exists several quotations from it in a notebook of "Permissions", begun in May, 1788 and discontinued on the 25th of February, 1790, which contains the handwriting of the Superior-general and of his Secretary, Brother Solomon.[96] The pages that are preserved have to do with the duties of the Brother Director, the

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there are some rather curious pages written by Brother Emery regarding the administration of the reformatory. These are recollections, written after the Revolution, by an eyewitness

[85] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 341-344.

[86] Beaurepaire, op. cit., pg. 7

[87] Reedited by Edward Pelay as an appendix to Translation du corps de l'abbe de La Salle (Rouen, 1875).

[88] The statistics for 1778 give the figure as 320; the statistics for 1790 give 530. Perhaps inmates of the reformatory must be subtracted from the second figure. In a letter dated the 18th of September, 1788, Brother Solomon writes of "170 free resident pupils" present "in the sanctuary". But we would have to assume that only half the pupils were present for the retreat to which the letter-writer is alluding.

[89] Tableau de Rouen, pg. 125.

[90] Ibid.

[91] A seven page notebook in the Motherhouse Archives. The date "1750" is barely discernible on the cover.

[92] Motherhouse Archives, pages preceding the ones that have to do with the reformatory.

[93] Ibid. Notebook of Permissions.

[94] Since elementary mathematics was included in the general program.

[95] Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pg. 333, note #1.

[96] Motherhouse Archives, HA m 5, fifty-page notebook, of which sixteen are blank.

Prefect of the free residents' school, the teachers, the Brother Sub-Procurator (responsible for directing and supervising workers and servants) and the "head of the Infirmary". It contains a discussion of the Confraternity of the Most Blessed Virgin, which it was thought expedient to suppress in the reformatory. But this fragmentary data takes on its real significance only when joined to the overall account written by Brother Agathon for the direction of all residence schools.[97] Further, there is no doubt but what the Superior, whose work we shall examine a little later, was thinking especially of the institution in Normandy; he was looking at documents which related to it, the most ancient of which went back as far as the Founder. The other institutions were modelled on it. Before proceeding to general documents which will determine, as thoroughly as possible, the structure of the typical residence school, by looking at how later schools functioned, we shall meet with many reminders of that great educational center.
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Beginning in 1771, among the paying residence schools in the "eastern" province there were (compass points notwithstanding) St. Omer along with the schools in Artois and Picardy. The foundation at St. Omer came twenty-five years after St. Yon. In 1725 a few resident pupils were recruited into the school. They followed the same classes as the tuition-free pupils; and a few special courses rounded out their program. The experiment proved so successful that in 1728 the city authorized the Brothers to put up a building in which henceforth the residence school would enjoy autonomy.[98] The growth of the enterprise was quite modest, although steady and secure; which was why the General Chapter in 1751, while radically suppressing such institutions, spared St. Omer. With some exceptions,[99] the "Magistracy"[100] continued to be favorable, and the local middle-class sent some of their sons there, although the number of pupils never went much beyond sixty. Its history was uneventful. But suddenly, on the 2nd of February, 1765, disaster struck: the school caught fire "with such ferocity" that in two hours the entire building was consumed.[101] The pupils were at first housed in the College of English Priests. But an excessively long "emergency" frayed this generosity; and the Brothers and their pupils were obliged "to pull up stakes" and take refuge "in the first vacant house" .[102] Finally, "the Assembly of leading citizens of the city and the town of St. Omer" agreed that the Brothers should appropriate the municipal property of St. Marguerite for immediate rebuilding. The residence school was reborn "stronger and more spacious" .[103]

The "catalogue concerning the Brothers residence school in St. Omer" seems to date from this second period. It is a prospectus which reveals rather well the nature of the institution. The school "neither admitted nor kept any but children of good morals and good will". It was founded on a single-minded model, like the primitive St. Yon, before the Founder assumed responsibility for the "libertines". It was, of course, an institution dedicated to "Christian education", which emphasized daily and obligatory "exercises of piety". The pupils might have been handpicked since tuition was expensive: "499 livres for 9-13 year olds, 450 livres for pupils over thirteen". (In 1725 the original tuition was 280 livres.) Each resident had his own room, and heat a light were paid for by the school.

The program of studies was as follows: Instruction is given...in reading perfectly and systematically, in deciphering ancient and modern handwriting; calligraphy, spelling, arithmetic, foreign exchange, money speculation, single and double entry bookkeeping, the elements of geometry and algebra, figure and ornamental drawing, civil and military architecture, land maps, landscaping, hydrography and gnomonics.

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[97] See below, pp. 603 et. sq

[98] Bled, les Freres des Ecoles chretiennes a Saint-Omer, pp. 13-14.

[99] The city government.

[100] In 1742, there were some difficulties which were without consequences.

[101] Bled, op. cit., pg. 14; Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 267-8.

[102] Idem., pg. 15, request made by the Brothers to the Assembly of leading citizens of St. Omer

[103] Bled, pg. 14, following the Great Chartulary of St. Bertin, Vol. X[103].

As usual, the practical application of science was paramount, and it extended as far as showing young people how to set up a sundial.[104]

There was nothing special about the education and discipline in the residence school in Rheims, the importance of which was about equal to that of St. Omer, but over which the City of Rheims and the Institute debated for ten years.[105] Its eighty pupils lived in a long, two-storied building, with a third story under the eves; the latter was the extension of the Brothers' chapel and ran perpendicularly to the Rue Neuve and the Rue Barbatre, which were separated by other pieces of property. To the southwest there was a courtyard; and to the northeast the Community's garden stretched out toward Rue Contray.[106] Whatever remained of this complex was destroyed during the First World War (1915-1918). But at least on a part of this soil, consecrated to the memories of St. John Baptist de La Salle and his first followers, the old growth has taken new roots. A Brothers' day-school has replaced the residence school.

To the third (and principal) ancient institution that we shall encounter on our road as we move eastward 20th, century Brothers have no hope, nor do they have any wish, to return. They have left to others a mission which was never in their direct line of sight. Maréville, near Nancy, has become once again "a place for shut-ins", a shelter for the mentally ill. Thousands of poor human beings, entrusted to the care of psychiatrists and nuns, walk the huge asylum, their minds depressed or unconscious.

There remain more than traces of the structures built in the 18th century.[107] The Community room, called rather pompously "the Chapter room" ,[108] preserves intact the Louis XV wainscoting. The splendid chapel continues to be a place of worship and prayer; for several years, and for the want of funds for a thoroughgoing restoration, it has, unfortunately, been without its hexagonal roof and the belltower that once crowned its dome. Within, it retains its look of former times: a sumptuously decorated cupola around a keystone with its symbolic pelican, statues of St. Anne and St. Roch and an altar-rail executed by the celebrated John Lamour; in the transept, which was furnished for a different type of resident, and in the single nave, there are large paintings, some of which came from the Spanish school and four of them, depicting the Visitation, the Marriage of the Blessed Virgin, the Presentation of Mary and the Infant Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem, were attributed to Claude Charles, one of Leopold of Lorraine's painters.[109]

This beautiful edifice was begun in 1778, when Brother Solomon was Procurator at Maréville, and it overlooked the vast construction yards that had recently been opened at the institution. On the 10th of December, 1777, a piece of land had been acquired in order to obtain all the room needed as a site for the chapel.[110] To the west, the sides of the hill were excavated in order to construct at the same level that part of the structure which today forms one of the asylum's "quarters".[111] The Community Brothers, novices, resident pupils, and Brothers retired from the schools in Lorraine and Champagne all required separate facilities.[112] The soil that was removed was used for an arrangement of terraces where vines were planted.

It was a bold and grandiose project. In July of 1778 preparations were made to cut down the trees in a neighboring wood for the lumber. The king had made over the trees to the Brothers in exchange for a

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[104] Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 22-3.

[105] See above, pp. 362-372.

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[106] Essai historique sur la Maison-Mere, pg. 71, view of the buildings according to Povillon-Pierrard's sketch (1819) and overall map. See also Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for January, 1907, pg. 9.

[107] Among these traces we include a door concealed by a modern structure, a dormitory and a pharmacy with antique crockery jars.

[108] Perhaps the provincial Chapters met there in 1776 and 1786.

[109] Memoires de l'Academie Stanislas, 1847, pg. 249. Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pg. 134. Claude Charles lived from 1661 to 1747.

[110] Doctor Archambault, op. cit., pg. 443.

[111] Ch. Pfister, Historique de Nancy, Vol. III

[112] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May, 1908, pg. 133

quitrent.[113] A great amount of money was required. "Letters Patent" from Louis XVI, dated the 15th of July, 1779, raised to 500 livres the cost of room and board for the inmates[114] and authorized a loan of 500,000 livres.

Outbuildings were constructed: a bakery, a locksmith shop, blacksmith shop, carpenter shop, cobbler shop, a laundry and sewing rooms. There were fountains, a fish pond and greenhouses. The main, "Leopold", building, reaching as far as the chapel and rising above it, lifted its majestic facade in the midst of gardens and orchards, and in a framework of groves, and was crowned by the estate's forest which rose over al1.[115] In 1757 and again in 1762 the Brothers in Maréville had obtained the right to acquire some pieces of property "to support themselves more securely".[116] They owned several farms and an important vineyard. During the three years in which he was responsible for temporal affairs, the saintly Brother Solomon found himself a prey to many concerns: "Accounts, reports, payments and expenses, household matters..." He described himself to his family as haunting "the shops, fairs and markets", and then "spending nearly two weeks in the fields, cutting, drying and hauling the hay" .[117] He knew how to raise his mind above his tasks. But there were others who could be lulled to sleep or swallowed up by this sort of success. And this is indeed what seems to have happened.

In this connection the "Maréville file" in the Motherhouse Archives contains two revealing documents. The first is "Reflections on the management of the institution", a forty-page notebook bearing the date 1787; and then there is a "Report of a visitation", dated July 1790. The Superior-general was aware of these documents; and, on the 13th of September, 1789, he formally approved of the conclusions to the prior one of the two.

Brother Jean de Marie (André Toye-Collègue) the Director since 1774, had thirty or forty Brothers[118] and about twenty novices under his guidance. He was regarded as having "good and great qualities". He was also a man of feeling, as we can see from the exquisite letter he wrote on the 24th of February, 1776 to M. Francis Le Clercq to let him know how highly he thought of the Boulogne businessman's son, and what "fraternal" friendship he felt for the young Brother, the model of "gentleness", "sincerity" and "exactitude in the fulfillment of his duties", and inspired with a marvelous zeal for the novices, of whom Brother Solomon was at the time the Director.[119] Brother Jeann was a wise counsellor who had served with distinction at the General Chapter of 1777. He displayed "a great deal of energy". And who, indeed, could doubt it, since the material progress of Maréville and the splendors of its chapel were due to him? Nobody questioned his "worth", his wide-ranging intelligence nor his many "ideas". But he allowed himself to be absorbed by his undertakings and distracted by the outside world. And in the exercise of authority he lacked coherence and moral force. The effects of these deficiencies were particularly regrettable for the religious life of the Community. It became an occasion for relaxation for some Brothers who committed indiscretions, complained and lost sight of their "final purpose". The higher they were situated the less tractable they became, and they actually modelled themselves on the example of

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113 Brother Solomon's letter from Maréville to his father, dated the 25th of July, 1778. (Motherhouse Archives, R-2.)

114 Except for the "natives of Lorraine and Barrois" who continued to pay 400 livres (Motherhouse Archives, HA q y, Mareville file.); Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 475.

115 For an excellent map of Mareville, see the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for March, 1908, pg. 72 and for July, 1924, pg 205.

116 Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May, 1908, pg. 133, note #2.

117 Motherhouse Archives, letters dated the 30th of August, 1777, 2nd of January and 19th of July, 1778: quoted by Bishop Chassagnon, pg. 164. In the Registre des recette et depenses, from 1768 to 1782 (Archives of the Mareville institution) there are both numerous instances of Brother Solomon's signature and evidence of the Superior-general's sojourns in 1778.

118 In his letter of the 3rd of January, 1778, to his elder brother, Antony, Brother Solomon writes of 60 Brothers: but this figure must include the novices. The statistics for 1779 indicates that there were 30 Brothers at Mareville. There were 60 in 1790.

119 Motherhouse Archives, Bl. Brother Solomon's letters. See Bishop Chassagnon's book, pp. 160-1.

the serving-Brothers. "Redditions" were no longer heard. Apparently, order was maintained, but as regards fundamentals, the author of the "Reflections" did not think that the word "anarchy" was too strong.

What with anvil and shop noises and the comings and goings of workers and tradespeople, "the house at Maréville had rather the appearance of a factory" than a monastic foundation. Merchants operated in the courtyards as they did on "fairgrounds". Too many visitors, "both men and women", were admitted and found a too easy and too generous hospitality at the hands of the Director. "Formal dinners" were frequent: they involved heavy expenditures, and they kept Brother Jean away from the Brothers' refectory.

The need of reform became evident, and the Director willingly cooperated. But men and events overwhelmed him. And while the report of 1790 is much harsher than that of 1787, the reason, obviously, was that the Revolution had already disturbed people and had broken patterns. "We can do no more", declared the Visitor, "than repeat what has often enough been observed concerning this curious institution." True, no longer were there invitations to banquets; but people go there shamelessly seeking to dine. Every week there are many non-residents dining in hall. (The `loose' talk sews discord) The Director's authority has practically been reduced to zero...Several Brothers go to Nancy, or to Laxou, without permission...and all with impunity. The document concludes severely: "It's a doomed institution".

The surface evil had certainly spread and it had begun to effect the roots. Among the better Brothers, however, there remained a reserve of faith, loyalty and dedication which would be put to work at moments of ultimate test. And in spite of the drawbacks of wealth and through obstacles exacerbated by human passion, a useful and beneficent apostolate was accomplished in Lorraine.

Here the free resident pupils were never more than a very small number in comparison with St. Yon. In 1769 there were only two-hundred, and in 1777 there were two-hundred-and-fifty. Board and room was expensive: 600 livres in the lower classes, and 1000 to 1200 in the upper classes. It was clear that the beneficiaries of such an education could only be the rich middle-class.[120] During the vast work of reconstruction the residence school was closed, and in January, 1778 there remained only forty pupils,[121] who, perhaps, were completing their studies. It was not until 1786 that the school was reopened, and Brother Jean decided to admit only boys who had not yet reached their fifteenth year, since the teachers had better success in forming younger minds and consciences. The large number of applicants afforded room for selection.[122]

The limited number of pupils, and especially the closing of the free residence school for six or seven years indicates that Maréville was primarily a reformatory, in accordance with the purpose assigned it prior to the arrival there of the Brothers. These were the views regarding the "lockup" that Brother Exuperian confided to the opening pages of the "Receipts ledger", where he explicitly refers to the "guard" for the insane. Some forty of these hapless creatures were still there in 1794, according to Pfister.[123] Concerning the total number of "residents through lettres de cachet", we possess only a single piece of absolutely reliable information: in his letter of the 3rd of January,1778, Brother Solomon, enumerating the number of mouths to be fed, states that there were 106 residence of this type. Pfister estimates that sixteen years later there was a "lockup population" of 500 inmates. This was a figure that was probably never surpassed.[124]

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120 Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, pp. 129-30.

121 Brother Solomon's letter, dated the 3rd of January, 1778.

122 Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May 1908, loc. cit. Brother Solomon's letter for the 3rd of January, 1778.

123 In volume three of his Histoire de Nancy.

124 The numbers of "schoolboys", "1304" and "1454", given in the statistics for Maréville in 1779 and 1790 have never been explained, even if they combine free resident pupils with the inmates. (Furthermore, the number of classes is not indicated.) Are we dealing here with the errors of copyists who, immediately afterward had to inscribe the "1254" and "1276" children in the "15" and "16" classes at Marseille? Bis repetita placent. But after an interval of eleven years? The second copyist (in 1790) could have started from the work of his predecessor...These are some of the mysteries and dangers of statistics.

Witnesses agree that the Brothers did not practice the brutality on the insane which was only too common in a century in which the causes and treatment of mental disorders were unknown. A licensed physician and surgeon came from Nancy only when occasional illness required their presence.[125]

Alert and responsible inmates were put under the authority of the "Prefect or First Master". Their regulation was similar to that of their counterparts at St. Yon. They studied mathematics, grammar and drawing, and they had a library at their disposal.[126] Many of them became craftsmen in iron or wood, engravers or sculptors. It is thought that the stone decoration that covers the interior of the chapel is in part their work.[127]

There seems to have been a policy of rehabilitation through work, to which was added the care and encouragement by the Brothers. Brother Solomon sketches for Achille Le Clercq the scene of the residents' Prefect, Brother Liboire, teaching and encouraging the "young M. Saint-Remy",[128] going so far as "to lose sleep over him" and "weeping" over the behavior of this boy who had made "the most humiliating confessions", only to fall back into the same faults.[129]

In forming a judgment (while keeping in mind the difference in the dates), it is well to place this scene opposite the one found in the "Reflections" of 1787.

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The western province, to which we now return to visit its residence schools that had been founded on the model of the Normand prototype in the second half of the 18th century, presents us with examples of institutions more modest than that of Maréville and more in conformity with the vocation of Christian Brothers.

The one in Nantes began unheralded, on land ceded by the royal government to Bishop Sanzay in 1742: an area of 45 measures adjoined Rue Mercoeur, to the rope-works at the General Hospital and to the cloister of the Sisters of Calvary, Faubourg Marchis in St. Similian's parish.[130]The generosity of the Bishop,[131] of the Marquis of Coetmadeuc, of the widow Marchand and of two priests, the Lorido brothers,[132] made possible the construction of a building in which the Brothers' Community would henceforth reside.

In the agreement of the 9th of February, 1751, in which Bishop Pierre Mauclerc Mausanchere authorized the new school, there was as yet no question of a residence school.[133] To house a few dozen pupils would provide some of that fixed income which was, otherwise, completely denied to the Brothers in Nantes. Within a few years the experiment met with success, which became clear enough about 1770 when Bishop Mausanchere abolished the "collection" intended to maintain buildings and provide food for the Brothers. At the same time the Brothers assumed the ownership of the institution of which they had previously received on the the use and the responsibility for its maintenance.

This was the subject of a report addressed to "the Most Illustrious and Reverend Bishop of Nantes" by Brother Eucher, Director, on the 15th of January, 1774. In it he explains that he and his confreres on Rue Mercoeur had "devoted themselves to hardships and hard work that cannot be easily described", and that they had spent "considerable funds, the result and the legitimate income of their own labors with their resident pupils", on improvements and repairs. While His Highness might well be reluctant to hand over to them the outright ownership of the institution, they expected at least, in justice,

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[125] Doctor Archambault, op. cit., pg. 447

[126] Idem., ibid., pg. 446.

[127] Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for March 1908, pp. 72-3, and May 1908, pp. 134-5.

[128] We recall that the inmates in the reformatory were given "aliases" to conceal their identities

[129] Letter dated the 19th of July, 1778, quoted in part by Bishop Chassagnon, pp. 107-8.

[130] Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG 662.

[131] Motherhouse Archives, HA q 8, Nantes file, note regarding Bishop Sanzay's will, dated the 26th of March, 1746.

[132] Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4, proposed contract of 1750.

[133] See above

that he credit them, on the capital value of the work done, with a mortgage equivalent to the total amount of their disbursements.[134]

Three months later the Bishop relinquished his title in favor of the Institute, except for those rights which a royal domain retained on such property. The transfer was confirmed on the 5th of February, 1776, by Bishop Jean Augustine Fretat Sarra. The Brothers who, in the meantime, had withdrawn their tuition-free classes from the dilapidated building [135]on Rue St. André,[136] brought their full efforts to bear on Rue Mercoeur, where they admitted "day students" for whom they continued to dispense elementary and catechetical instruction[137] according to Rule and proceeded to furnish it in a permanent way.

To build a "dwelling" where their resident pupils would be at home, in 1775 the Brothers obtained a permit from the City Council "without their being able to infer" any right to "legal or permanent existence" in a city that had persisted in "merely tolerating" them.[138]

A description of the site, prepared on the 23rd of January, 1792, by Brother Josephat, the Director, for the administrators of the District of Nantes enables us to imagine what the institution must have looked like, since it no longer exists.[139] It consisted of "four classrooms occupied by both day-pupils and residents", two parlors, a refectory "capable of seating about eighty people", an infirmary and a Community room, five dormitories that provided space for a total of "seventy small beds", next to which, "separated by a partition, were eight small bedrooms for the Brothers". The size of the chapel must have been proportioned to the small number of pupils and teachers. It was not a special building, but merely one of the institution's "seventeen rooms".[140] On what remained of the property there was only room for a courtyard, a garden, a poultry yard and three sheds.[141]

There was no room for expansion. The neighbors were opposed to it, and the preponderant rights of the State left the threat of repossession hanging over the establishment. The Community, which comprised eleven Brothers in 1779, fell to nine when the school closed. There were no more than five teachers to conduct classes in "reading, writing and matters related to commerce". Space was so restricted that the maximum number of resident pupils never exceeded sixty. We have seen that they slept in dormitories. A report was sent to Brother Agathon with the view of obtaining a rearrangement, for reasons of morality, into small individual bedrooms -- the system practiced at St. Yon, Marseille and Angers. The anonymous author.[142] who appeared smitten with the idea, insists diffusely upon the merits of the proposed renovation. Expense was no object. (On the 19th of November, 1788, the Director was able, with a single stroke of his pen, to make a gift of 30,000 livres to Melun from the profits of his institution.)[143] The sixty

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134 Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, G-4. (There is a copy of this document in the Motherhouse Archives, Nantes file.)

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid. Expert evaluation of the architect Pepaud, 12th of January, 1774.

137 The children in the tuition-free school were about 300 in 1779 and 450 in 1790. In 1792 there remained 230. (Institute's statistics and Brother Director Josaphat's statement of the situation.)

138 Municipal Archives of Nantes, DD 275.

139 In the Brothers' residence on Croisic Square there is preserved a painting of the Anunciation that comes from the chapel on Rue Mercoeur.

140 On the 24th of November, 1778, the marriage of Louis Fresneau, Lord de La Templerie and Master of the Budget to Frances Bruneau Gravelles, the daughter of the Captain-Major of the Coast Guard for the Ile of Bouin; and on the 19th of July, 1790, the Meusnier-Bonemant marriage (Municipal Archives of Nantes, GG 380 and 392.).

141 Departmental Archives of the Lower Loire, L 608.

142 Motherhouse Archives, Nantes file. The document is undated; but, the context suggests that it is later than 1777.

143 Ibid. "Permissions and prohibitions" (1782-1789). The cost of board and room was 400 livres.

or more bedrooms, however, never got built. The matter was still under discussion when the Brothers were obliged to leave Rue Mercoeur in 1792.

Conducting flourishing schools in the principal seaports, including among their pupils the sons of shipowners, enjoying the respect of the leaders of important commercial interests in Nantes, Rouen and Boulogne, which had maintained such lucrative trade with trans-Atlantic countries and the "Islands" controlled by France, the Brothers had been for a long time invited to emigrate to the colonies. In the course of this account, we have called attention to the Canadian initiatives and the invitation extended from Louisiana.[144] We must now transport ourselves to Fort Royal College in Martinique, to which we have made a hurried reference in the history of the foundations made under Brother Florence.[145]

It was the first expedition into the New World and the prelude to the "missionary vocation" of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. All the more reason to look attentively and reflect upon this beginning! Both chronology and geography dictate its insertion at this point in our story. The school in Martinique belonged to the western province of the Institute. Its development coincided as much with Brother Agathon's generalate as with the prosperous days of the schools in Nantes.

Properly speaking the Brothers did not "found" St. Victor's College: -a fact that is suggested by the name of the institution, which did not form part of the Brothers' nomenclature. According to Sydney Daney, who wrote a history of Martinique, the founder was Father Charles Francis Coutance, O.F.M. Cap.[146] in 1766. The junior branch of the Franciscan family served the island for a century; and, after having taken root on the "knoll" that still bears its name, it penetrated into the city of Fort Royal, whose parish was served by the Capuchin Fathers.[147] In this way, Father Charles Francis (whom we meet again as Apostolic Prefect)[148] was able to convince the High Council for the Colonies to undertake the founding of a College. The bylaws of the foundation were drawn up in July of 1768. The royal government, while criticising excessive power in the document's form, granted "Letters Patent".[149]

There were immediate disappointments. The teachers, recruited randomly, proved incompetent and unreliable. Families complained and most of them withdrew their children. St. Victor's vegetated and was on the verge of dying, when, in 1777, an official appeal to the Brothers' Superior concluded with the sending of two Brothers to the island. They were Brothers Aquilinus and Piat of Jesus. The latter (a native of Rethel) had been Prefect of Studies at St.. Yon. Lasallian methods and discipline were to turn the situation around.

On the 18th of September, 1777, the Martinique Gazette, in a supplement, published an extremely interesting explanation of the work that had been achieved over a period of three years. The author adopted the point of view of a father of several pupils addressing a friend who was seeking advice from him concerning the "new teachers" and the new thrust that had been in evidence at the Fort Royal College.

The Brothers, he wrote, "teach and instruct with gentleness and patience; they correct without punishing", and "by their tender care, are quite deserving of the name" by which the members of the Congregation are designated. During recreation, youths associate with them "without bashfulness, cheerfully" and quite civilly. In the classroom there was nothing but silent application to work, emulation and obedience through skillful educational methods stripped of the ancient and primitive threats of the switch and the rod. The teachers "possess the precious art of being loved". To put the boys to the test, the journalist "pretended" to want to withdraw them from the school: the alarm was acute, and the "concern" palpable.

The College was situated "in a pleasant site, ventilated and healthy"; it included spacious gardens. The food was "abundant and wholesome". On Thursdays and Fridays the pupils "go on a walk, sometimes into the city, sometimes into the countryside...; they bathe frequently." But a fatherly supervision was practised unremittingly.

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144 See above

145 Ibid., pg. 393.

146 Sydney Daney, histoire de la Martinique, Fort Royal, 1846, Vol. IV, pg. 246 and Vol. V, pg. 128.

147 Annales du Conseil souverain de la Martinique, 1876, Vol. I, pg. 37.

148 Report of the Colonial Assembly of Martinique, for the 17th of June, 1787. Saint-Pierre, Richard Press, 1788

149 Colonel Boyer-Peyereleau, Les Antilles francaises, Paris, 1825, Vol. II, pg. 239.

“Class time is only three hours in the morning and the same in the afternoon, so as not to overtax the children's minds with excessively long studies.”

While brief, class time was put to good use. At. St. Victor's instruction was given in "religion, penmanship, arithmetic and the French language"; and soon they would be teaching "geography, history, geometry, mathematics, drawing and bookkeeping". Further, for an additional cost, "excellent teachers from the city" came to teach "vocal and instrumental music", dancing and fencing. "They are trying to hire someone to teach English".

In 1777, "counting resident and day-students" there were only fifty pupils. The 660 livres in annual cost for board and room was more expensive than in France -- a discrepancy that was accounted by the cost of living in the colony and the inhabitants' income, thought "moderate" by the writer in the Gazette.[150]

The College buildings in Fort Royal were large enough to accommodate three times the number of pupils. But new admissions were found to be a less pressing problem than the sending of additional teaching personnel. In 1779 Brother Piat of Jesus and Aquilinus were the only ones teaching sixty-two children.[151] About 1780 the Superior-general decided to provide them with a great deal of help along with an outstanding leader. He sent his Procurator, Brother Dositheus, to Martinique, with two other teachers who had been trained in the Scholasticate at St. Yon. Brother Piat of Jesus was exhausted, and died in August of 1782. But earlier, one of Brother Dositheus' colleagues, a Brother Olympiad, died -- perhaps the victim of the change in climate. The Superior wrote to Brother Florence: Brother Dositheus asks for young Brothers, saying that the dangers to which they might be exposed has been greatly exaggerated. He needs trained teachers, balanced, having a good character and especially virtuous.[152]Indeed, the weather in the Antilles could have a depressing physical and moral effect on the teachers. But their desire to remain devoted was all the stronger.

The civil authorities did not forsake the school in Fort Royal. In 1784 Marshall Castries ordered the Island of Guadaloupe to contribute to the expenses of the College in Martinique by an annual payment of 5,000 livres.[153] The Martinique Colonial Assembly, created by the order of the 17th of June, 1787, heard the reading of a report in its meeting of the 29th of the following December by Father Charles Francis "on the needs" of St. Victor's school. The Assembly asked for clarifications, without, however, refusing "prompt assistance" in case of emergency.[154] Brother Dositheus had just died; but the Community of five Brothers continued to educate more than 100 pupils.[155]

* *

We now turn our attention to Anjou. It is time for us to cross the sea, ascend the Loire and the Maine to glimpse once again the steeples of St. Maurice's Cathedral and King René's palace. In 1783 we would have arrived in that neighborhood, where the residence school, called the "Rossignolerie", recently completed in the Faubourg Pressigny,in St. Julien's parish, raised its magnificent facade -- the ground-floor with its large semicircular, arched openings, three floors of windows and a roof topped off by the bell-tower, and its two wings, each one decorated half-way up with a pediment. On the central building was visible Brother Martin's clock, the mechanical masterpiece which ran regularly, without having to be set, for a century.[156] A sandstone gateway, with embossed pillars, led into the great courtyard that was framed

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150 The article in the Gazette de la Martinique of the 18th of December, 1777, is quoted in eztenso by Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pp. 381-6, following the copy found in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse.

151 General statistics for 1779.

152 Quoted (without a date) by Brother Lucard, Annales, Vol. II, pg. 724, following the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse

153 Boyer-Peyreleau, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 339

154 Report cited. The article in the Gazette de la Martinique refers to an annual subsidy of "six thousand louis" (i.e., 144,000 livres!!) granted by the royal govermnent. There is an obvious typographical error: it should read "6,000 livres".

155 According to the statistics there were 138 pupils at Fort Royal in 1790.

156 We have already spoken of Brother Marin in connection with the school in Melun. His name was Desire Chagrin and he was born in 1741 in Sergenoz in the Jura. He also built the clock at Mareville, with its six faces that could be seen from the various areas of the institution. In Angers as in Lorraine he achieved an ingenious mechanism which balanced the movement of the hands with the sun's movement in order to obtain "true time".

by the three lines formed by the buildings. The Community, the free resident pupils and "the king's residents" had their separate quarters, their yards, workshops, rooms and refectories. Looking toward the countryside, there extended a magnificent garden: "very pleasant", writes Pean Tuilerie, "(with) many charming and glorious pathways" and "small structures in which one might view landscape paintings".[157]

The plans for the residence school are generally attributed to the architect Delauney.[158] The chapel at the "Rossignolerie" was the work of Brother Francis, and it was a delightful example of Louis XVI style. It was in the shape of a Latin cross: its vaulted ceiling, in sandstone, rested on paired columns in the Doric manner.[159]

We have been looking at a Brothers' school in all its sparkling freshness through the eyes of a man of the 18th century. But in this case we need not overtax our imaginations. For, the "Rossignolerie" has survived for more than a hundred and fifty years; and today it is Anger's secondary school. The First Empire, in the belief that the Institute's property had reverted to the State, in 1896 dedicated it to that purpose, which has become permanent. The university of Napoleonic times had nothing but trouble in attempting to take over the residence school built and organized by Brother Agathon. Only the outbuildings date from our own time.[160] The garden has been considerably reduced in size by the opening of a "right-of-way" for a railroad. The kiosks with the artless paintings (Prussian blue skies strewn with yellow stars) have been destroyed. Generations of students have lived with archangels' wings on the ceiling of a former oratory transformed into a study hall.[161]

When the Christian Brothers acquired the property from Bishop de Grasse, [162] the beautiful walks and the groves of trees where birds sung had already justified the springtime name of the "Rossignolerie". But the cloister was gloomy and practically neglected. Having bought it in 1738, Bishop Vaugirault thought of turning it into a home for aged and infirm priests (under the patronage of St. Charles).[163] But that institution met with a very modest success, since those meant to be benefited preferred to receive assistance in their own homes. James de Grasse then attempted, with an equal lack of success, to turn it into a refuge for foundlings.[164] The arrangement made with Brother Agathon, Director of the Providence school, was, in every way, a fortunate event for the diocese: and the General Assembly of the Clergy hastened to approve it on th 22nd of August, 1774.

Seven years(1771-1778) of administrative and legal difficulties went by;[165] and, then, once the obstacles were overcome, nearly four years were required to complete the construction. At the beginning of November, 1782 teachers, pupils and inmates, led by Brother Eunuce, left the old Lesviere house, its "pretty chapel" recently redecorated by the Italian artist Baroni, and the soil in which reposed the earthly remains of many Brothers. By the king's order,[166] the property was to be leased out.

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[157] Description de la Ville d'Angers, 1778

[158] E.L.'s note on page 379 of Thorode's manuscript edition (see above, pp. 257).

E.L.'s note on page 379 of Thorode's manuscript edition (see above, pp. 257).

[159] Three drawings of the Rossignolerie, offering, besides an overall plan, the elevations of the principal facade and the entrance way, are on file in the Motherhouse Archives. These remarkable documents, dating from the period of the construction, in 1910 belonged to M. Tendron, an architect in Angers. He made a gift of them to a Christian Brother. They mention the fact that "the buildings were begun on the 19th of April, 1779" and that "the Community and the resident pupils lived there from the 6th of November, 1782 on".

[160] Note quoted in the Thorode's manuscript edition

[161] Elias Sorin, Histoire du lycee d'Angers, Angers, 1873, pp. 3-5.

[162] See above, pp. 478-480. The 1773 agreement was ratified, after the registration of the "Letters Patent" , by the writ of the 2nd of October, 1778, in Paris, in the presence of Boursier-Passeur and Sauvage, notaries to the Chatelet. The price of the purchase was 20,000 byres.

[163] Thorode, pg. 377

[164] Idem., pg. 378.

[165] In the journal at Melun for the 23rd of September, 1778 we read that the Procurator of the Institute paid out 1,984 Byres "in expenses due to the Oratorians...opposing the purchase of the "Rossignolerie" and for the executor...due to the pastor and the Lesviere parish...who also were opponents".

[166] Pean La Tuilerie, pg. 139; Thorode, pg. 376. Historigue des etablissements de Bretagne et d'Anjou (Motherhouse Archives HB s, 633).

On the 28th of November, Father Huchelon des Roches, pastor of St. Julien's in Angers, prepared the following report: “In virtue of the commission of the Most Illustrious and Reverend Michael Francis Couet du Vivier Lorry, Bishop of the diocese, the chapel of the new house built by the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on the land of the Rossignolerie, within the boundaries of our parish, was blessed, as well as a vault to serve as cemetery...by Father Caesar Scipio Villeneuve, licentiate in law, priest, Dean and Canon of the Church in Angers and Vicar-general of this diocese, in the presence of Brother Agathon, Superior-general of the said Congregation, Brother Eunuce, Director of this institution, Brother François, architect of the said chapel, Brother Cheron, Sub-Director, and ourselves, pastor of this parish..”[167]

There was the solemn opening, and, the Brothers, full of hope, saw their situation strengthened and their long efforts crowned with success. In gratitude for the hospitality they enjoyed at Angers, they supported two schools at their own expense -- one at the "Rossignolerie" itself and the other in Trinity parish.[168] The City Council stopped regarding them as undesirables; and in 1787, it asked them to supply a teacher of mathematics and a teacher of drawing.[169]

One of Brother Solomon's letters to his sister, Rosalie, in November of 1788 informs us that the Community numbered forty-four Brothers, the reformatory "about sixty" inmates and the free residence school "about 180 pupils", aged seven to fifteen years.[170] The pupils might have been more numerous if "the reputation of the reformatory and correctional institution" had not created an unfavorable bias in many families.[171]

However (according to the Prospectus preserved in the municipal archives in Angers[172] only pupils "of good will, good morals and docile" were admitted. They attended Mass every day and went to confession once a month. They did not go into town except on "the explicit order of their families" and under escort.

“Each pupil has his individual room...which was carefully locked at night. There he has a pallet, a mattress, and comforter, a pillow and two woollen blankets. The institution also furnishes bed and table linens.”

“The food is decent, ordinary, middle-class. The cost for room and board is 400 livres...Upon entering, each pupil pays seven livres for the chapel, the servants, and for fire and light. Further, (each semester) they pay three livres for laundry, fifty sols for ordinary paper, pens and ink, four livres and six sols for the hairdresser who arranges and combs thoroughly three times a week; and six francs, once, for text books...Residence pupils must be properly dressed and, because of the difficulty of drying laundry in the winter, they must have at least twelve shirts, and as many handkerchiefs and collars... They must bring a chest or a trunk that closes locked to secure their possessions...”

Rising is at 5:30 a.m. and retiring is at 8:15 throughout the school year...At the end of dinner there was an hour of recreation. There was another recreation, lasting one-half-hour in the middle of the afternoon. And on Tuesdays and Thursdays, during the daytime, there were walks. As for instruction nothing distinguished it from that of the residence schools we have already described.

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In the South of France, the oldest and most famous school in which the Institute offered special education, without Latin, for the sons of the middle-class sprung up in Marseille. It lacked an official deed of foundation. All that can be said is that it existed well before 1750 in the establishment on Rue Roquette

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167 Quoted in the Historique; for which see preceding note.

168 Apart from the receipts from the residence school, there was no income at Angers except 400 livres paid by the Abbess of Ronceray and Trinity parish (National Archives, L. 963).

169 Thorode, pg. 375, note #1.

170 Letter no. 85, quoted several times

171 Idee general de l'Institut des Freres et formation de l'etablissement des Ecoles chretiennes a Angers, a 43 page booklet, printed in 1790 in Angers (copy in the Motherhouse Archives, BE y 10).

172 No. 1030, folio 161 (published by Father Urseau as a supporting document for his book, L'Instruction primarie avant 1789 dans les paroisses du diocese actuel d'Angers, Angers, 1890).

where the Confraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help had housed the Brothers.[173] On the 22nd of July of that year 130 distinguished citizens of Marseille, "gentlemen, former Supervisors, business men and towns people demanded support for the institution. After a well-deserved eulogy of the teachers who had brought tuition-free education to "poor children", they declared that this work cannot survive.. if the Brothers are stripped of the income they pick up outside of their public schools...(since) the slight profit they make from their resident pupils adds what is needed to the meagre income derived from gifts and legacies. The residence school was especially "useful for young people whose parents are obliged to send them away for correction" and who, "upon emerging, have gotten over their disorders". The signers were happy to report "their testimony in favour of the truth." Nine days later the aldermen responsible attested that "the establishment was not in conformity with the order and regulations of the kingdom and therefore could not be authorised" for the correction of young people.[174]

The Marseille residence school nevertheless could be neither a place of confinement nor a reform school. As was the case already at Saint-Omer, Rheims, Nantes and Fort-Royal it would be an up-market residence school, a perfect model of "a boarding school" occupied by studious young people. This is what emerges from in the Letters Patent of February 1757.[175] The king authorises his "dearly loved Brothers of the Christian Schools in the city of Marseille" to obtain an extensive site for the price of thirty thousand livres in the Rue Neuve quarter in order to build there suitable well-aired buildings needed for a good residence school. They will continue to offer "the children of the principal merchants an appropriate Christian education, to teach the whatever is required for commerce." The concluding lines refer to what was done at Rouen without any reference to the category of large boarding schools." [176]

The new building supervised by Brother Benezet was constructed but not without some difficulties, principally those coming from the Roquette community led by Brother Benigne,[177] concerned about going into debt. The ban of major superiors about going into debt had little impact on the tough Brother Benezet who borrowed the money from several Institute houses as well as from various other religious congregations, including the Chartreuse, Carmelites, Recollects and Ursulines… The complete sum paid for the site and buildings was paid back by 1771.[178]

After two years, heavy ones for the work's master, the residence which had suffered in the meantime, was ready for occupation.[179] It was an imposing series of walls, a kind of fortress with narrow Provençal windows, with a development of approximately 120 meters along the boulevard Corderie and Rue Endoume. It took its place in the panorama of Marseille beyond the Vieux-Port, between the old abbey of Saint-Victor and the hill of Notre-Dame de la Garde.[180]

The establishment was quickly prosperous. In the accounts from 1771-1792 over 40,00 livress handed on to the novitiate at Avignon and to the Regime.[181] In 1779 there were 104 pupils and 12 teachers. In 1790, there were 280 pupils ranging between seven and fourteen years of age and a community of 29 Brothers.

Information from the prospectus is completed by the account books, inventories, the 'time-table', or more exactly, the memoir of Brother Guillaume de Jesus. In consulting his text, we have a clear idea of the house.[182]

First of all, here are some detail of the material order. The overall fee is 445 livres, plus six paid in the first quarter for "the bed, linen, laundry, hairdresser and class furniture. Breakfast consists of 5-6 ounces of fresh bread and a goblet of wine, half of which is water. At 11.30, soup is served, a meat plate, roasted or fried, one or two desserts, three servings of wine provided the goblet is half-filled with water. The dormitories are divided into cells, opened and closed by the same key.

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[173] See above, pp. 216 et. sq. The statistics for 1779 suggest the year 1730 as the date of foundation; which is an acceptable probability, in the absence of any more exact and more certain documentation.

[174] Mother House archives Historique of the Marseille house

[175] Ibid. The parchment sent was entrusted during the Revolution to the family of the Marseille Brother Ferréol and given back to the Superior General in February 1811 by the Brother's nephew, Chevalier Laget.

[176] The letters patent were registered by the Aix Parlement on 30th March 1757

[177] Letter from Brother Benezet to Brother Adrien, Visitor, 7th October 1758

[178] Historique

[179] ibid

[180] ibid

[181] ibid

[182] Cf. Prospectus

Now to the studies. French, arithmetic, accounting and geography are the common foundation. If the parents so wish, there is added "elements of geometry and algebra, a little figure drawing, embellishment, landscape, elements of architecture and navigation. There are teachers for music dance, weapons and foreign languages." These optional lessons, of course, require further payments.

The Marseille Brothers make themselves resolute defenders of the national language. An interesting article of the regulations forbids the pupils to speak 'patois' – provençal – during the recreations. In the same way, neither Spanish nor Italian are to be spoken during this time.[183]

For their personal work as for their teaching, there is a rich array of scientific tools. The physics cabinet contains a telescope, a thermometer, astronomical rings, a magnet, an electric machine, a spirit level, brass globes of the world, a compass, optical instruments, several mathematical boxes one of which cost 84 livres.

In the library can be found Mallet's Geometry, Lalande's Astronomy, Bezou's Equations, Elements of integral calculus, Differential Calculus, Newton's Treatise on Motion, collections of the Annals from the Academies of Science of Paris, Berlin and London. Among the dictionaries, that of the French Academy and that of the Sea. Besides all these, there are the 70 volumes of the Journal de Trevoux, published by the Jesuits between 1701 and 1757. History is represented by the dictionary of La Martinière, Rollin and Thou. With regard to geography there are many atlases, including Description of France with engravings valued at 250 livres. There is a superb edition of La Fontaine's Fables, illustrated in four folio editions. There is n o shortage of religious literature. In addition to the ascetical books found in all the communities, the Marseille house has the complete works of Augustine, Saint Basil. Saint Bernard, Bossuet…

Here, as in all the other boarding schools, the religious exercises surround, sustain and give a supernatural tone to each day. At a time when faith was strong, there was no hesitation in building on practices found in the family and establishing a certain parallelism, or even fusion, between the rules of the pupils and that of the Brothers. The day for a young Marsellais developed thus: After rising at 5.30am, prayer, reflection, Masas, litany of the Child Jesus, three decades of the Rosary. Before lunch, the particular examen, the De Profundis, the Angelus. At the meal itself the long Benedicité followed after by the Litany of the Passion. At one o'clock, the litany of Saint Joseph and three decades of the Rosary. At 6.00pm there was explanation of the catechism; at 8.30pm prayer and reflection in the classrooms. On Sunday, there was the morning office of the Blessed Virgin recited before Mass, Lauds and the litany of the Child Jesus afterwards. At 11.00am there was a pious reading; at 3.00pm Vespers and Compline, and in the evening, the litany of Saint Joseph, the Rosary and a second spiritual reading.

An eight-day retreat preceded the feast of the Immaculate Conception "celebrated very solemnly." This was the one day of the year when there was the *Benedicamus* during the main meal. Pupils who had to go to confession once each month prepared themselves for the 8th December feast by a minute examination. Those who had not made their first Confession during the retreat came to Communion only at Christmas and Epiphany. What can be seen here was certainly not that of Saint John Baptist de La Salle but all the strictness of the old discipline.

Certain chosen pupils had every year a second series of exercise preached by the Pères du Bon Pasteur from Sainte-Marguerite. The majority of the pupils belonged to the Congregation of the Blessed Virgin, the existence of which in the Marseille residence school certainly preceded 1755. The archives of the Institute have nine diplomas delivered to the members between 1755 and 1789 by Brothers Benezet and Macaire. The wording promises that if the family is careful to return the diploma after the death of the recipient, the Congregation will offer prayers for the repose of his soul.[184]

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Montpellier and Mirepoix were on the list of residence schools acceptable to the General Chapter of 1751. Both Communities had taught their resident pupils together with their tuition-free classes. In the first of these cities, there were twelve Brothers in 1779 for a school population (in round numbers) of 480 children. The "Letters Patent" of July 1754[185] authorized the purchase of a

[183] It is clear that there were a good number of foreign pupils

[184] Mother House Archives Letters of Brothers Benezet and Macaire

[185] The Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes for May, 1907, pp. 133-4 reproduces facsimile copies of diplomas received by Joseph Guerin and Draguignan on the 15th of August, 1755, and by Charles Gaspard Forcalquier-Bernard on the 24th of February, 1789. The Guerin family (following the directions on the reverse side) returned the diploma to the Brothers after the 29th of May, 1810, the date of the death of the former confraternity member in Marseille.

house large enough to shelter teachers and both categories of pupils. It was situated "near the Ursulines, as one ascends toward the olive grove". The Bishops, Francis Renaud Villeneuve[186] and Joseph Francis Malide (two model pastors) showed every consideration for the Brothers who backed the Bishops' charitable action and who shared their views about Christian education. Bishop Villeneuve allowed the Brothers to have Mass every day in their chapel.[187] The Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin was begun "under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception", as at Marseille. The certificate was the same in Languedoc and in Provence, as can be seen in a copy dated the 1st of January, 1775, signed by Brother Joseph of Mary, "the headmaster of the residence school".[188] Mirepoix, where the Brothers (in their fidelity to the memory of Bishop Champflour) about the year 1777, dedicated themselves to about 100 schools boys, was too small and too remote a region to attract a wider public. It is probable that resident pupils made up hardly more than a third of that number. As a consequence, in 1787 we shall see that the Brother migrated to Carcassonne.

Brother Agathon sought to establish in the southern province an institution comparable to St. Yon or the "Rossignolerie", situated in the countryside, and, therefore, enjoying ample room. He meant to fulfill a project that was close to his heart: just as in the Faubourg St. Sever, but in a better situation and where the air was purer, a novitiate would be opened and a house for the Institute's retired and elderly Brothers would be built, around a fully operating residence school and without the encumbrance of a reformatory

Neither Avignon nor Marseille completely fitted this description. But after 1780 the Superior-general's attention was drawn to Carcassonne. The tuition-free classes in this city were conducted by a remarkable man, Brother Bernardine, the second of that name. Pierre Blanc, born in Marseille on the 28th of October, 1738, arrived at the novitiate in Avignon on the 26th of October, 1754. He pronounced his first triennial vows on the 1st of November, 1756 and his perpetual vows on the 4th of October, 1763. Of a fiery temperament, and for a long time wavering, he had once for a brief period left the Congregation to assist his family. The Superiors, aware of the worth of this man, preserved his vocation by themselves subsidizing his indigent relatives.

On the 21st of April, 1768, Brother Bernardine sent Brother Florence his formal commitment to persevere until death, regardless of the entreaties of his family. And he would boldly run a marvelous race which, beyond the harsh tests of the Revolution, ended only on the 29th of August, 1808, in full light and in a sort of splendor.[189]

As a teacher in the residence school in Marseille and as Director of the school in Castres, he proved his educational competence and his exceptional influence. He was also a Religious with a living faith and a regularity that was beyond suspicion.

As Director of Carcassonne he won the respect and the confidence of Bishop Jean August Puysegur, the Canons and the members of the City Council. In 1786 he obtained quite suitable quarters for his tuition-free school and a decent income for his Community. On the 19th of May of the same year Jean-François Poncet, the first counsellor, explained to the "City Council" how the situation stood: classes were "overcrowded"; the names of 140 children were on the waiting list, and many, idle, went about plundering the displays in the shops. Bishop Puysegur encouraged the city

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[186] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 260-1.

[187] See above, pp. 207-208.

[188] Permission dated the 10th of March, 1765, Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 262.

[189] Historique de la province meridionale

magistrates to think about a school that would have "people as its purpose". And from the episcopal tongue there fell the phrase which, seven years later, the sonorous voice of Danton .would pick up in a more striking expression and repeat everywhere: "After food, education is the first thing we must be eager to obtain for the children of the people."[190]

Building was started "at the Tuilerie de Grassai and the St. Marcel Bastion", as the city and the diocese equally absorbed the costs. The number of teachers was to be raised from four to six and the stipend of each fixed at 400 livres.[191] On the 19th of July, 1789, the Council, seeing that the completion of the new school was near at hand, decided to transfer classes there at the opening of school in October.[192]

The residence school was clearly a different matter. But it took root in the same soil; it was administered by the same people; and it was, after all, an extension of the tuition-free school. For it follows from the text of the "Letters Patent" that "the Bishop, the Chapter of Carcassonne and the members of the Council" in 1784 had undertaken a double initiative: one, concerning the extension of "the tuition-free schools", and the other, "the formation of a residence school where the children of well-to-do people would be admitted". The schools would continue in the old city. For the future institution, the Brothers chose a piece of property situated in "'the Faubourg Barbecane", a half-league to the southeast of the city, and belonging to Geraud Rouby, a "commercial manufacturer". It was "the Charlemagne farm...comprising some 87 sesteries", having a value of 43,500 livres, "at 500 livres the sesterie". A deed was drawn up on the 20th of May, 1784; and the City Council gave its approval on the 31st of May. It promised to release without charge to the Brothers' Institute the materials that would come from the demolition of the Faubourg's "ramparts", which would be used in the construction of the residence school. The king authorized Brother Agathon, Superior-general, to open a novitiate in Carcassonne, along with a home for retired Brothers, on condition of appointing "enough Brothers" to the schools frequented by "poor children". With an eye to the purchase of the Charlemagne estate, he declared an exception to the Edict of 1749.

These letters, signed in Versailles "in September, 1784" were registered on the 27th of August, 1785 by the court in Toulouse.[193] And, on the 27th of February, 1786 Brother Bernardine, accompanied by Brother Benezet, who at the time was Director of Montpellier, signed the final contract with Geraud Rouby.

Pierre Blanc was a fine architect. During his time in Castres, he had given evidence of his technical knowledge. In all probability it was he who worked out the plan for the Charlemagne buildings. After visiting the estate, the Superior-general believed that it was possible to create something splendid on the site. There exists a document that enables us to form some idea of his plans: we refer to the survey made by two natives of Carcassonne, J.B. Chevalier and J.P. Alibert, conducted in February, 1787 at the request of the city and the "Regime" with the view of discovering whether the entire area purchased would be tax exempt.

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[190] See above

[191] Resolution of the City Council of Carcassonne, 19th of May, 1786 (Copy in the Carcassonne file,

[192] Agreement of the 28th of March 1787. (Ibid.)

[193] Ibid. Parchment copy. The exact price was 43,285livres, and 3 sols. In October 1785 St. Yon had paid 12,000 livres to the Superior-general to contribute to the purchase (St. Yon permission notebook). In May 1787 the seller was paid in full (Melun journal, 7th of May, 1787).

The appraisers agreed first of all that a hill of "about ten sesteries" would have to be subtracted from the useable land; and that, on the other hand, the buildings should not rise above a single storey, "because of the great winds". The buildings would be situated on the slope of a knoll "in order to take advantage of the water which sprung up" in that place. Given these conditions, the area was parcelled out as follows:

1. A retirement home "for at least fifty senior Brothers" (individual bedrooms, an oratory, refectory, conference room, recreation room, infirmary, library, and woodhouse, gallery, yard, flower beds and gardens);

2. A novitiate (same quarters and appurtenances with the addition of a study hall;

3. A house of studies for fifty students (scholastics), similar to the novitiate house;

4. A "building to house 250-300 resident pupils" (individual bedrooms, "for all" l three "schools", three dining rooms, three parlors, three recreation rooms, 'for days of bad weather" , three outdoor areas, "for good weather" , and three others "for holidays when the resident pupils will not be able to leave the compound"; three rooms for instruction in instrumental music, one for group music and drawing, one for dancing a mathematics and one for fencing; three yards and three gardens; housing for the teachers; and infirmary, "a very large common kitchen" , large "cellars", large warehouses;

5. A church "with a balcony going the length of the building's facade;"

6. A charity school--certainly distinct from the schools in Carcassonne, and totally at the expense of the residence school;

7. A residence for chaplains, another for the laundrymen, the bakers, the cooks and the hairdressers; sites for the poultry yard, drying-rooms, stables and for the furnaces to bake bread.

8. A vegetable garden and an orchard;

9. A bridle path, and a tree-bordered promenade. ("The piece of land on the island will be set aside for this purpose.") Indeed, so extensive were the plans that it was necessary to discard some of its features or somewhat reduce their scale.[194]

The work was begun. There was no need to await its completion to set the residence school into operation. Brother Agathon decided to confide the direction of Charlemagne to Brother Evaristus, the Director of Mirepoix. The resident pupils of that small school in the Pyranees, now closed, could if they wished, follow their teacher to Carcassonne.

On the 7th of June, 1787, a Brother Odile of Montauban wrote to one of his confreres that Brother Evaristus, "unwell", was unable to come to the General Chapter held in May at Melun; but that his health being "on the mend", he had returned to Mirepoix from Nîmes, and was getting ready "presently to transfer his residence schooL .. " Forty-nine small rooms had been made ready in a manor house called "Chateau-Terre-misere", which would be occupied during the construction of the new buildings. 1

Another letter, this one from Brother François, informs us that on the 23rd of August, at 4 o'clock in the morning, a splendid band of resident pupils left (Mirepoix) in a variety of conveyances ...Eight days later dear Brother Evaristus visited (his former home) to close the books and then leave for Charlemagne.

Brother François (whose letter is dated the 1st of November)[195] must have gone himself to Carcassonne for a few days, beginning on the preceding Sunday, the 28th of October. Upon his

[194] Motherhouse Archives, Carcassonne file, assessment dated the 22nd of February, 1787, original document signed by the appraisers Chevalier and Aliber. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 537-9.
[195] Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4, original letter

arrival, there was a celebration of the feast "of St. Evaristus", postponed from Friday, the 26th. The astonished guest took part in the final festivities: At about 8 o'clock in the evening the fireworks...began. Dear Brother Director set alight from the balcony the serpentines, which ignited the pinwheels at the end of the flower-garden; there were about twelve pinwheels, many rockets, serpentines and "fountains"...All around the manor there was a mob of people; it reached out as far as the trees; in a word, joy was unrestrained. It was a good thing to celebrate an inauguration. In 1787 France was living in a euphoria that stifled the presentiment of catastrophe; and it seemed normal that the Brothers relish those fugitive moments of blessed peace. At "Charlemagne", during a season of high hopes, the Brother were on the road to a fulfillment. The correspondent makes the point in the following lines: Our Dear Brothers are the same ones as heretofore, namely: Evaristus, Seraphian, Celestine and Isidore; they have fifty resident students and many (applicants) they are unable to admit. Heaven's blessing drops down upon the residence school: no one is ill, and everything goes welL Their chapel is not yet blessed; no one knows when they will have Holy Mass there; the quarry, like the fountain, continues abundant.

Brother François could not refrain from commenting that "both at Carcassone and at Charlemagne a great deal of money had been spent". He "hoped that it all would be for the glory of God".[196] The product was worth the expenditure; and in addition, it progressed without undue haste. Buildings were added to the rectangular, turreted "Manor" --a former "farmhouse";[197] an observatory was built; and physics and chemistry laboratories were fitted out.2 In July of 1788 the Procurator in Melun noted that during the preceding year he had sent 31,390 livres to Brothers Bernardine and Genereux "for the Charlemagne school", apart from the funds whose use had been earmarked by the last General Chapter. Brother Evaristus, whom his pupils regarded as a superior person,[198] had (probably as the result of fresh exhaustion) quickly to give way to Brother Bernard de Marie, who directed a Community of twelve Brothers and presided over 200 youths in the residence school, a good number of whom were (according to the author ofthe History o/the Southern Province) half-resident/half-day pupils. Brother Agathon's magnificent creation was still unfinished when the Revolution struck. And it was never to see a revival.

The beautiful Charlemagne estate, preserved by a former pupil of the Brothers after the Institute abandoned it, became, in the 19th century, the country house for the seminarians in Carcassonne.[199] At the gates of the city which spreads its medieval silhouette the blue sky, the former Brothers' school also evokes memories of antique France. But the past that it represents is not dead history laid away in a rare and huge sepulchre. The soul that filled the residence schools, the novitiates and the scholasticates of the Brothers in the 18th century has flown from this corner of the earth; but throughout the world it continues to inspire vocations, labors and dedication similar to those of days gone by.

[196] Ibid. Mirepoix, 1st of November, 1787.

[197] Historique de la province meridionale.

[198] Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 539-40.

[199] MelWl journal, 31st of July, 1788.

CHAPTER FOUR

Brother Agathon and Education in the 18th Century

As a century of theoreticians who loved to raise questions and furnish answers by the fistful, the 18th century sought among other things, to reform education. It severely criticized ancient education, considering it bookish, passive and too detached from society and the real world. It insisted that the child's eyes be opened to the spectacle of nature and that it be taught to observe, to compare and to perform experiments; that its mind not be enclosed in the abstract before it had ever taken the trouble to come in contact with the concrete and the immediate. The 18th century advocated the study of the sciences, less, perhaps, for their formative value than to multiply the individual's tools for action--man's power over the earthly city.

The elimination of vacuous activity, the spreading of "useful" knowledge, to be "practical", especially at the beginning of the educational process when the problem is as much the creation of intellectual habits as the equipping of a young mind with knowledge: these were the themes of the books and lectures of the period. We meet with the characteristic tone and specifically with respect to the sciences) in the following lines of Jean Jacques Rousseau:

I maintain that after two years' work with the globe and cosmography there is not a single ten-year old child who could find his way from Paris to Saint Denis by the help of the rules he has learnt. I maintain that not one of these children could find his way by the map about the paths of his father's estate without getting lost. These are the young doctors who can tell us the position of Peking, Ispahan, Mexico, and every country in the world. [1]

As in philosophy, the influence of British empiricism was at the same time profound in matters of education. The book in which John Locke had cast wholesale his reflections, his "thoughts" , on the physical and intellectual education of children was known in France by 1695 through Pierre Coste's translation (under the direction of the author) two years after its publication in English. French editions of the book were numerous throughout the 18th century: the fifth appeared in 1737, and once again through Coste's industry.[2] In 1726 Rollin, in his *Treatise on Studies*, acknowledged his dependence upon Locke, as well as on Fenelon, while observing a certain wariness regarding the former, "whose opinions he did not always mean to approve".[3] Rousseau claimed that his Émile had abandoned the beaten track, even though it put in its appearance "after Locke's book."[4] In fact, he owes a great deal to the British philosopher.

Locke believed that we should give "constant attention and particular care to every single child". From this principle he deduced "the impossibility" of collective education. According to him a child in the middle "of a crowd of schoolboys" is necessarily left to himself or to the pernicious influence of his comrades over the greater part of the day.[5] Locke's ideal teacher, as well as Rousseau's, was, thus, the tutor of a privileged youth. Thus, also, we are talking about an exceptional situation, an eventuality founded upon the view that *humanum paucis vivit genus*. We should bear in mind, however, that the teacher must "study and correct everyone's particular defects and the vicious

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[1] Emile, Bk. II. (Foxley translation

[2] Gabriel Compayre's preface to his translation of John Locke's Some Thoughts on Education, pg. xxxvi, Paris, Rachette, 1904.

[3] Treatise on Studies, III, VIII, Part One, pg. 220, Letronne edition

[4] Preface to Emile.

[5] Locke, op.cit.,

inclinations"[6] of each individual; that psychology is first of all a science of particulars; and that consequently the genuine educator lives uninterruptedly with, and solely for, his pupils. And yet he does not substitute his conscience for theirs.[7] To destroy a will is just as disastrous as to fail to rectify or to regulate it. Man is essentially a free being: he has neither goodness, nor virtue nor ability except "within" himself.[8] He must achieve self-mastery and not be a slave to lock-step conditioning .

. . . He who has found a way to keep up a child's spirit easy, active and free; and yet, at the same time, to restrain him from many things he has a mind to do, and to draw him to things that are unpleasant for him, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education. We should be failing to respect, rather we should falsifying, the soul's powers and merely encouraging passivity or rebellion if we bent every child to a uniform, rigid law and "burden him with too many rules". After all, what happens when we legislate intemperately? Either we must be constantly punishing, and correction becomes the norm and therefore devoid of value, or transgressions must be tolerated, which begets contempt for the law.[9]

To destroy the spontaneity of action is to misunderstand human freedom, just as to fail to take intention into account is to lose sight of the distinction between justice and injustice. All other faults, where the mind is rightly disposed ...are but mistakes...or when they are taken notice of, need no other but gentle remedies of advice, direction or reproof.[10] Physical punishment, in most cases, is dangerous. It over excites the child's sensibilities, increases his natural horror of pain and, reciprocally, his appetite for pleasure. It dampens and destroys his will. It debases his character: "a servile discipline" results in temporary submission and simulated obedience. [11]

We should not forget that the child is a reasonable creature. Certainly, we cannot "argue" with him "as (with) a grown man. Long discourses and philosophical reasoning more or less confound, but do not instruct, the child. He is, on the other hand, "quite capable of understanding" the reasonableness of counsel, the rightness of a command or of a criticism.[12] Locke also wishes to harden his pupils physically; and he goes so far in this direction that he runs the risk of burying corpses along the way. He calls for light clothing and shoes for all climates and seasons. For breakfast he allows nothing but dry bread.[13] His hygiene is somewhat less bold when he claims that young bodies should rest on hard beds and not on warm, enervating "feathers".[14] On the same subject, Rousseau is content to copy his predecessor nearly word for word. He might have done well, too, to have borrowed the British author's principle for a moral and religious education. No doubt we find both empiricism and anti-doctrinal bias in Locke's treatment of religion. Fearing here as well both verbalism and passivity, he defends a narrow Deism. But in any case, he did not construct the relentless barrier between the soul of the child and the supernatural imagined by Émile's tutor. The "true notion of God" seemed to Locke necessary for "virtue": the child will know that there exists an "independent Supreme Being" , creator of all things, from whom we derive all good and who loves us. "This is enough to begin with..." If we strive "unseasonably to make" a scarcely blossoming mind "understand...the incomprehensible nature of that infinite Being", we stir up endless difficulties and obstinate errors. "In

[6] Locke, op. cit. pg. 57.

[7] Idem., pg. 35.

[8] Idem., pg. 68.
[9] Idem., pg. 68
[10] Idem
[11] Idem., pg. 37.
[12] Idem., pg. 69
[13] Idem., pp. 13-15
[14] Idem., pg. 22

some plain and short form of prayer", morning and evening, there should be in the pupil's life "acts of devotion" to his Maker, Preserver and Benefactor.[15]

This was the educational system that guided the new century on its first steps. It was realistic, it was "reasonable", it brought into play both mental and physical activity, reflection, initiative, courage and adaptation to one's surroundings. It is possible to single out similar features in Fenelon, whose *Treatise on the Education of Girls* preceded Locke's essay by six years: the appeal to observation, through object-lessons, the cultivation of judgment, the importance given to "nature", which must be purified and developed according to its tendencies; and the subordination of knowledge to utility.[16] The criterium for an educational program is the social vocation of the individual: Fenelon proposes this principle as he thinks about the future mistress of the house and the mother of a family; others would proclaim the same principle as they contemplated the future industrialist or the future navigator. Locke, himself a Latinist and a Hellenist, declared unhesitatingly: “Can there be anything more ridiculous than that a father should waste his own money and his son's time in setting him to learn the Roman language, when, at the same time he destines him for a trade? ..(One neglects) all the while the writing of a good hand and casting accounts, which are of great advantage in all conditions of life, and to most trades indispensably necessary.” [17]

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We have observed "the excellent Rollin" compare the Archbishop of Cambrai with the Protestant servant of the Hanoverian dynasty. That he should make "an extensive use" of these "two modern authors" simultaneously should occasion no surprise. The posthumous influence of Fenelon and his immense popularity throughout the 18th century no longer need to be proved. *The Treatise on Education, Telemachus* and *Dialogues of the Dead* (in other words, his essentially educational writings) have amply contributed to this reputation. The people of the period savored his books for their milk of human kindness, as well as for their less bland, more exciting, nourishment: -bold opinions concerning the political administration and liberal opinions concerning natural morality. The "Philosophers" and, later on, revolutionaries succeeded in regarding the Archbishop with a complacency that was somewhat suspect, indeed, as one of their own.[18]

Charles Rollin, Rector of the University of Paris, who had a mind with Jansenist leanings, was not personally given to placing any emphasis on the "liberalism" that neo-Fenelonists had ascribed to their idol. But from Fenelon and John Locke he borrowed a subtle psychology and a concern for youth. And their authority was far from endangering the success of his *Treatise on Studies*. Even more than his Ancient History and his Roman History, this book established the reputation of the teacher, universally celebrated as a model of wisdom, ceaseless labor, antique virtue, and, indeed, moderation, in spite of Jansenius and Quesnel. The entire century read and commented upon the *Treatise on Studies*, which was being reedited 122 years after its first publication.[19] President Rolland Erceville, in his Report, dated 1768,[20]singled it out for extravagant praise; he thought that it would be difficult to combine "more good sense, taste and propriety...Mind, reason, virtue and literature, precept and example walk hand-in-hand" in its pages. "Religion is represented in it...with

[15] Idem., pp. 128-9.

[16] 1 Lanson, Histoire de la litterature francaise, 1903, pg. 605.

[17] Locke, op.cit., pp. 152-3

[18] See G. Goyau, la Vie des Livres and des Ames, 1923, the pages devoted to the Vie posthume de M. de Cambrai, following Albert Cherel's book, Fenelon au dix-huitieme siecle en France (1715-1820), son influence, Paris, 1917.

[19] 1 Paris, Lecoffre, 1853, 3 volumes

[20] See above, pg. 423 et.sq. 3 D'Erceville, op. cit., pg. 145

features that are proper to it..." In this book "teachers will find the genuine rules of education". And Erceville borrowed from it the inspiration for his own projects.[21]

Between his sixty-fifth and seventy-first year, the old university professor, who died in his eighties in 1741, gathered together into a single book his experience, his lectures and the results of his endless reading. He was raised on Cicero, Quintillian, Plutarch, and Livy, and he himself raised several generations on the same authors. He taught "eloquence" in the College of France. Our purpose, which is to isolate the new ideas in French education at the end of the "Ancien Regime", does not take us through all the byways. We have no need to question Rollin at this point concerning the programs at Plessis College or at Beauvais College --the great Parisian institutions where he taught and which rivalled the education the Jesuits gave the intellectual elite. But Charles Rollin not only represents a genuine and glorious past. He hovered anxiously over the youth of his day. He was a sensitive listener to his century and his observations and his opinions prove it. In his Treatise there prevails a *philosophia perennis* which educators continued to consult. The people whose steps we are following, the Christian Brothers, did not consider it to be a mark of infidelity to their "Founder" that they sought to understand the opinions and methods of this contemporary of De La Salle. And, in his explanation of the *Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher*, Brother Agathon adopted views from Rollin that we shall presently be emphasizing.

Rollin was himself interested in Lasallian innovations. Thus, his description of the simultaneous method: *A number of years ago there was introduced into Paris, into most of the schools for the poor, a method which is quite easy for the pupils and which spares the teachers a great deal of trouble. The school is divided into several classes. In the present instance, I shall deal with only one of them --that of the children who already know how to combine syllables --and we must judge of the others accordingly. Assuming that the reading material is Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede a dextris meis. Each child pronounces a syllable, say, DI: the classmate who is next to him continues with XIT, and so on. The entire class is alert, since the teacher, without warning, may suddenly pass from the beginning of the row of pupils to the middle or to the end, and continue without interruption. If a pupil misses a syllable, the teacher strikes his desk with his pointer without speaking and the pupil's neighbor is called upon to try the same syllable, and the process continues until it has been correctly pronounced.*

Actually, the author did not select this example from a Brothers' school, as the Latin reading makes sufficiently clear. He states that he saw the method practised in Orleans "thirty years ago" (and therefore about 1696) "under the direction...of M. Garot, who was in charge of the schools of that city".[22] But, in this connection, we should recall that the merit and the talent of John Baptist de La Salle were exhibited in generalizing and systematizing the more or less successful, however partial and timid, attempts at adapting to elementary education a procedure that was as old as the world.

At the time alluded to by Rollin, the Founder of the Institute had put his principles into effect in the schools of Champagne and Paris. There he had established the order and silence admired by the man who had visited the schools in Orleans and that he would experience once again, in 1726, in the "schools for the poor" in Paris. Another passage in the *Treatise on Studies* leaves no doubt concerning the inquiry undertaken by the author. This time the reading of Latin is the principal theme of the case he is attempting to make. Rollin, first of all, advances and takes advantage of the argument set forth by those who defended the ancient practise: In this language words are pronounced uniformly and sounds always correspond to the written letters ...rather than in French where there are many letters that are not sounded ...and are pronounced now this way not that. Must we then reject the reformer who would teach children to read in their native language? Not at all. Rollin admits that the reading of Latin offers the pupil "nothing but meaningless sounds and that boredom must naturally accompany an activity in which he understands nothing". And, in the final analysis, he completely agrees with De La Salle: “People thoroughly informed by a long experience ...and whom I have consulted in this

[21] Cf.above

[22] 1 Traite des Etudes, Book One. Quoted by Charles Lecocq, Essai sur la combinaison des trois methodes d'Amsterdam, de Lancaster et des Freres des Eco/es chretiennes, Tournai, 1818

matter are convinced that, in country schools and in schools for the poor, it is necessary to begin reading in French, and I share this view completely. Since, apart from the fact that children learn to read more easily when they understand what they are reading and that, when they know how to read French, they can learn how to read Latin, a much stronger argument supports this practice .. .It often happens that when one begins with Latin, children leave school before they learn how to read French, and all their lives they are deprived of the advantage they might have gained for their salvation by reading books of piety."[23] This statement is a faithful summary of the memorandum that the Brothers' Founder addressed to the Bishop of Chartres.[24]

The Saint's disciples could only observe with pleasure the points of agreement between the celebrated professor and their own Founder. They compared passages from the Treatise with articles of their Common Rule and texts from the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and the *Conduct of Schools*.[25] Especially, Book VIII of Rollin's work, "The Internal Administration of Classes and the College" , quickly became familiar ground to them. Its points of view were their own, along with a certain shift in perspectives, certain selected positions whence, perhaps, one might better discover a direction, a point on the horizon; its itinerary brought them to the crossroads where the Christian educator had no hesitancy about the direction to take, to the holy places where his vocation was born, where its vitality was restored.

They learned from Rollin that: "The first duty of the teacher is to study and to strengthen the natural bent of the child. Upon that he must base his line of action. There are children who become relaxed and languish unless they are pressed; there are others who cannot tolerate people who pressure them or deal with them arrogantly. There are those whom fear restrains and those, on the contrary, whom it depresses and discourages. e see some from whom nothing can be gotten except through hard work and application; and there are others who study only by fits and starts or spurts. To attempt to place them all at the same level or to subject them to the same rule is to attempt to force nature. A teacher's prudence consists is occupying a middle ground which is far removed from either extreme; for in this matter the wrong way is a close neighbor to the right way, and it is easy to mistake the one for the other and fall into error; and this is what makes the work of young people so difficult."[26]

The Brothers noted these carefully drawn lines, so important for anybody who wanted to respect the mind's freedom and to find its point of entry without forcing its consent. Further on, a young teacher would discover advice that would spare him a false first step, with its distressing and enduring consequences: "The first care of a schoolboy (facing a new teacher) is to study and sound him out. There is nothing he doesn't try, no trick, no stratagem, that he doesn't attempt in order to ain the upper-hand, if he can. When he sees that his efforts and his ruses have been useless, then, let the teacher, calmly and quietly, present a gentle and reasonable firmness, but one which always wins obedience, and the pupil will yield and readily surrender. And this little warfare, or rather skirmish, in which both sides feel one another out, ends happily in peace and understanding, which spread gentleness throughout the time they must be together."[27]

"This irresistible influence," wrote Charles Rollin, "is precisely what we call "authority". Neither age, nor size nor tone of voice, nor threats confer it. It arises exclusively from an evenness of character, from self-control and from a resolute will that is free of caprice and anger. But coolness and firmness can never be enough. The emotions govern education, as they do the physical and spiritual life, Just as it is a general principle that love is purchased only at the price of love--*si vis amari, ama(Seneca*) --the first thing that Quintillian requires is that a teacher...adopt a father's feelings for his

[23] Traite des Etudes, Book One, chap. I, para. #2

[24] Cf. Volume 1

[25] Ibid., especially pp. 415-420, 435-436, 483-484, 498-501.

[26] 1 Traite des Etudes, Vol. III, VIII, Part Two, art. 2. Cf. The twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher, Chap. iv, "Prudence" in Management of Christian Schools, New York, De La Salle Inst., pg. 265 et.sq

[27] Traite...ibid., art. 3

pupils and that he consider himself as taking the place of those who have entrusted the pupils to him, whose gentleness and patience, whose bowels of mercy and tenderness, which are natural to fathers, the teacher must, as a consequence, borrow."[28]

The task is one of disposing children to virtue by marks of a virile affection and warm, insinuating language.[29] Punishment (education's perennial problem and the educator's perennial concern) comes later. Rollin, alluding to texts of Sacred Scripture, does not venture to forbid the use of the cane or the whip. But he reserves it for extreme, practically desperate, cases. He recognizes that such chastisement "has something indecent, mean and servile about it"; that "by itself it is incapable of remedying faults"; that "it gives the child an incurable aversion for the things one is attempting to get him to love"; and that "it does not transform the spirit...but frequently brutalizes it and inures it to evil".[30]

It is advisable to imagine sanctions that are both efficacious and wise, which do not reduce a being endowed with reason to the level of "brutes". It rests (with the teacher) to attach shame and disgrace to any number of things which in themselves are indifferent ..! know a school for the poor where one of the greatest and most painful punishments of pupils who have misbehaved is to have them remain seated at a desk, apart from their classmates, with a hat on their head when some distinguished person comes to visit ...[31] Echoing De La Salle, the author of the Treatise declares that there is no valid chastisement, genuinely compensating for the fault committed and forestalling eventual repetition except it is ultimately consented to by the one who is chastised. Similarly, one must avoid "punishing a child in the very moment" of his disobedience or rebellion. He should be left time to come to his senses, to get a hold of himself, become aware of his mistake and (consequently) of the justice and the necessity of punishment.[32]

Only reason makes correction "worthwhile"; and only reason "has the right to correct". How can anger, or disordered passion, be a good remedy for vice? If ever emotion appears on the teacher's face... the schoolboy is immediately aware of it and he feels deeply that it wasn't a zeal for duty... that ignited the teacher.[33] And because passion easily enters into physical punishment, and because, for the guilty party, there is involved a pain that has nothing to do with the spiritual order, admonition and reprimand are to be preferred for as long as possible. "Admonition is always accompanied by an air and a tone of gentleness which make it accepted more comfortably." That is why it can be used more frequently. But since "reprimand is always a goad to self-love"; therefore it remains a weapon whose handling demands prudence and discretion. [34]

On the other hand, appeal to a sense of honor, praise, reward are educational means rendered indispensable by human nature. Of course, excess is to be avoided. It is also necessary to be on one's guard against hasty alteration between censure and smiles, discontent and demonstration of affection. The child "grows accustomed to this gambit and knows that reprimands are a brief storm that he merely has to endure". We should postpone pardons "until the attempt to do better demonstrates the sincerity of repentance.[35] We have to accustom our pupils "to be genuine". We must prepare youth

[28] Idem. Vol. III, VIII, Part Two, art. 3. Cf. The Twelve Virtues .. .Gentleness, Ed.cit., chap. viii.

[29] Idem.,ibid., art. 4. The Twelve Virtues, Ed.cit., chap. viii.

[30] Traite des Etude, Vols. III, VIII, Part Two, arts. 4 & 12. Cf. The Twelve Virtues...ed.cit., chap. viii. 4

[31] Traite..., Ibid, art. 5. Cf. The Twelve Virtues ...loc.cit.

[32] Traite des Etudes, Vol. III, VIII, Part Two, art. 5. Cf. The Twelve Virtues, Chap. viii.

[33] Traite des Etudes, Vol. III, VIII, Part Two, art. 5. Cf. The Twelve Virtues, Chap. viii.

[34] Idem., Ibid., loc.cit.

[35] Idem., Ibid., art. 6. Cf. The Twelve Virtues . .. chap. viii.

"for the common duties of society". We must strip it of "that fierce and rustic coarseness", that shameless egoism, that "haughtiness and pride", which would conquer the world; and that "spirit of contradiction, criticism and mockery that condemns everything and seeks only to make trouble". The adolescent, among his classmates, will be apprenticed to social life.[36]

We should try to make study attractive. We should not be stingy in granting "rest and relaxation". One might very well constrain the body, and make the schoolboy remain at his desk against his will, double his work. .. deprive him of play .. .Is this the sort of thing that study is, to work like a prisoner? And is there left after all of this, except a hatred for books, for knowledge and for teachers?[37]

This thoughtful, relaxed psychology, this sound humanism, is crowned by a splendid profession of faith: “What is a Christian teacher who is responsible for the education of young people? He is a man into whose hands Jesus Christ has placed a number of children whom He has redeemed with His blood and for whom He has given His life; in whom He dwells as in His house and temple; whom He regards as His members, as His brothers, His co-heirs; of whom he wishes to make kings and priest, who will reign and serve God with Him and through Him for all eternity. And why has Christ entrusted these children to this teacher? Was it simply to make poets out of them, or orators, or philosophers or scientists? Who would dare to say or even to think so? He has entrusted them to him in order to preserve in them the precious and priceless deposit of innocence that He imprinted upon their souls in Baptism, when he made them true Christians ... That is the end and the purpose of education .. , The rest is nothing but the means.”[38]

The same strains stirred in the depths of the soul De La Salle's disciples. Here Rollin was speaking the same language as "their beloved Founder". It. was the language of Catholic France, of the Church charged with teaching all nations. And it was through the *Treatise on Studies* that the Brothers fell heir- like into the entire pedagogical inheritance derived from the Gospel, to the original text of the marvelous prayer which, daily up to the present time, they recite "before school". *Thou, 0 Lord, art my patience, my strength, my light, my counsel; it is Thou that dost make submissive the hearts of the children entrusted to me; abandon me not to myself for a moment. For my own guidance and for that of my pupils give me the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel and of fortitude, of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of a holy fear of Thee ...* [39]

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After this lofty and unsullied teaching, what of "Jean-Jacques'" harangues? There is nothing worth remembering in his *Émile* except what he borrowed from Montaigne, the best of Rabelais and from Fenelon, Locke and Rollin himself: -advice about physical education, the development of language, pronunciation and singing; and, with some reservations, about the training of the mind through contact with nature, through life in the out-of-doors, through manual labor and through small scientific experiments; and, finally, the warning against the tendency to consider the child merely as a diminutive adult and not as a being endowed with more acute feelings, with an infinitely more lively imagination, and with a logic that is uninformed, and, yet, odd and difficult to grasp. However, we cannot take seriously his paradoxes about the fundamental goodness of the individual left to himself,

[36] Idem., Ibid., art. 7. Cf. The Twelve Virtues .. . chap. viii.

[37] Idem., Ibid., arts. 8 & 9. Cf. The Twelve Virtues

[38] Chap. viii. 2 Idem., ibid., arts. 10 & 11. Brother Agathon changes only two sentences in this passage. He omits "of whom he wishes to make so many kings and priests", and instead of speaking of "poets...orators, or philosophers" ,he refers to "goodpenman, great arithmeticians, able calculators and mathematicians" --which better corresponds to the education provided by the Brothers

[39] Idem., III, VIII, Part One, art. 13. Cf. Revista Lasalliana, for December 1936, the "Preghiera de maestro prima della scuola", pp. 74-79. The Brothers' prayer involves some slight variations and adds an ending which is today worded as follows: "I unite my labors to those of Jesus Christ, and I beseech the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, the Holy Guardian Angels and St. John Baptist de La Salle to protect me in the performance of my duties."

about "negative" education, about the uselessness of punishment and reprimand with regard to one who, according to Rousseau, "does not know what it is to be at fault", does not need pardon, since he is incapable of offending and is "deprived of all morality ...and cannot do anything that is morally evil".[40]

Even among "the philosophical clan", the man from Geneva, the bear, as Madame Epinay called him, remained insulated by his origins, his temperament and his teachings. (According to him, he was misunderstood and persecuted.) But it was not to him, but to the *Encyclopedists* and to Voltaire that the politicians, smitten by pedagogy,[41] looked --more or less closely and with reservations and objections that derived from university, Gallican and Jansenist mentalities. At this point, we shall confine ourselves to a few quotations from La Chalotais. Indeed, some of the reforms he proposed were interesting and had a future. They took their place with those which, in the preceding century, were sought by Father Claude Fleury in his *Treatise on the Selection and Method of Studies*.[42] And on several points they paralleled the program applied by the Christian Brothers in their residence schools. La Chalotais lamented the incompetency and verbalism of classical education. "Can the knowledge one acquires in college be truly called knowledge?" he asks rudely. It wasn't that he wished to exclude Latin from secondary instruction. But he limited its scope, and he refused it pre-eminence; and finally he stript it of part of its clientele. According to the opinion of the author of the *Essay on National Education*, “French literature and Latin literature must go hand-in-hand. Thus, it would be would be well if school in the morning were for French and school in the afternoon were for Latin ...There would be children who, having need of neither Latin nor Greek, would merely follow the courses in French; and I wouldn't consider it an evil if such a practice were introduced.”[43]

His basic plan of studies, the minimum and essential program was as follows: “To learn to read, write and handle the drawing pencil is the work of the first phase; to learn how to read well, to pronounce well, to write and to draw well is the work of the second phase. I always combine music, history, geography, mathematics, natural history and literature.”[44]

On the role of history, on the form and foundation of its teaching La Chalotais insists.For children it is the first disclosure of human society, of the continuity of the ages, of the nation's past and the present, and it is a treasury of examples. "I would have histories of every nation composed for the use of children", more detailed for more recent times --and these modern sections should be read first. [45] would have people write "the lives of all sorts of famous men, of whatever condition and profession" We cannot confine ourselves to these points of view when we speak to children: for them, history is no longer merely the mistress of individual and civic morality: it must exercise their judgment; and, as a consequence, it must be accompanied by a criticism of the evidence. It is important to go beyond the facts to the principles and the rules. What is the purpose of this science? How do we tell the difference between "proven facts from those that are not"? How does one "recognize historians" upon whom "to place our trust? What "are eras that can be explained"? To fail to pose these questions, to fail to attempt to answer them, is, in such an important matter, to fail in one's mission as an educator. [46] Basic definitions, real notions, acquired both by observation and by reading, classified in the memory and developed by reasoning --without such a preparation there is only an unsteady scaffolding and a sham scenery. We train the young man "to speak without ideas...to us a lot of words" on a subject he hardly knows anything about. We "impair his mind" and "we corrupt his taste" for the rest of his life.

La Chalotais, of course, gave credit to mathematics and the natural sciences for filling the "void" and for establishing the mind's equilibrium. But he himself seemed to be venturing here into an

[40] Emile, Book II, passim
[41] See above, pg. 416 et.seq.
[42] See Vol. I of the present work
[43] Ibid., pg. 89.
[44] idem
[45] Essai d’Éducation nationale
[46] P.95

area that had not been too thoroughly explored. He had the zeal and the illusions of a neophyte. He took delight in enumerating physical techniques and fancied, perhaps too readily, that curiosity, amusement and surprise would enlist the child on the paths of serious knowledge. We should, however, keep in mind his appeal in favor of "mechanical models", "showcases .for natural history", "atlases" and "spheres", barometers and telescopes.[47] He promoted new trends, the field for which was [48]extensive, and which, judiciously directed, did not run the risk of ending up in blind alleys. In the hands of De La Salle's disciples, these innovations were not suspect: stripped of casual prejudice, employed in concrete situations and associated with spiritual values and metaphysical concepts, they contributed to the formation of an elite.

The entire secret consists in moderation. We must subscribe to La Chalotais' indictment of "the sedentary and constricted life to which children had been subjected", the continuous stream of "Latin themes"[49] and the systematic contempt for physical exercise. We have to join him in his demand that young people know "the world they live in and the earth that feeds them...the animals that served them and the workmen and craftsmen they employ".[50] There was nothing but ill-humor and bombast in the criticisms hurled by the principal of the college in Puy, Father Proyart,[51] against the authors of the new programs. [52] According to them, he observes ironically, hardworking children ...could be, at the age of fifteen years, very good farmers, learned naturalists, wise managers, shrewd merchants, enlightened statesmen, profound metaphysicians, and amazing geometricians: and all of this, without detriment to the study of the arts and crafts, chemistry and its valuable results; without detriment to writing and drawing, universal geography and history, both ancient and modern; without detriment to the French language, and sometimes even wthout detriment to English, German and a little Latin; but also without detriment to heraldry, dancing, fencing, horsemanship, and especially without detriment to swimming.[53]The great cry of the innovators was: Mathematics, Mathematics! "As for religion", Proyart adds, and this time without a smile, "our modern Teachers deal with it pretty much as they do with Latin.. [54]

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The cleric, an alumnus of his Parisian *Alma Mater*, wanted people to hold to the programs of the ancient university. The Brothers had no reason to get into this quarrel or to draw up declarations either for or against the classical humanities. The program of study in their residence schools followed quite simply from a complete obedience to De La Salle's Rule, and not from any preconceived hostility of an educational theory which sought models of clear thought and high eloquence in antiquity. We know why the Founder forbad both the teaching and even the use of Latin by his followers: the necessity of creating a barrier between the priesthood and the schoolteacher. If the new Society were enlisted among the Latinists, it might, like several others before it, have run the very great risk of swerving from its goal and of losing sight of its origins. Pretty nearly insurmountable forces in the 17th century would have wrested the Brothers out of popular education and transformed them into priests and teachers of the ancient languages. The institution at St. Yon was opened only on condition that it would not divert the Brothers from their essential vocation.

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[47] Ibid., pp. 63 and 65.

[48] Essai..pp.18-19

[49] Ibid., pg. 21

[50] idem., pg. 21

[51] Cf.above

[52] Response to the question put by the Attorneys -general for the Clergy: "What is the most suitable educational system to make religion loved and respected, to preserve the purity of morality, to promote excellence and an appreciation for science, and to equip pupils to fulfill their functions in society?"

[53] Réponse pp.101-102

[54] Idem., pg. 105. According to the priest, the results were "a presumptuous ignorance, egoism, contempt for duty.. .and a sort of epidemic passion for the military arts...in an age in which only humanity and kindness are preached." (pg. 108) *Nil novi sub sole*... The world we live in continues to be as belligerent as it is unChristian.

This was the providential obstacle that had initially determined the establishment of a special education comprised of French and science, without having recourse to the Ciceronian stamp or cast. More modern theories have overtaken the practice of the Christian Brothers, by now time-honored, who never claimed to deny the importance or the value of Graeco-Roman culture. Working without a backward look in their own domain, the Brothers did not mean to blame or contradict anybody. As Catholics, they neither concealed themselves, nor did they conceal from their pupils the brilliance of Roman civilization. When, in our times, the Church, through the Pope, believed that the evolution of ideas, the mixing of the social classes, the development of programs of study, and especially the good of the Church, demanded that a law that they had observed so faithfully and courageously be allowed to lapse, they were prepared (without danger to their vocation) to introduce Latin into their schools with professional conscientiousness and following the methods inherited from their Founder and his successors.[55]

There is no reason, then, to search through Institute documents for manifestos that echoed Claude Fleury, Locke, La Chalotais or that rebutted Father Proyart. The education at St. Yon, Marseille and the "Rossignolerie" was judge by its results; it made room for science, while reserving something rather better than first place for religion --the preponderate, limitless influence, the function of universal inspiration. It had none of the encyclopedic ambition that was jeered at by the principal of the college in Puy. It educated men who looked optimistically upon the real world without believing that reality was limited to the sensible world.

To maintain integrally the Institute's educational traditions, to remind the Brothers of the greatness of the obligations associated with their task, to comment upon and to develop the written work of the Founder, respectfully to update his *Conduct of Schools a*nd to add certain complementary material --such, at the educational level, was the work to which Brother Agathon set himself, without the least polemical purpose, in the lofty and serene understanding of his responsibilities, the aspirations of his time, and the permanent conditions of Christian education.

It was in 1784 that Brother Agathon began to publish his "Circulars" and that he undertook to codify Lasallian principles and regulations. On the 1st of January of that year the entire second part of his "instructional letter"[56] attempted to "correct or anticipate negligence" within the Brothers' essential mission. The Superior faced the Brothers with their "most sacred duties" . Who had entrusted the children to them, if not the "sovereign Pastor of souls", the Christ whose affection was so profound and, one might dare say, so extraordinary in dealing with the simplicity and the artless assurance of the children in Galilee? Is it possible, then, knowing this, "to be indifferent to the salvation" of God's favorite ones? In merely human terms, we must not forget that the opening of a school is the object of an agreement between its founders and the Institute: if we "are satisfied with a superficial education for children", we void both the letter and the spirit of that agreement, and we are not men of our word. At the same time, unfortunately, we become unfaithful religious. There is a glaring contradiction between professing the name of Christian Brother and being a mediocre teacher. [57]

A son of De La Salle reveals his legitimate filiation primarily through the teaching of catechism. Drawing his inspiration from the theologian Collet, Brother Agathon shows that the catechism lesson must be defined and articulated on the model of mental prayer. It is important "to anticipate the subject-matter, to "prepare the points into which it is divided; the affections then can be introduced into it, and the fruits we are going to try to draw from it". Then, following the method set forth in the Management of Schools, we construct "the body of the lessons": and, then the three phases or acts succeed one another: "instilling" the truth, "explaining" it and "providing" it with a living force in the soul of the child. The practical conclusions, the "resolutions", are supported by "some passage of Holy Scripture", a simple argument, one or two examples borrowed from the history

[55] See Vol. I of the present work

[56] See above

[57] The first instructional letter, pp. 11, 17, 18. Motherhouse Archives, AAB a 6

of Israel or from the Gospel. Through this concrete translation of a dogma or a commandment we "impress" and "win" their hearts.[58] Example must come primarily from the teacher. Education is never the work of the mind alone. It involves the whole of one's being, along with the spiritual and the moral values and the energy that education inherits from a revered tradition, from doctrine and from collective experience. Regardless of the knowledge we may have acquired through study, it will not produce the most abundant fruits of education in the child unless it is accompanied by humility, piety, charity and uniformity of instruction. Humility is the Brother's fundamental virtue. Without it he can neither pass through the low and narrow gate of the schools "for the poor", nor place himself at the level of the little ones and neither follow them nor serve them in their uncertain progress.[59]

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These passages are merely the prelude. Motives are outlined in the clearest terms, and handed on to be remembered and reflected upon by the reader. The Superior would return to them, with variations, in the marvelous and delightful essay that he finished "at Melun on the 12th of February, 1785" and which he called *The Twelves Virtues of a Good Teacher*, by M. de La Salle, Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, explained by Brother Agathon, Superior-general.

The book was published immediately and interest in it extended beyond the family circle of the Institute; it won a place for its author among distinguished educators. It was re-edited in the 19th century;[60] Bishop Frayssinous declared it a "masterpiece"; and the Brothers who continued to meditate upon it, carried it to other countries. In fact, it preceded them into Spain. In 1869 (eight years before the Congregation appeared beyond the Pyrenees) it was translated by a teacher in the normal school in Vallodolid.[61] In our own time, a lover of souls and a magnificent and acute writer, Maurice Barres, found the greatest pleasure in reading it;[62] and a philosopher of education, M. Casotti, mentions *The Twelves Virtues* glowingly in his commentary on the Lasallian apostolate.[63]

Indeed, there is a want of taste and wisdom in denying the allurements of this little book. Its style is lively, concrete and concise; its definitions display a fine psychology; its counsels and conclusions are those of a discerning, penetrating mind, and of a generous and (as in the 18th century would say) a "sensible" heart; and it is a sensibility that is unequivocal, virile and Christian. Even the imagination, here and there in the book, finds a feast. Brother Agathon knew how to set a scene and bring to life the teachers and schoolboys about whom he wrote. "We shall develop", he writes, "the true quality of each virtue, the special marks which belong to it and those which are contrary to it." He intended to draw "pictures".[64] And he succeeded in doing just that, because he was an artist. His *Twelve Virtues*, incarnated in the men whom he knew very well, who were models during his youth or whom he had directed as an adult, the "twelve virtues" which he himself had practiced, had nothing in common with the allegories of medieval "morality plays".

Nevertheless, he made no pretense at originality. We have already pointed to the quite extensive, as well as discreet, borrowings from the *Treatise on Studies*. He himself informs us that he

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[58] First instructional letter, note on the teaching of catechism, pg. 20 et.sq.

[59] First instructional letter, pg. 25.

[60] We personally possess a copy of the 1845 edition from the Moronval Press, Paris

[61] Las doce virtudes de un buen maestro . ..Vallodolid, 1869. A copy --at one time belonging to Don Blas Barrios Castellanos and then to Don Theodore de la Puente (Brother Justo-Felix) -has been on file in the Motherhouse Archives since 1930. (Before its publication, the book probably was used as a pedagogical text for students in training to be teachers)

[62] A letter dated May 22, 1923, to the Brother Secretary General of the Institute, published in the Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for October 1924, pp. 318-19

[63] Course taught in 1935 at the Catholic University of Milan

[64] Preface, pp. 4-5 of the 1845 edition

has "taken" passages "from the most highly regarded authors. It goes without saying, however, that his principle guide was De La Salle, who, in his *Treatise on Various Short Subjects*, enumerated the virtues of a good teacher: gravity, silence, humility, prudence, wisdom, patience, discretion, gentleness, zeal, vigilance, piety and generosity. Brother Agathon did not need any other outline. It was not that he failed as a writer, but there was a quite conscious determination to follow "the venerable Founder" step-by-step. Greater consistency, he noted, was possible: one might easily have underscored certain first principles, reduced the variety of explanations to unity, pointed out symmetries and sorted out relations and interdependencies. In a spirit of simplicity and obedience, the author had forsaken that procedure. "To tie" his book together better "seemed (to him) to be a matter of pure curiosity, without any real utility". He enjoined upon himself, as a filial obligation, to divide his commentary into twelve chapters of unequal length and "to explain" each virtue "in the order that De La Salle thought it "appropriate" to adopt.[65]

Many paragraphs in a didactic style, enumeration as aid to memory, and quotations from Sacred Scripture and the Fathers of the Church as final exhortations are entirely characteristic of the 18th century. Its language (as well as its thought) belongs to the saintly priest who was faithful to the intellectual disciplines of Fathers Olier and Tronson: his sons had inherited from him several of the qualities of the Sulpician family. Their Rule, their customs and their writings, taken together, testify that the Brothers, as Ferdinand Brunetière wrote, were "contemporaries of Louis XIV". But under the three-cornered hat there was a personality.

Within the framework of the *Conduct of Schools*, the 1711 *Collection* and the *Meditations*, the Superior-general contributed his own experiences and judgments. Thus, before recalling what the *Conduct* says concerning the occasions in which the teacher should speak during class,[66] he describes the class in which the teacher does not know when to keep quiet: .. .if he speaks too much the pupils will invariably do the same. They put irrelevant questions to him: they busy themselves with matters entirely foreign to their duties; they excuse and justify themselves and others; and confusion and disorder reign supreme in the class.[67]

Praising the virtue of prudence, Brother Agathon stresses the scrupulous preparation of lessons: it is necessary that (the teacher) should exactly recall the principles of things, and those facts that easily escape the memory .. .It is necessary also that he adduce reasons in support of the principles he advances, and arrange them with tact and judgment, in order to avoid presuming upon such as he may have gleaned from a hurried and ill-digested, cursory reading. It is equally essential that his discourses should be clear and easy to comprehend, free from all disorder of ideas and methodical in arrangement, to prevent vagueness and confusion...Lastly, his expression and his demeanor should bear the impress of dignity of manner, or behavior, for, were he devoid of this he would be liable to excite weariness, disgust, and, perhaps, even the contempt of the pupils. This, unquestionably, demands sedulous preparation and energetic work. Should he neglect either the one or the other, in the expectation that God would come to his aid by an extraordinary help to supply the deficiency, it would indeed rather resemble the rashness of a man who tempts God, than the just hope of one who confidently trusts in His goodness and omnipotence.[68]

Brother Agathon then goes on to explain how through patience one deals with fickleness in children: "Just and reasonable ideas" begin "to take root"; Christian sentiments "steal insensibly" into "affectionate and compliant" hearts. And "one gathers fruits that are all the more abundant" in that they are slower in appearing.[69].

Everything having to do with punishment and reprimand is gathered together in the chapter on "Gentleness" is purposely selected and is significant. As he takes up the topic, Brother Agathon

[65] Preface, pp. 4-5 of the 1845 edition
[66] Cf. Volume 1
[67] The Twelve Virtues p.15
[68] Cf.pp.42-43
[69] Ibid pp.67-68

quotes Jesus' words: "Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart" .[70] Gentleness, in the most exact sense, is the teacher's principal quality: it is impartiality, a sense of justice, a sense of the possible, respect for freedom, refinement of affections and disinterested love. It is neither timidity nor indecision nor weakness. "The meek will inherit the earth." And just as staunchly, they will conquer the souls of the young. Genuine education was never a question of physical force nor of moral violence.[71]

Brother Agathon declares that the use of the rod and the whip has "long since been banished" from the Institute's schools.[72] The "disadvantages" of such punishment far outstrip the "usefulness" that harsher ages thought they found in it. "It would indeed be greater wisdom on the part of the teacher...of intractable pupils...to send them home to their parents..."[73] More categorical on this point than Rollin himself, Brother Agathon suggests, however, modes of punishment resembling those indicated in the *Treatise on Studies*: kneeling on the "shame stone", being sent to the last place in the class or the "end of the line";[74] or extra school work or additional homework.[75] The punishment must be proportioned to the magnitude of the fault, to the age and character of the guilty party, to his degree of malice and to the state of his conscience. John Baptist de La Salle had earlier written about the "ten conditions that correction should have in order to be just"; his successor supplies an "explanation" of these qualities. As for the teacher who lodges the complaint, every rebuke should be "pure, charitable, just, fitting, moderate, calm and prudent"; and as regards the pupil who is being disciplined, the rebuke will be beneficial only to the extent that he has accepted it "respectfully and silently".

The development of this chapter on "Gentleness" (which is Chapter Seven) is enough to prove the importance that the author attaches to the subject. By itself, it takes up a third of the book.[76] It includes directives for the training" of the heart, mind and judgment" , which is successful only if the teacher" carefully avoids all that has the appearance of harshness and constraint', and if (he) habituates (his pupils) to expect the same sort of conduct on all similar occasions ..."[77]

A particularly welcome passage emphasizes the damage done by "irony". "Far from being a proper means of correction, (irony) serves, on the contrary, to prejudice the youthful min4 against" (the teacher). A schoolboy who lacks esteem and attachment for a teacher whose injurious manner has wounded him will ordinarily not only not accept his corrections and counsel with the greatest repugnance but even his instruction as well. He always remembers that his teacher had the meanness, the indecency and the baseness to insult and ridicule him for defects of body, mind or other, rather than warning him, or correcting him simply, and thus, attracting to him the friendship and esteem of his companions ...[78]

The picture of "the faults against gentleness" is spiritedly sketched: ...a too great vivacity, impetuous sallies springing from a lively temperament; a fantastic or extravagant humor, sombre and ferociousairs, an arrogant and haughty gait ...words that are bitter, sharp, full of venom, insulting, which schoolboys rarely fail to report to their parents, in order to predispose them against the teacher and to justify their own angry feelings and aversion for him and for the school; violent agitation, precipitate and brutal corrections, increased without reason and carried beyond the limits of justice and charity...[79]

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[70] 1 Matt. XI, 29. Brother Agathon follows the traditional interpretation of the Vulgate

[71] Professor Casotti has emphasized this point in his lecture notes: "St. John Baptist de La Salle and Activism in Education" .

[72] Blain notes that as early as 1723 "the Brothers were beginning to formulate a rule totally to banish (physical punishment) from their schools". (Vol. II, Narrative (appendix), pp. 109-10

[73] The Twelve Virtues pp.109-110

[74] Ibid p.115

[75] Ibid pp.123-132

[76] Ibid. 63 pages in the original edition of 187 pages

[77] Ibid pp.87-88

[78] Pp.134-135

[79] Ibid pp.135-136

Near the end of the essay there is an analysis of "zeal" as practiced by the Brothers: He will, indeed, find his satisfaction and all his joy instructing without respite, without distinction or exception, all children, whether gifted or stupid, rich or poor, handsome or deprived of natural grace, docile and obedient or obstinate and intractable, Protestant as well as Catholic [80]...; there is also a precise definition of "vigilance" which puts the teacher on his guard against "restlessness, mistrustfulness ... [81]complicated by ill-founded conjectures"; it "will not exaggerate precaution" , and it will shrink from driving pupils into hypocrisy.[82] And, finally, there are the beautiful lines, written in the style of the period, on "generosity" -"as noble as the grandeur of the soul, as useful as benevolence and as tender as humanity", preparing youth for "the Christian and social virtues", for the duties of the citizen.[83] In his conclusion, Brother Agathon, once again, pays tribute to De La Salle, whose success was "astonishing" and who had given to his disciples both the secret and the example of the virtues commented upon by one of them. Brother Agathon's whole self is totally revealed in the words of St. John Chrysostom on the two ways of salvation --the one of fasts and austerities, the other of "alms, instruction and works of charity in favor of one's neighbor". He continues: Let us then appreciate the happiness of being privileged to be members in a religious Congregation which is thought to be one of the most austere in the Church and which adds the singular privilege that is not had in many of them, namely, that of instructing others and of laboring for the salvation of souls.[84]

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We have learned to recognize the apostolic ardor and the argumentative energy of the Superior-general in his writings on education as well as in his spiritual direction and his administrative guidance of the Institute. He appears in the same way in the fifty-five page pamphlet on file in the National Library:*Remarks...on the Public Exhibitions Which Take Place at the End of the Year in Various Institutions* ...which Brother Agathon signed on the 10th of April, 1786, at Maréville "where he was conducting a visitation".[85]

The custom of "public exercises" preceding the solemn distribution of awards had begun in the colleges. Guyton Morveau, on page 287 of his Memorandum, proposed a system for their regulation. He insists that "for schoolboys of the third form", the exercise should consist in an "explanation of Greek[86] and Latin authors", a grammatical recitation and a quiz on mythology; and that for "the humanities section", French prosody and history should be included among the subjects for examination. It seems clear that, according to another passage of this essay, these tests at the end of the school year determined admission "into the upper classes". [87]

Several Brothers' schools had adopted a similar custom. In the school at Dole, in 1785, a public exercise was arranged "on the principles of religion and literature". The pastor/dean, the Gentlemen of the City Council and a "large number of people of every level" were in attendance. The success was such that. the City Council decided, on the 19th of August, that henceforth to the prize-winners would be issued books, on the covers of which would be engraved the coat-of-arms of the city. In 1785 a veritable "academic gathering" was held in the Church of the Bernardines. In 1788 two delegates from the Council questioned 180 pupils and then moved to increase the budgetary allocation for prizes. [88]

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[80] ibid

[81] Pp.144-145

[82] Ibid pp.158-159

[83] Ibid pp.176-178

[84] Ibid pp.182-186

[85] The copy bears the mark of the library of the Seminary of St. Sulpice. (National Library, 8-0 R, 25250

[86] Guyton, op. cit., pg. 291

[87] Bulletin des Ecolu chretiennes, for October, 1926 (pp. 318-9) and for January, 1927 (pp. 27-9), "Les Freres de. Ecoles chretiennes a Dole du Jura"

[88] Motherhouse Archives Hb t 3, Historique du district de Reims. Bulletin de Ecoles chretiennes, for July, 1910, pp. 260-2, "Les Distribution de prix dans les ecoles des Freres avant 1792

In 1781 in Rheims a complete plan for this sort of competition was drawn up: only pupils with a good chance of winning were permitted to participate. "Preparations intended to impress" were widely deployed. The books distributed were selected from the lists of lives of the saints and volumes of Holy Scripture. To win them the contestants had to reply successfully to questions taken from the entire program of studies (catechism, reading, arithmetic, etc.), "since these subjects were all very necessary and quite useful", and since children should neglect none of them. Special awards were conferred for "good conduct" and "diligence"; and the pupils themselves designated "by vote" those of their classmates most deserving of these awards. In a resolution passed on the 1st of February, 1783, a sum of money was set aside, the interest on which would be used to purchase prizes. A similar fund was established, during the same period, in Boulogne for the pupils in "both upper and lower town".[89]

In principle, there was nothing in all of this but what was praiseworthy and nothing more consistent with the ideas of John Baptist de La Salle as regards examinations and the system of rewards.[90] But here and there these "public competitions" had been diverted from their purpose. Several school principals, influenced by the traditions of former Jesuit Colleges, had transformed the competition into ostentatious spectacles (into what might be described as "publicity pageants"), which were intended to flatter the talents of young orators or budding actors, or the skill of the organizers. Against these innovations the Superior-general directed a tart invective.

They have, he wrote, "changed the nature...of what was a simple exercise", designed to inspire childrens' competition. Out of three or four hundred pupils, only fifteen or twenty of them, and nearly the same ones each year for as long as they attend the school are featured. The prizes go for natural ability and not for effort. People strive to train the "stars", and give the impression to the rest of the pupils that they are being neglected. Furthermore, there was something detrimental both for studies and for deportment in the big "starring roles". "While the ordinary pupils studied what was specified for each class period, the privileged few ...were occupied with what amused them..." They were coddled and treated with flagrant partiality. "To prevail upon these handpicked youngsters to remain in this attractive career, what liberties were not granted to them?" Genuine intellectual and spiritual progress was sacrificed; self-love occluded the pathways to learning; and out of something that was of no "major moment" an "important objective" had materialized. To the usual feverishness with which children approach vacation-time, there was added the chaos of these notorious competitions.

Brother Agathon goes on to describe, in his genuinely spirited manner, the preparations for, and the aftermath of, these events. They decorate the theatres, they put people in costumes...they extend formal invitations, oral or written, to the most important people...they are eager to attract a numerous audience, or, rather, critics, or, indeed, scoffers ...Once the applause is over, one must make the rounds and pay one's respects to those who graced the spectacle with their presence. For one or other magistrate who was unable to attend, it becomes a duty to repeat the speeches and the songs. And, finally, the triumph must be announced to confreres in other cities.

The charges, doubtlessly justified, were rather scathing. But no sooner were they hurled than they gave way to the serenest exhortation. The purpose of the Christian Schools, it cannot be too often repeated, is to raise children in the love of God ...and to fill their young hearts ... with the precepts of the Gospel, an "to imprint" on their souls the commandments of God and the Church. It is a grand and splendid mission. Abiding by the *Conduct of Schools* is sufficient to achieve the results that a disciple of De La Salle should want. If, to the means already prescribed, one wanted to add "a general examination", there is no need to measure the pupils' progress through "pompous" stage-productions. It would be preferable to question the pupils on the catechism and reading, have them "decipher modern and ancient handwriting", and, through dictation and problems examine their knowledge of

[89] Bulletin des., article cited, pp. 259-60.

[90] See Vol. I of the present work.

spelling, grammar and arithmetic. The cultivation of the memory is a misspent effort, if we leave the mind to lie fallow.

As a result, the Superior formally forbad "declamations, the speeches of debate societies and congratulatory addresses". But he did not condemn the distribution of awards, and, on the whole, supporting the usage in Rheims, he stipulated: 1) That the awards be given "for genuine merit and in the presence of all the pupils; 2) That, in all .classes, "the most advanced" pupils "in each subject, complete among themselves"; 3) That awards not be granted "except to those who have excelled in the greatest number of subjects; 4) That "deportment, genuine piety, diligence and constant, outstanding assiduity" not remain in obscurity but that they be honored by the votes of youngsters who, by means of certain tactful standards, are able to pass a conscientious judgment; 5) That the examinations always be limited to what is taught in the Brothers' schools.

There was nothing in all of this but clear sightedness, balanced reason and firmness, without any narrowness. The lofty mind of Brother Agathon did not sacrifice to the idols of the age. His criticism did not extend, of course, to artless recreation, to games of memory or to the pleasure of the skills in which people indulged in the college or family circles. He was thinking of the primary schools where studies were of short duration and where instruction admitted neither of disparity nor of dispersion. He quite correctly feared an unevenness of attention, frivolity and the precocious arousal of vanity and jealousy. To avoid these dangers he brought both teachers and pupils back to the standards set by the Founder.

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The *Remarks on Public Exhibitions* was the last, essentially educational essay that Brother Agathon published.[91] But his productivity as a writer never slackened during the relatively calm period of his generalate. Until 1789 he managed simultaneously his manifold, prodigious activities, which demanded the Brothers' cooperation in the form of notes, memoranda and articles.

The Institute Archives preserves several of Brother Agathon's manuscripts in his own hand relative to educational questions. Before taking up the principle group, we shall have something to say about some papers assembled under the title: *Counsel Given by the Brothers to Pupils to Induce them to Spend the Day in a Christian Manner;* it is the only secondary document of his own composition; since all the others are "notes" from his reading.[92] It has no date; and it may be the outline of a circular letter, since it strikes a note of leadership.

As always, he enunciates extremely concrete commands and expresses the insights of a very shrewd observer. He does not want the children "telling on" their classmates, and if they know of a serious fault, they should inform their teacher about it in private, "out of a spirit of charity and not out of vengeance". And he enjoins children to be prepared to be "of service" in the home and encourages them to give external signs of affection for their mothers and fathers, as well as acts of kindness toward the unfortunate. He was concerned for their purity, which, to his way of thinking, required a sensitive vigilance.

"The Brothers must teach their pupils how to speak as Christians", and not according to the maxims of the world. If education does not react against nature at its lowest level, against that false wisdom found on the streets, we can be sure that we shall find on the lips of youth the sayings and the prejudices that are most opposed to the Gospel. Hearts must assimilate the Sermon on the Mount, incorporate the teachings of Our Lord, find happiness in the imitation of Christ and moral disaster in egotistical wealth, sensual pleasure and shameful success. When a child talks like a pagan, the teacher

[91] We are not speaking of the last classical text, since the Treatise on Arithmetic appeared in 1787

[92] See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July, 1937, art. cited, pg. 210.

should challenge him in a tone "that will make an impression on his mind", the recollection of which will last all his life. However, let the child not be overwhelmed under an avalanche of precepts. Sufficient for the day is its good counsel. And let moral direction be evenly distributed throughout the week.

We come now to a matter that the Superior certainly regarded as important: the revision of the *Conduct of Schools*. Only one edition of the book (that of 1742) had followed upon the first edition in 1720, which contributed only minor changes in the text -corrections of spelling, additions of a word to a sentence for greater precision and clarity. By 1777 the second edition was exhausted and the General Chapter at the time asked that it be reprinted. After sixty years, the work had become somewhat dated. The time had come to bring it up to date, and also to rearrange some of its sections in a more rational way. Besides, the book was incomplete: there were several parts promised in the preface that were lacking (the duties of the Inspector of Schools, and the Rule of the Trainer of young teachers). It contained nothing about residence schools.[93] Brother Agathon invited the Brothers to send him their "comments and advice to assist him" in a new versions.

As Brother Agathon himself stated in an outline of his preface,[94] he received notes from only "five or six Brothers".[95]. In the Institute Archives we find the manuscripts of three of these, classified as numbers 40, 41 and 43: one, a manuscript of 120 pages and 11 chapters; another comprising the same number of chapters in 260 pages; and the third having 353 pages divided into two sections. The first two follow the order of the original *Conduct*, and "number 40" adds considerations concerning "what a Brother should think about his vocation". "Number 41" is pervasively dependent upon Rollin. The same thing is "Number 43", but with an even greater freedom regarding the basic text that was handed down by John Baptist de La Salle and the first Brothers.[96]

The Superior-general thought of these tentative approaches as useful. But none of them corresponded completely with his own purposes. Lacking the more abundant materials he had asked for, and unable to assemble a committee of "experienced teachers" for a definitive edition,[97] he determined to write a new *Conduct* himself.

We have two "accounts" of this vast undertaking: first, there is "Register number 45", which is in great part in Brother Agathon's handwriting, as it is generally in his style. It is a first, and frequently illegible, rough draft.[98] Its date has been fixed with certainty as 1788 or 1789: for the author quotes the *Treatise on Arithmetic*, published in 1787. He apparently set to work immediately after the General Chapter, which had once again issued a demand for a new edition of this fundamental text. It is impossible to believe that, in the midst of a Revolution, Brother Agathon would have had sufficient leisure to write so many pages and then correct them in the way we shall presently see. Throughout 1792 he kept the manuscript with him personally, and, during a visit to Rouen,[99] he added an official document, certified by his signature.

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[93] Cf. Volume 1

[94] Motherhouse Archives, AC d, Register no. 45, pg. V

[95]. The copy in the Motherhouse Archives does not mention the publisher. On the back of the cover, on an in-set page, there are printed the words: "Brother Vivien, of the Christian Brothers" . In the second half of the 18th century Lasallian pedagogy began to spread outside the Institute. In the Motherhouse Archives there is a manuscript, author anonymous, entitled Essai d'une ecole chretienne ou manière d'instruire et d'élever chretiennement les enfans dans Ies ecoles, which originated in the Congregation of Our Lady Help of Christians, at Charly, Seine-et-Marne. This essay is in direct dependance upon the Conduct and the Meditations for the Time of Retreat

[96] No. 1 See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July 1937, article cited, pg. 211

[97] Register no. 45, pg. V.

[98] There are some pages in a finer, clearer and more regular handwriting that might very well be the work of the Superior's secretary, Brother Solomon.

[99] This document, the existence of which is witnessed by a note written by the Brother Archivist, has become detached from the protective covering on Register no. 45

Registers nos. 42 and 44 supply the second account of the edition.[100] Overall, it is based upon "No. 45". But there are a number of corrections and variants. The long preface found in the draft is not included. Whole pages are blank. The two secondary documents do not totally overlap one another. Number 44, which includes, over and above the text of "No. 42" (and "45"), various articles concerning residence schools, stops abruptly before the end of thiH code, at the first page of the "Rules for Residence Schools". The concluding chapter of the book must be sought elsewhere; and it is found in a small, 29-page notebook, in a handwriting other than that of "Register No. 44", but the opening words of which fit exactly the sentence left unfinished in the register.[101]

Such is the condition of the manuscripts in which Brother Agathon worked out his plan and elaborated his thought. What they needed in order to be published was the finishing touches on several chapters and the integration of some scattered elements. With the catastrophe of 1792 the project was swallowed up in the darkness. After the restoration of the Institute the documents would be reassemble and re-examined. However, they would never be published. In 1811 a new edition of the *Conduct of Schools* would merely take its inspiration from them, while omitting what had to do with the residence schools (which were not revived), although it borrowed from these documents typical passages describing "the conduct of inspectors and those who train young teachers". In this way the survival of the educational ideas of the Superior was attested and the lines binding the Brothers of the 19th century to De La Salle's distinguished successor appear quite visibly.

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Some of the Brothers "thought that serious changes" were going to be made in the 1720 and 1742 editions (and regarded that as a pretext for the casual use of what had been highly successful Lasallian methods). In his letter of 1784, Brother Agathon appealed to the Brothers for fidelity to the Founder's teachings. The Regime, he wrote, is indeed intending "to arrange the book in a better way"; but this was a long-range project. Before it was concluded, nothing should be changed in school regulations --except the use of the rod and the whip, emphatically forbidden by the General Chapter of 1777. Besides, "the new edition ...will include the same elements as its predecessors" .[102]

Indeed, the revision of 1788-1789 differed from the original in form only --and in the addition of chapters devoted to the training of candidates, the inspection of Christian schools, and the management of residence schools. In his preface,[103] the author explains why, henceforth, the *Conduct* will begin with the "Rule of the Inspector of Schools": it was "natural" to begin with "a sketch of the administration of schools and the principles that must guide them". This part, he reminds his readers, "is not new .. .It is a collection of the precepts...that have been uninterruptedly taught and followed". And he goes on to describe his discovery of "a manuscript dated 1696...filled with the primitive spirit of the Society" and the principles instilled into successive generations of novices and scholastics. He simply "copied it" --except for alterations required by practices that had become time-honored.

As for the second and third parts, "it will be admitted, through their conformity" with the earlier editions, that De La Salle's book, although "reformed" and perfected on some points, still stood on its primeval foundations, including the developments that the Founder himself originated.

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[100] Number 44, like number 45, is in the handwriting of Brother Agathon. Motherhouse Archives, AC d.

[101] The numeration, which goes from 261 to 273 manifest without any possible doubt that this notebook follows the revised Management; it must be noted, however, that manuscript no. 44 has 460 pages, while manuscript no 45 has only 200.

[102] Instructional letter of the 1st of January, 1784, note to page 27.

[103] Cf. Register 45

The chapters on "the management of residence schools" was the material of the fourth part into which the former director of the residence school in Angers compressed the results of his own experience along with the traditions of his religious family. In his preface he emphasizes that "superabundance" of "educational tools" which the organization and the programs of the major Lasallian institutions afforded the Brothers. He hinted as to how religious discipline and the rigorous cohesiveness of effort and commitment assured the Institute's educational superiority over other institutions whose "migratory and mercenary" personnel, compelled by individual interests, wrangled over diverging systems. And, finally, he extolled the advantages of residence schools where children, "in a kind of retreat, more easily preserve the love of work. .. (and) acquire a taste for virtue", supervised step-by-step, so to speak, by unremitting and unimpeded solicitude.

When he draws up advice and principles for the use of the teachers of young Brothers, the author of the new *Conduct* comes very close to borrowing, as he said he would, from a very venerable text[104] that goes all the way back to the origins of the Congregation --a copy (or more probably the original) of the manuscript preserved in the Departmental Archives of Vaucluse. And, similarly, in reviewing the duties of the inspector of schools, he preserves the outline, the ideas and even whole sentences from the concluding pages of the manuscript called "1705", which is in the possession of the National Library. His excitement at having discovered De La Salle's unadulterated thought is quite understandable.[105] He received it respectfully and enshrined it in his own text. Following the copyist, or the faithful interpreter of the Founder, Brother Agathon points out the defects that it is important for the young teacher to correct arid the qualities of authority, prudence, psychological tact, speech and method that beginners must gradually acquire. *The Explanation of the Twelve Virtues* ... had already traced out the portrait of the ideal teacher: indeed, Brother Agathon refers his readers to that essay in order "to spare himself repetition".

What follows in this book (as far as the chapters on the residence schools) corresponds to the two parts of the edition of 1720. We meet with logically justifiable transpositions and omissions, indicated in manuscript "No. 44" by lengthy blank spaces, which the writer evidently intended to fill after a fresh examination, and two unpublished sections, at the beginning of the third part, on "dividing classes ("beginners", "intermediates" and "advanced") and the activities that go on in each" and on "the diligence of pupils". The theme of "punishment" is dealt with according to the principles advanced by Rollin and the author of the *Twelve Virtues* ... Brother Agathon had put it quite exactly: he had scrupulously satisfied the demands of the last two General Chapters; his "additions" could not in any way "be regarded as innovations", foreign to the spirit or traditions of his Institute.[106]

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The fourth part must be treated separately. Not because (any more so than the preceding ones) this part represents an innovation. For it, too, remains in the direct line of the Lasallian tradition, as it can be traced from 1690. It was not reckless for the Superior-general to have laid claim to both the oral tradition and the authoritative scriptures of the Institute. But with the foresight and the conscience of a great teacher, he sought to define the image of a century of educational progress. He wished to present a synthesis of the work which is the residence schools, which, under our analysis, has appeared as fragments and by successive stages.

From the outset, he defined the principal end of the teachers in residence schools (as) thoroughly to teach their pupils in the Christian and Catholic religion; to form them to piety, virtue and good conduct; to inspire them, by constant instruction, to acquire and preserve its spirit and its practices. Besides, they teach them the rules of politeness and civility...to read well both manuscripts and printed materials, fine handwriting, general calculation and foreign exchange, bookkeeping, commercial theory, spelling, French grammar, drawing, the elements of mathematics, geography,

[104] Register no. 45.

[105] See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 474-479, and 501-505. At lines 43-44 of page 475 read "This supplement to the book was not ready for publication until the end of the 18th century"

[106] See Bulletin des Ecoles chretiennes, for July 1937, article cited, pg. 214. See Vol. I of the present work.

hydrography and history. The teachers will also strive to form their minds, character and judgment...Such is the task of the teachers in residence schools. Such is the summary of their obligations regarding the youth for whom they are responsible. Such, also, is the purpose of their residence schools. For them this is a matter of justice, conscience, honor and salvation.[107]

While the Community to which these teachers belong has, for religious and administrative matters, a person in authority, who is the Director, the guidance of the residence school, the organization of its studies, the coordination of its instruction and discipline are entrusted to another Brother, the "Prefect", appointed immediately by the Superior-general. The Brother Prefect must be "the prime mover, the ever-present active soul" of the residence school. He presides over group activities (and therefore over chapel meetings, the refectory and the lecture halls); he supervises both the classrooms and the courses; he personally oversees the work and the behavior of the pupils.

However, safeguards are provided in order to avoid a serious conflict of authority. The Prefect, remaining subordinated to the Director, is enjoined to inform the latter with regard to the general progress of affairs affecting the institution. His role of intermediary requires a great deal of tact. Respecting his colleagues, he is cordial, gracious and moderate. His assistant, the Sub-prefect, will have the same qualities.[108] Harmony among the teachers is essential to the success of Christian education. Men whom "voluntary religious profession" has inspired to unite their talents, their work and their experience and who are vowed to obedience cooperate unreservedly "for the accomplishment of the" collective "task". [109]

Once the author of the manuscript has advanced these general principles, he returns to each of the Prefect's duties toward the pupils. Since the responsibility for admissions is entrusted to the wisdom of this Brother, he must be convinced that "a great multitude that has been poorly selected is of no advantage to an institution" and that only children "who exhibit good habits", an adequate intelligence and a readiness to be open and docile should be admitted. When parents bring their children to the Prefect, he will stress with them the dangers of overloaded programs of study: in attempting to diversify the sciences in a young mind, "disorder is introduced"; and "the learning faculty as well as the resiliency of the physical organs are blunted".[110]

The schoolboy must neither be discouraged, nor incited to pride nor should foolish hopes be raised. "Unless a resident pupils behaves very badly or is rebellious ...the Prefect will not complain about him" on the occasion of family visits. "He will be content to say: 'Master ...will do better presently'", and if he has good reasons to commend a pupil, he will mix his praise with a good deal of discretion.[111] Similarly, in his correspondence with parents, he will give evidence of circumspection, so that when the pupils return home, they will find remarks and admonitions that conform completely with the discussions that the Prefect held with them concerning their work and their behavior. For similar reasons, it is fitting for the Prefect to examine the merits of complaints. It is a matter of justice, as well as of prudence; in so doing, one anticipates "hotheadedness, intrigues and schemes for rebellion." [112]

The same solicitude, the same respect for souls dominates the explanation of teachers' general obligations: --the teaching of Christian doctrine, the orientation of one's daily activities according to moral directives, the training of the believer, the "citizen", the "father of a family", the "genuine friend" and the man called to live in the world or drawn by a higher calling, the cultivation of personal piety and especially the very large part given to Marian devotions through the Confraternity of the

[107] Ms. 44, pp. 375-6. See Bulletin des Ecole chretiennes for July, 1937, art. cited, pp. 214-6.
[108] Ms. 44, pp. 376-90. Cf. Lucard, Annales, Vol. I, pp. 333-334, quotations from the general regulation at St. Yon
[109] Ms. 44, pp. 390-9
[110] Ibid., pp. 399-401
[111] Ibid., pp. 402-04.
[112] Ibid., pp. 407-8 & 412.

Most Blessed Virgin, the practices of the examination of conscience, frequent talks on purity of intention, the struggle against spiritual sloth and religious routine --so many subjects marvelously dealt with, and in which we perceive the influence of the author of *Advice on the "Christian day" of the student.*[113]

The constant and clearly expressed thought of the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle was sharply and decisively, although without untimely interference and clumsy zeal, to involve the lives of their pupils along supernatural lines. When the day came for resident pupils to leave their teachers, the Brothers' parting word of advice was "to dare always to be Christians", and "to make their devotion consist in acquitting themselves well of their religious duties and the duties of their calling". And, so as to conceal nothing ofthe Gospel's truth, the Brothers would persuade these middle-class youths that "their comfortable situation did not dispense them from detachment to the goods of this world".[114]

It is not surprising to find Brother Agathon calling upon the affections for the secret of an effective education. "Teachers (will be less concerned) with making themselves feared than with making themselves loved." They will win "the regard" of their pupils through "a sincere attachment...an intense zeal for their progress, an affability, and frankness, a politeness, an ease of manner, goodness and kindness": by assisting them in their work; by never rebuking them when it is necessary to repeat an explanation. If these humble functions and evidences of affection "are not discounted by petty meanness and unworthy familiarity, they will have the double effect of winning both respect and love" and of inducing young people to imitate such virtues.[115] To adjust to the minds of the pupils, "to anticipate the difficulties" they will meet with in text or a problem in order to put them in a position to surmount an obstacle, not to go on to a more difficult lesson until one is certain to have been understood throughout the previous classes, to ask a lot of questions and to be simple and clear --all of this is to apply to education a system that succeeds in training the will.[116]

To know thoroughly one must observe. And nowhere else will one better observe children than at play. "Left reasonably free" during recreation, they reveal "their character: anxiety, tranquility, harshness, gentleness, quarrelsomeness, honesty, obstinacy, flexibility, dishonesty, kindness, hotheadedness, composure, presumption and modesty". It is up to the teacher to notice what must be "improved and corrected", developed or opposed. Forbidding all behavior that is less than sincere, anticipating faults by timely intervention rather than making haste only to punish the guilty party, breaking up all suspicious assemblies, the teacher will so act that the time for play will promote his pupils' health, but not be detrimental to their souls and present a marvelous opportunity for his work as a teacher.[117]

He will be evenhanded with all resident pupils. The less intelligent have the same right to his attention as have the better endowed. It would be an "obvious injustice" to "grant more to those who have greater facility". He "will regulate" the burden of each one by considering the aptitudes of each. Otherwise, he "would cause loathing, despair, insolence, callousness, spite, and rebellion".[118]

The chapter on punishment is suggested by the principles of which we have spoken. He forbids the use of the whip. Regarding other "corporal punishment" (and he is referring especially to

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[113] Ibid., pp. 412-20; See above, pp. 598.

[114] Ibid., pp. 421-2.

[115] Ms 44,pp.425-426

[116] Ibid pp.427-428

[117] Ibid., pp. 429-33. These comments on recreation obviously pertained to the chapters on the residence schools; the primary schools did not include play in the brief time the pupils were present, morning and afternoon, for the teachers' instruction.

[118] Ibid., pp. 438-9. These paragraphs and the ones that follow are missing from Ms. 42.

the rod), without absolutely abolishing it, he wishes that it were eliminated. One should never deprive a child of food.[119] Nor should one inflict "penances that smack of the practices of religious Communities"; they would be particularly "out of place". And one should not refuse "to pardon a schoolboy who asked for it with the signs of genuine repentance; to do otherwise would be unreasonably severe, and would arouse hatred".[120] These are the general guidelines of the "Conduct of Residence Schools". They are everywhere to be observed. But, of course, circumstances of time and place, the exigencies of everyday life, and unforeseen eventualities will require adjustments and particular or exceptional decisions. The Prefect and the Brothers will confer about these in "committees", bimonthly meetings (or if need be more frequently) which will take place in the evening "after the resident pupils have gone to bed and their rooms are closed", and, usually, on Sundays. Discussions and decisions will bear upon "everything that has to do with behavior and instruction", on "everything that relates to good order".[121] From this collaboration among the teachers there arose the handbook of "customs" which, provided the Superior-general approved, regulated the details of life in each institution.[122]

Up to this point, Brother Agathon was adopting the point of view of the teaching personnel. In the final chapter he places himself in the perspective of the pupils by discussing the "duties of resident students". Starting with the second half of the first paragraph, this section is the conclusion that the small book, in another handwriting, adds to "Register No. 44". Several articles repeat themes already dealt with: but under a new form, since this time the prescriptions are addressed to the children and no longer to the teachers. It goes without saying that their primary "duty" has to do with religion, in external action (assistance at and practical participation in services, the study of Catechism and Holy Scripture and attendance at homilies) and in the secret of the heart ("purity, piety, faith, hope, and charity without which postures and gestures are of no value in the sight of God.")

Then, the resident pupils has obligations of respect, gratitude, submission and attachment with respect to his "teachers" who, for him "hold the place of God and his parents"; and who, "citizens, zealous for the common good, have dedicated their health, their leisure, their patience and their courage to the task of education" .

Regarding his "classmates", he must practice the great commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself; whence he will deduce the two principles: "Offer him all the help that you expect from him; and never do to him what you would not reasonably like him to do to you".

There then occurs an enumeration of, and a commentary upon, the rules which govern life in a residence school, the major and minor virtues incumbent upon all refined youth. To fail to care for one's clothing and linen is an "injustice" towards one's parents, who must pay for them. Cleanliness "must be observed in the outward appearance of resident pupils and especially in their rooms". So that they might acquire the habits of order and of "self-reliance", they shall be required to make their own beds and clean "their shoes, vessels and play-clothes".

Each morning they will open the window of their small room. They shall do no damage to the walls, "not even under the pretext of having powder to blot their writing". They shall neither whistle, nor sing, nor eat, nor receive their classmates in their room, which is reserved for silent reflection and sleep.

They shall go to class "earnestly and with joy, in the desire of acquiring useful knowledge and of accomplishing God's will". They shall be on their guard against .carelessness, and, here again, against slovenliness. To stain one's hands with ink, spill it on the floor, table, one's clothing, linen, on

[119] Lucard, op.cit., pg. 335

[120] Ms. 44, pp. 446-52.

[121] Ibid., pg. 455. cr. Lucard, op.cit., pg. 336-7.

[122] Ibid., pg. 458.

the paper on which one is writing, to suck one's pen, apart from the fact that these things are condemned by decency and civility, they are objectionable in every way.

The rules of civility meet with a broad field of application in the refectory: an "indolent posture" , a napkin that is immediately dirtied, food "devoured greedily by the eyes" before it is eaten, the knife carried to the mouth, the mouth "wiped with a piece of bread" --such "revolting coarseness was scarcely dare talk about!" (Surely, the resident pupil would have done well to have studied De La Salle's little book.[123]

Their games during recreation were rather strictly supervised (and the rules were quite typical of the period). No "exploits of strength", jumping, or too violent physical exercises "that might soil or tear" the clothing, prevent the players from "appearing properly" in the parlor, "especially on Sundays and holidays".

The Brothers feared that their pupils might wound or cripple one another. They were also concerned about hygiene and understood how favorable is the open air to physical health, and to moral and intellectual equilibrium. "A walk in the country", so "wholesome" for the constitution, is not less useful for improving the heart and the mind through...the spectacle of nature...Considering attentively ...the marvelous products of the earth, the water, the forests, and the animals...a wellborn young man adds to his knowledge" (and) is lifted up toward the Creator... Furthermore, the sight of a peaceable and industrious farming population inspires him with sympathy for "the simplicity and the innocence of its ways", and with respect for its rugged and useful toil. It was in the style of period. J.J. Rousseau and Bernardine Saint Pierre would have repudiated neither the poetry nor the "sensitivity". They would have applauded (and, so too would have all the "moralists") the rule against "picking fruit from trees" or "a flower from a garden", and even "a branch from a hedge", "chasing or striking cattle", as well as licence to drink milk as refreshment. And there are some lines in the regulation at St. Yon one might believe to have been borrowed from Émile which recommends that the resident pupils be brought to "the major fairs" to view "the displays in the booths".[124]

"Walks into town" were allowed every other week, provided that the return to school was no later than five o'clock in the winter and six o'clock in the summer. But let the beneficiary of these amusing pastimes refrain from offending against "the truth, justice and the reputation of his neighbor" when discussing the residence school!

The final articles of the regulation make a number of recommendations, especially on the theme of reading, which must be controlled by the Brother Prefect, and also on the conduct to be observed whenever "the hairdresser" comes "to arrange" the young gentlemen's hair. On these occasions, silence was the rule: a precaution that appears justified when we realize, on the testimony of the author of the *Plan for Education*, that these "sumptuary craftsmen", brought into the colleges on the strength of a tyrannical fashion, "render young men effeminate" and reveal to them rather dangerous perspectives on the morality of the times.[125]

Overall, there is nothing more sensible than these regulations for residence schools, which succeed so well in informing us about the organization and the role of the teachers, the profoundly

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[123] ! See Vol. I of the present work, pp. 469-473, concerning the Rules of Politeness and Christian Civility.

[124] Lucard, op.cit., pp. 718-24. But "they will be careful not to bring" the children to see "conjurers, clowns and stage comics" .

[125] Sicard, op.cit., pp. 139-40.

religious character of the education, the attention to a fastidious politeness, discipline and relations between teachers and pupils at St. Yon and the other residence schools of the Institute. It seems to us that after these long analyses we are sufficiently informed concerning the education provided by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the 18th century.

EPILOGUE

The Christian Brothers on the Eve of the French Revolution

It was a brilliant generalate, positive and pregnant with as much promise for the future as it had admitted of genuine accomplishments. This language is not excessive in defining Brother Agathon's years, from 1770 to 1789. And we do not believe that we laid too much stress on the period, which was so brief in terms of time, but so filled with light and life. We should like to consider it once more, as we pause at one of its most solemn moments. On the 4th of May, 1787, there met at Melun the Eleventh General Chapter, the great assembly which with enthusiasm and gratitude subscribed to initiatives of the Superior and converted their substance into copious legislation. At the end of the road followed by the sons of the De La Salle for a century, and before the *diaspora* which no one as yet foresaw but which was nonetheless near-at-hand, there was erected a public witness: a collection of prescriptions in conformity with the doctrine and the spirit of the Founder, a statement of principles and obligations proclaimed to Brothers in active employment and bequeathed to their spiritual heirs by a chosen few grouped about their leader.

Prior to the convocation of the Chapter Brothers Agathon had made a representation to the Holy See. He sought a clear interpretation and reconciliation of the 3rd and 13th articles of the Bull of 1725.[126] In his appeal of 1786 Brother Agathon explained as follows: “According to the Constitution of this Institute, Most Holy Father, in General Chapters where usually hold elections, we have always assembled as many Directors of principal houses ...as other Brothers selected from among our senior members; and the elections of the Superior-General and his Assistants have taken place...without the least conflict, but in union of spirit, by all the Brothers without distinction, by secret ballots ...But, since this Institute has been subject to vast growth, there is good reason to fear that in the future the Directors of the principal houses may suggest that they enjoy the exclusive faculty of electing separately, in conformity with the tenor of the Bull.”[127]

The Assembly of 1777 was composed (apart from members of the 'Regime') of fifteen Directors and fifteen senior Brothers, and all were deputies selected by the votes of professed Brothers. The Brother Superior asked the Sovereign Pontiff, by rescript, to confirm the solution that had been adopted at that time. On the 11th of August Pope Pius VI consented. On the 9th of January, 1787, Rome's decision was registered in the Parlement of Rouen.[128]

On the 17th of January a circular letter notified the Congregation of the date on which the Capitulants were to meet. It asked for prayers; and it outlined the procedure for elections. According to a chart that had been subsequently drawn up to the Brother secretary, there were (apart from Melun) 113 Communities, inhabited by 829 Brothers, who were to share the costs of the Chapter.[129] At the forefront of concern there were certain resolutions to be submitted, certain reforms to be proposed. Brother Philippe of Jesus, the Procurator-general, wrote a report in which he asked that "communions for the dead be not delayed," to supervise the catechetical instruction of all teachers, to lighten the Superior-general's crushing load of correspondence, to determine a rotation of visitations

[126] See above.

[127] Recueil des Bul/es, brefs et rescrits accordes par Ie Saint-Seige a l'Institut des Freres des Ecoles chretiennes, Versailles, 1871. Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pp. 508-09.

[128] This chart, preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, BE g, is quite apparently in Brother Solomon's handwriting. The total cost came to 4,088 livres and 16 sols.3 Motherhouse Archives, HA p 4, original document.

[129] Archives Mother House

and residence at the Motherhouse for the Assistants, to suppress provincial chapters, which he considered expensive and superfluous. The Superior-general retained the right himself to convoke former Superiors and Assistants. Among the delegates to the Chapter of 1787 there are many names known to us. There were the Brothers Assistants Paschal, Sylvester and Zacheus (who resigned), Brothers Directors Benezet, Leander, Amand of Jesus, Macarius, Eunuce, Jean de Marie, Lupicin, Serapion and the former Superior-general, Brother Florence. Brothers Dominique, Ferreol, Cherubin, Nicolas, Placid of Jesus and Aphrodisias completed the group of heads of major Communities. These were experienced men, at the height of their powers and they had proved themselves at such places as Dijon, Provence, St. Yon, Paris, the "Rossignolerie," and Orleans. Brother Aphrodisias (Nicolas Gase) of St. Denis in France, had left the great Normand institution, where for a long time he had been Procurator and afterwards Director, in order to take charge, in 1785, of the Community on St. Euvertus Street in Orleans. According to the Register at St. Yon, he was "a most edifying Brother who is an excellent leader.[130]

Brother Evaristus, Director of Mirepoix, must have taken his seat as a senior Brother. Ill, he was unable to fulfill his mandate, and there was no one to take his place.[131] His fourteen colleagues at Melun were Brothers Anacletus (the former Assistant), Vincent-Ferrier, Philippe of Jesus, Brice, Jean of the Cross (who had been Capitulants in the previous Chapter), Lothaire, François Regis, François of Mary, Solomon, Bernardine, Marcus, François, Prudence of Jesus and Amable. Brother Lothaire

(Jean-Baptist-Claude Clerc), the Superior-general's secretary, was to be elected Assistant, to replace Brother Zacheus. Born in Franche-Comte on the 21st of June, 1739, he entered the novitiate in Dole on the 30th of April, 1760, and he pronounced perpetual vows at St. Yon on 19th of March, 1766. As Director of novices at Maréville, before becoming the sub-Director of the institution in Nantes, in 1772, he had initiated Brother Solomon into the delicate work of counselling young Brothers. The two men were well met and a fine friendship sprung up between them. "Welcome him as though he were myself," Brother Solomon wrote to his brother Achille, on the 25th of October, 1766.[132] In June, 1787, after the designation of the new Assistant, whom a tour of duty would take to the North, his friend chose this language to introduce him to his family in Boulogne: "I'm writing you about the visit ...of a man who is small in stature and not very much to look at, but who has marvelous qualities and acknowledges virtue .. You will see ...a man in whom I have always believed should be given my complete confidence .."[133] In his letter, Brother Solomon neglected to inform his relatives that he himself would be replacing his alter ego as the Superior's secretary. He had just marked the beginning of his new functions by drawing up the report of the Chapter meetings. The post was consistent step, before the final martyr's crown, in a career during which every year marked both spiritual and intellectual progress. Of all John Baptist de La Salle's 18th century disciples he is the noblest and the most lovable figure. And there is none of them who is better known, because many of the writings of Nicholas Le Clercq (the glory of the Lasallian Congregation and of Catholic France) have been preserved. We should only have glimpsed a reflection of his soul in "notebook no. 116" in which he had copied passages from Canon Blain and "the maxims of the Blessed Brother Gilles, of the Order of St. Francis" and others "taken from 'The Year Sanctified,' the "Counsels of St. Teresa," and quotations from The Life of the Dauphin, The Father of Louis XVI.[134]

But what is quite a different matter and a much more important treasure is his collected correspondence: ninety-nine letters in his own handwriting, spread out between the 30th of October, 1768 and the 15th of August, 1792, the date on which he was arrested. Twenty-four documents complete the letters: the family letters from his elder sister Barbara (Mme.Ricart), from Brothers Gervais, Serapion and Leander, and from M. Allen, a friend of the Le Clerqs.These important documents, with some others, were transmitted by a grandniece of the martyr and were used as the

[130] Brother Aphrodisias died in 1791 in Orleans (mention made in the previously cited Register

[131] See above Cf. Lucard, Vol. II, pg. 506.

[132] Motherhouse Archives, R-2, letter no. 34

[133] Motherhouse Archives, letter no. 91. Bishop Chassagnon quotes these two texts, pp. 122-3 and pp. 275-6 of his book on Brother Solomon.

[134] Motherhouse Archives, R-2

basis of a biography written in 1905 by the then Father Chassagnon of Autun.[135] They open up to us an. entire world of ancient France; and they reveal one of those middle-class provincial families, sturdy and healthy, closely united and marvelously Christian, as well as hardworking, competent in business, every ready to serve their city, their parish and to give several of their many children to God. It was one of those "social cells" which taken together constituted over the long centuries the honor and the strength of the nation. In the forefront there is the hero, the flower of the nation and the model Christian Brother: Guillaume-Nicolas Louis, born in Boulogne on the 14th of November, 1745, baptized the following day in the church of St. Nicholas in Lower Town, the fifth of eleven children, the fourth of seven surviving sons of FranJLIois Le Clercq, wood merchant and exporter, and May Barbara Dupont.[136] After having studied with the Brothers in the city of his birth and worked at commerce in Desvres and in Paris, he answered the divine call. He entered the novitiate at St. Yon on the 25th of March, 1767; and "he took the black robe on the following Ascension Thursday."[137] His brother, Eustachius, who joined him in the Institute on the 26th of February, 1771, died with the name of Brother Salvator on the 24th of May, 1775.[138] The eldest of the Le Clercq sons, Jean-François, had earlier ended his brief life, with the Oatorian Fathers; while Achille, pure of should and timid of conscience, passed away in 1782, as a sub-deacon.

In Rennes, Rouen, Maréville and Melun, amid joys and sorrows, Brother Solomon pursued his course toward holiness. As a young schoolteacher, Director of novices, Procurator, and professor in the scholasticate, his shadow has on several occasions crossed our story. His letters especially those that he addressed regularly to his father (become a widower), to his younger brother and sister, Achilles and Rosalie, show us his piety, his spirit of penance, his humility, his abnegation and his zeal for the Eucharist and for the Sacred Heart. Affectionately filial and fraternal, he was able to combine, frequently with a smile, the most complete detachment from earthly things with the liveliest family spirit...

He was interested in the small and the great events that surrounded the family and the city. He scarcely distinguished, whether in thought or in word, between his Brothers in Religion and his "Le Clercq brothers" and he went out of his way to establish frequent contacts between them. He supported Rosalie during the exercises of a retreat, told her the story of his journey from Maréville to St. Yon in 1781, on foot, with stops at Troyes, where his elder Oratorian brother had died earlier, at Sens, where his visited "the superb mausoleum of Bishop Ie Dauphin," the descent of the Seine from Melun to Paris, and then on to Rouen by "watercoach."[139] In November and September of 1788 he sent her a real journal, "begun in Angers," continued in Nantes and finished in Melun,[140] of the long trip taken as the Brother Superior-general's socius to the houses of the Ile-de-France, Normandy, Picardy, Orleans, Anjou, the Lower-Loire, with a return by way of La Fleche, Ferte-Bernard, Nogent-lle-Rotrou and Chartres. An historian finds circumstantial information in this manuscript and vivid details. We have used it, on occasion, for some of the particulars surrounding residence and primary schools. Thus, for instance, the description of Brother Agathon's and Brother Solomon's horse and buggy: "A small carriage, on springs, with a leather top...a sort of cabriolet ...harnessed to a single

[135] In Brother Solomon's papers preserved in the Motherhouse Archives, the correspondence is divided into two classifications (Brother Solomon's letters and letters from family and friends; Augustine Le Clercq's letter, incomplete, is a copy, in the handwriting of Brother Solomon. The numbering system (which does not include several documents) mixes the two classifications. Letter no. 93 has, since 1933, been placed in a reliquary. And letter no. 83 has disappeared.

[136] Extrait des registres . ..de l'eglise paroissiale de Saint-Nicolas • • . pour l'annee 1745. (Copy of the baptismal certificate, in the Motherhouse Archives. Cfb). The two surviving daughters were Mrs. Ricart and Miss Rosalie Le Clercq

[137] St. Yon Register

[138] ibid

[139] Letter no. 61, dated the 26th of August, 1781.

[140] Letter no. 85, dated the 10th of November, 1788 ("finished on the 23rd") and an unnumbered letter, dated the 28th of the following December.

horse ...the reins" of which the Brother Secretary "usually took." Sometimes the travellers would do several miles outside the carriage "to rest the animal" or "to take exercise and warm themselves." [141]

In this way we are able to follow the Superior-general in his apostolic rounds,[142] and catch a glimpse of him in his intimate moments with the friend whom he respected and loved and who, after sharing hardships and travel with his leader, would join him along the road of the harshest trials we must now return to our starting point. We were at Melun, where from the 4th to the 21st of May, 1787, the meetings of the Chapter unfolded, in a religious, cloudless and cordial atmosphere that can be created by thirtythree prominent Religious assembled for the common good of their Institute.[143] The Superior-general first of all sought the approval of resolutions which would definitively regulate the composition of Chapters, the manner of electing Capitulants and the mode of selecting the members of the 'Regime.' Having obtained the votes, he showed the Brothers the rescript from the Holy See conformable to their wishes. Brothers Assistants Paschal and Sylvester were then returned to office, and Brother Lothaire was elected. The entire work of these thirty men was condensed into seventy-four resolutions. Basically, it could not be very different from that of their predecessors. It aimed in a very special way to complete the work of 1777. Good recruiting and sound formation of young Brothers remained the primary preoccupations of the Institute. "We should take the greatest precautions against admitting" any but the best, good people, upright and capable, both in the schools and in religious life, to achieve "the goals" for which the Society was founded. Young teachers were, ordinarily, still in the process of developing, in a phase of spiritual and moral growth, when they moved on to the guidance of the Directors of Communities. It was, therefore, necessary to remind the Directors of their crucial responsibility. They must "spare nothing" in their efforts to inspire their inferiors with "the love of virtue, regularity, an exalted idea of their profession"; and to initiate them "into the difficult art of educating youth". They must watch over the preparation of classes and especially the daily study of catechism. They must see to it that progress is achieved.

Every three months the Directors were to examine the young Brothers publicly on subject-matters that were taught in the school. "No one will be admitted to vows" who failed in this respect. If need be, time was to be given to candidates to practice grammar and arithmetic.

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[141] On the margin of this Epilogue we may, perhaps, be permitted to introduce some brief sketches from the alert pen of Brother Solomon. On the 4th of October, 1788, "Feast of St. Francis," the travellers arrived at Amiens: We assisted the next day, Sunday, at the Office in the Cathedral, which is one of the most beautiful in the kingdom; the choir, paved with marble, is superb and the sanctuary is majestic. The officiating is very well done, and what is more marvelous is the piety of the Canons." In 1782, Brother Solomon had witnessed the Corpus Christi procession in Amiens; and he noted that "the cloths stretched like the sails of a ship, which make a sort of ceiling along the streets on which the procession passes." He was edified by "the people's devotion:" not only a great crowd followed the Blessed Sacrament"quietly," but "many people" then redid the course of the procession, their book or their rosary in hand, "honoring Our Lord without curiosity entering in any way." In Orleans, where the Brothers were from the 14th to the 16th of October the Secretary mentions the "beautiful Cathedral, on whose towers work was still being done, and a superb bridge ...over the Loire, one of the largest rivers in the kingdom." Near Angers, he went to see "the quarries from which slate is taken; they are very deep; some of them go down as much as 200 feet." In this city he counted "seventeen parishes, two seminaries, a university, Religious of both sexes of nearly all the Orders there are in France. The Cathedral is rather pretty, although it's only a chapel, since it has not aisles." On the 6th and the 8th of December, "Feasts of St. Nicholas and of the hnmaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin," Brother Solomon, went "to t,he first Mass at 6 o'clock, with the Community of Nogent-Ie-Rotrou, in a church where you have to climb 160 steps, besides a part of the road," on a steep hill. "This long stairway each five steps" of which "are separated by a landing of 4 or 5 feet (square) ...was covered with snow." The Superior, who was ill, was unable to visit the Community in Chartres. There he left his traveling companion, who remained at this house until the 14th of December; and returned by night as far as Paris in a coach, where he "sound a horse" to return him to Melun on the 16th. "Thank God," he concludes, "I feel remarkably well and I have more to fear from overweight than from thinness."

[142] The cashbook at Melun indicates journeys by the Superior-general in 1780, 1781, and 1788.

[143] The Arretes de Chapitre general tenu a Melun au mois de mai 1787 was printed "with several circular letters, a prospectus for postulants, etc." in Rouen, at the widow Laurence DUDlesnil, MDCCLXXXVIL. (Motherhouse Archives copy, AAB a 1). Cf. Lucard, Vol. II pp. 509-11.

But the Brother Director's task was not confined to cultivating the minds of young Brothers. It extended to the concerns that a father has for his family, a father who provides the necessities to his children. He sought "to comfort them in their suffering", "to strengthen them in their discouragement", "to counsel them in their difficulties" and "to enlighten them in their moments of darkness". Every week the Director was to speak with each of his subordinates "effusively" and in absolute confidentiality.

The spirit of the age appeared peculiarly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, which was the spirit of De La Salle. More than ever in was important to be concerned about regularity, simplicity, poverty and religious reserve, without which the Institute would not survive. The Chapter, therefore, "enjoined" Directors "to eliminate ...anything that smacked of profusion", to abstain, as far as possible, from meals "with outsiders", "not to allow games of chance to be introduced" into the Communities, and "to refuse ...gifts, recompense and gratuitous services and see that they are refused". These points appeared so important to the Assembly "that it judged those Directors who transgressed them in grave matters to deserve to be deposed".

The laxity would be particularly serious if it resulted in the neglect for the vow of poverty. The Brothers, of course, retained the bare ownership of their property; however, they could not dispose of their fortune without permission from the Superiors. And permission could never extend to authorizing a Brother to live in a way that was incompatible with his Rule.

For the rest, every precaution was to be taken to counter premature, foolhardy or dubious assignments. Professed Brothers were to provide their considered opinion of those of their confreres who asked to pronounce or to renew triennial vows or to alter their commitment from temporary to perpetual vows. A delegate of the Superior-general was to examine aspirants and preside at chapters of admission.[144]

The smooth functioning of schools was the object of another series of resolutions. The Capitulants planned for the re-editing of the *Conduct of Schools*: and they stipulated that "what has to do with corporal punishment was to be excised."[145] On the other hand, they demanded that the Rule of the Trainers of Young Brothers and the Management of Residence Schools be added to the original text. By the enumeration of the records that the Directors were obliged to keep up to date, we can see how preoccupied the Assembly of 1787 was with material and moral order and good administration and the documents it would have had prepared for history, if collapse had not set in five years later. It prescribed daily schedules in writing, the history of each house,[146] along with notebooks of permissions and visits, novitiate records and vowbooks.

It entered into a number of details regarding schools furnishings, heating and supplies; it renewed the prohibition against teaching outside of school hours, ordered the prayers customary in each diocese, and legislated the addition to the night prayer said by the pupils the *Domine, salvum fact regem.*

Higher Scholasticates were reaffirmed. Contributions made by "well-to-do" schools were to continue to be paid to the central treasury in order to finance the general expenses of the Institute. The

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[144] Proposition No. XLVI has to do with the "serious causes" which involved the dismissal of a Brother. See above, pg. 96, Art. X of the Bull of 1725

[145] In the absence of a new edition of the Common Rule, old editions were inunediately brought up to day by hand. Copy No. 4 in the Motherhouse Archives ACK (the Rule of 1726), after page 34, bears the following handwritten addendum: "The Congregation's General Chapter, held in Melun in 1787, absolutely forbad all punishment whether by whip or rod and passed a special resolution on this subject." In the 1768 edition the paragraphs having to do with the reviewed punishments were covered over with white paper.

[146] XVIII. In each house there shall be a Register in which the Conununity's beginnings and its improvements shall be recorded, as well as the names of its founders, it benefactors and its supporters, and what they did and gave to the institution; its income and the sources of that income; its responsibilities, citations from its contracts, purchases and sales, business transactions, noteworthy events which have \happened, along with their good or evil consequences ..." Brother Amand of Jesus' two Registers for the institution in Nimes anticipated these conditions. (See above, pg. 382, note #2.

ill and the elderly were put in a position to ask the Brother Superior to be sent "to Communities which appeared better equipped" for their care.

Finally, several resolutions dealt with the movement of the Congregation. One of them, handing a victory to Brother Philippe of Jesus and quite correctly assuming that a decision taken in 1771 had lost its principal purpose,[147] "suspended" the operation of provincial chapters. It created an instrument to substitute for them: Every three years...a Committee composed of the Superior-general, his Assistants, the Secretary-general and the Procurator-general dependant on the Regime will meet with four delegates from each province ...namely: two Directors of principal Communities and two Senior Brothers. In these Committees provisional legislation will be adopted in cases requiring it, while the following General Chapter may confirm or invalidate what shall have been decided, including the perpetuation or the suspension of the Committees themselves.

The election of an Assistant outside of the sessions of a Chapter was decided as follows: The Brothers who have the right to vote will nominate two commissioners in each province. And these commissioners, together with the members of the 'Regime,' will proceed to the designation of the new officer, who will function until the end of his predecessor's decennial period.[148]

Two of Brother Agathon's circular letters, with the title *General Information*,[149] were sent from Melun four months after the closure of the Chapter, on the 4th of October, 1787. One was addressed to all the members of the Institute, while the other was for the use of the Brothers Director. As commentary and explanation of the legislation that they provided to be read in each Community, they insisted on the most austere points of the Rule: penance, public humiliation, silence and separation from the world. Directors were reminded that they really "direct" (and not merely "inspect") their Brothers; that it was important for them, as a consequence, to know them thoroughly, not just tolerate their mistakes, but to transform young people sometimes refractory and somewhat vain into "genuine Religious."

The fifth Superior of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools spoke in the same terms as the Holy Founder. He prepared people to support earthly struggles whatever they might be and, if necessary, to suffer for Christ. He and the remarkable group which surrounded him and the great number of Brothers whom he instructed would know how, at the critical moment, to manifest what authentic disciples of De La Salle truly were.

[147] See above

[148] The final resolution was frankly a step in opposition to the Superiors' humility: "In order to avoid difficulties in obtaining the portraits of our Superior-generals, henceforth they shall be sat for during the course of the Superior's first year of election."

[149] Motherhouse Archives, A Ab a, printed circular.