HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF THE BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

VOLUME 7

by

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THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

WORKS AND STRUGGLES OF LASALLIANS IN FRANCE

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[Edited by Br. Gerard Rummery, FSC]

PREFACE

The translation of this work from French to English was done by Brother Edmund Dolan of the San Francisco District. 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 research from 1932-1954 was honoured by the award of the APLON prize.

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** and for most proper nouns.

In his work over three years Brother Edmund suffered a number of slight strokes. 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.

The original French sentence-structure of the text, especially in the use of the semi-colon in what would not usually be usual practice in English, has been maintained 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.

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

Brother Gerard Rummery

INTRODUCTION

The years that we are about to attempt to relive in the following pages of the history of the Institute in France at first sight seem to be thankless years. There will be themes for neither epic nor lyric. Within the boundaries of continental France — if not in the vast regions where colonizers and missionaries took flight — life seemed chilly and confined. The humiliation of 1870-1871 weighed heavily on people's spirits; many seemed to distract themselves from it by nothing except preoccupation with wealth or by dilettantism of mind and heart. The truths of the faith were forgotten, misunderstood, contested and despised. There were those who sought to create a morality independent of dogma, which ended in nothing but disaster. The policy for continental France that this agnosticism inspired was particularly lacking in grandeur; and, turning aggressive, it employed devious tactics and mean-spirited devices with which slowly and deceitfully to strangle its victims.

If melancholy tragedies, and dazzling triumphs capture attention, if the French Revolution, the reign of Napoleon I, the century of Louis XIV, the Roman Empire in the time of Augustus or under Nero's tyranny continue to have a way of rousing the reader's passionate interest, we very much doubt that the same thing will be true of the Third Republic. It was not a great "epoch", but a mediocre "time", gloomy, without powerful contrasts during which by an endless glide people were making their way toward catastrophe.

But we should beware of rash judgments. From a distance we can perceive the fragmentation of the masses who had been led astray by misguided leaders. But perhaps it would be well to adjust our perspective; since God does not abandon His creatures; and while the tares get sewn among good grain. the wheat does not wilt with the thistles. Never here below does evil exist all by itself; for even as the power of evil becomes more obvious, so does the energy of the good grow. Enthusiastic and noble men and women outline their own ideals, and then they are followed by gifted people whom an over-hasty glance may have ignored. Perhaps in gloomy and oppressive times they have been relegated to obscurity. Let us take a step closer, and they will resume their genuine importance. We shall cease to regard them as weak, debased and reduced to empty shadows. We shall, rather, become aware that they were actually laying the groundwork for a rebirth.

We shall then be less inclined to pass by inattentively and bored. In any case, humanity's wretchedness deserves to be handled with an enlightened compassion. The study of it reveals that it is less desperate than our levity assumes it to be. We must discover the flame underneath the dead coals.

The smoke of a sputtering candle and a spreading, inextinguishably blazing fire are not the same thing. If we believe in the Gospel, how shall we fail to recognize permanence? "I came to light a fire upon the earth", says Our Lord, and he vouches for the eagerness with which he wished to make that flame leap out.[1] He continues to feed it.

His disciples were not unaware of the work that the Master demanded. The watchword had continued to be handed down; and in every generation there was sufficient generous obedience for its accomplishment. Recalling the story of a great and fervent Congregation, we are bound to see it struggling against discouragement, relaxation and tepidity. While, after its forced marches, glorious in the bright sunlight under the guidance of Brother Philippe, it entered upon the roughest of roads, pursuing it along these routes will cause us no disillusionment.

The Brothers' Institute during three decades of the Third Republic are the limits within which our task is confined. First of all, there was a quite brief generalate, an appendage, so to speak, to

[1] Lucard, xii, 49

the greatness and the success of the preceding "reign"; then growing opposition from political circles, the beginnings of a persecution that expanded according a systematic plan; there was a succession of Superiors who were prepared both for suffering and for combat; and there was fruitful work under difficult conditions, along with exemplary virtue, religious, professional and patriotic, within a collectivity that was more than ever faithful to its origins, invaluable to the Church and advantageous to nations. And after an effective contribution to the salvation of souls, to the development of minds, to the health of morality, and to social peace, there came the death-blow. Sectarian forces were dead set on destroying an organization from which the entire nation had benefitted. Apart from the ingratitude and the hatred, there were the empty tributes, the cheap, if not deceitful, flattery directed at those who were about to be driven into exile. But, finally, in the midst of tragedy, there was a determination to survive and a supernatural confidence, which was the seed that held the promise of resurrection.

It's an immense picture. And to match it with the frescos of ancient times, one would have to have the pen of a Chateaubriand as he depicted the history of France — a skill we do not possess. Furthermore, since we are too close to the events as they occurred — two-thirds of them during our own childhood and adolescence — we are in danger of distorting certain points of view: — unintentionally, some episodes might be exaggerated, while others are glossed over. The interpretation of events that have only just entered into the annals of history are sometimes tricky. Think of the danger run by the psychologist who attempts to analyze his contemporaries.

At least we shall strive for objectivity and fairness. Between the end of the 19th century and our own time a huge gulf has occurred — two terrible wars, incalculable destruction, shocking slaughter and the total disruption of humanity. There is no doubt but what there are grounds here for taking that absolutely indispensable step backward in order to get a better view of the whole. We are disentangling causes whose effects still overwhelm us. But once again, how many differences of opinion, rivalries and quarrels become confined within the dimensions of unfortunate misunderstandings! Antipathy and rancor are assuaged and disappear. On the other hand, legitimate friendships cross the deepest ravines and combine their forces to become reunited with the objects of their fidelity.

The heart, then, will not be silenced. Why should it hesitate to express its gratitude, its admiration, its veneration? Feelings are not banished from history as long as it preserves its quality of honest witness. Similarly, an affirmation of faith, far from rendering suspect an account based upon proofs, manifests the narrator as one with his subjects, prepared to understand them and in a position to explain their motivation and their attitudes.

In order to disengage the principal personalities and introduce an order into the mountain of detail we shall adopt a strictly chronological order, even though the subject-matter lends itself badly to such a procedure. It needs to be dealt with in large masses, illuminated on all sides and, first of all, by means of a light that shines in some sense from within. The initial step has to involve an exact analysis of the environment, through an investigation of the characters, their principles and their morals. And at the same time we shall have to examine mechanisms.

Under the sub-title of *Lasallian Structures* we shall attempt to provide some idea of the Institute's government, its Superiors, its General Chapters, its Rule, its Religious life and the professional training of the Brothers of the Christian Schools between the death of Brother Philippe and the voting in of the Law of 1904.

Then we shall be able to present *The Congregation In Relation to the Republic*. This will be the story of the laicisation, of the analysis of the laws, the fiscal and administrative measures, concerning education, the abolition of military exemption, and the passage through the apparatus patiently and systematically set up by Free-Masonry to keep the Catholic Church in check and to exclude it, if possible, from the nation's future. In this way we shall see the end of the Communes' and the University's jurisdiction over the Catholic schools. But then there

immediately emerges the splendid structure, *The Work of the Brothers in France Prior to 1904*: — private schools, residence schools, technical institutes, clubs, young men's associations, associations of friends, religious sodalities and a variety of organizations, created as the occasion warranted and according to demands made by religion, by science applied to daily tasks and along the lines of material, spiritual, individual and social progress.

At the dawn of the 20th century the sons John Baptist de La Salle numbered in the thousands in the homeland of their Founder. And within the same frontiers there were hundreds of thousands of their pupils. The World Fair of 1900 had featured the educational accomplishments of the Institute. There was scarcely a judge of educational matters who denied the Brothers' competence and their influence. But it was precisely this success that would constitute the real, fundamental complaint of their adversaries. A pseudo-philosophy and a partisan policy would conceal a variety of pretexts. The Religious teachers were accused of being enemies of the State and distorters of minds. A diabolical perversion was employed to contrive the most monstrous scandals out of the whole cloth — the prelude (which, by the way did a quick turn-about) to the campaign in the press against the members of the Congregation and to the indictments in the precincts of the courts. And on July 7, 1904 there was pronounced by France's official representatives the iniquitous condemnation which forbade the Brothers to teach and withdrew official recognition from their Society.

And the great trial of the sons was to be followed by *the glorification of the Father*. At the historical level it was a coincidence, but in the eyes of Christians who contemplate God's designs, there was an obvious relation. It was another instance of the connection between Tabor and Calvary: on this earth suffering in the price of triumph. Such a law was especially verified in the life of De La Salle, a law to which his disciples must conform. February 19, 1888 and May 24, 1900 are the dates of the beatification and the canonization of the Priest/Educator respectively. Separated by an interval of twelve years, they each dominate a series of spectacular celebrations. Brother Joseph, the Superior-general who presided over the first of these demonstrations, would experience a painful aftermath; and Brother Gabriel Marie, voted to head the Congregation beginning in 1897, between the 8th and the 17th and last, years of his generalate, was to witness the closure of the schools in the French Districts; he was to manage the exodus, and he himself would depart the institution on Rue Oudinot, for half a century the headquarters of his Institute, in order to take refuge in Belgium.

We'll take our leave of him, until further notice, when he leaves France; since it is obvious that that event marks the end of the present volume. The 19th century is, in fact, completed for our history the moment it becomes apparently impossible for the Brothers to work and struggle on their Society's native soil. The 20th century to which, often enough, we refuse to assign a real beginning, a distinct reality, until the opening events of the drama of 1914, will very likely elude the reach of inquiry. No man, once he has come to the threshold of old age, can anticipate a great future, and still less, a robust restoration. We can only dare to hope to write, please God, one or two more volumes which we regard as an indispensable completion to the present 7th volume; it would be the direct follow-up to volume 6, and a study, or more exactly, a broad synthesis of the apostolate of the Brothers in Europe, America and Africa, prior to the current "world-wide" expansion going on in our own time. The statistics for 1904, at the turn of the century, will also be given here. But thereafter the quarry, rather than go underground, became so huge, spread out so broadly in the haze and the radiance that numerous and carefully constructed research-teams will have to share the burdens of the investigation.

The latter, although heavy, do not outstrip the powers of a man in order to put the finishing touches on the pages that follow. The bases of our documentation has remained pretty much the same as in the days when we began "the era of Brother Philippe": the Motherhouse Archives, the archives of a number of French Districts, especially Béziers, Besancon, Bordeaux,

Cambrai-Lille, Clermont-Ferrand, Le Puy, Quimper, Rodez,[2] St. Omer and Toulouse; and then at the top of the list of published documents are the Superior-generals' "Circulars" along with the reports of the General Chapters, the obituaries, edited beginning in 1885 (and going up to 1922) by Brother Idelphus, a scholar who gave them a new look. It is appropriate to add to these interesting — and sometimes extremely profuse — mementos biographies published either by the Procure General or by a variety of editors. The most productive and the best biographer invested with the blessings of the Superiors was Brother Paul Joseph: — a psychologist, philosopher and mystic, he was able to throw light on the minds of men like Brother Exupérien, Brother Arnold, Brother Aidan and Brother Gabriel of the Cross. A master educator — as some of the textbooks issued from his pen testify — he wrote an excellent book about Brother August Hubert, the Director of the residence school of Passy. We shall not neglect these important contributions.[3] We shall find others in the witty and fascinating writings of the late, lamented Brother Charles of Mary who, under the pseudonym of I. Cicé, as a proud Breton and faithful Brother, served the cause of the Church, the Institute and Christian Youth. And, finally, among the living, we shall mention with gratitude the names of Brother Albert Valentine and Brother Arthemius Leonce, both of them accomplished narrators and depicters of character.

Apart from these long and taxing texts, it will be worthwhile to page through the more popular accounts, retracing the origins and fortunes of educational institutions for pupils, alumni and faculty: — "News items" of residence schools, the bulletins of youth associations, and "Souvenirs" of special "jubilees" and of the "Fiftieth" and "Hundredth" anniversary celebrations of institutions. Certainly, there is no question of collecting rhetorical flourishes or gathering "pearls" of dubious origin, ornaments of base metal. But here and there it may be that we shall hit upon some golden fragments.

On the same level we can place monographs of local history: *L'Histoire des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Sedan* by Henry Rouy (1892), *Les Frères à Espalion* by Lagarrigue (1906), *Les Écoles des Frères à Nîmes* by F. Durand (1907), *Les Frères à Alais* by Brother Theodat German (1908), *Le Pensionnat Saint-Pierre de Dreux* by Louis Leter[4] (1914), *Les Frères à Cambrai* by Dailliez (1923), *Le Pensionnat Saint-Martin de Tours* by Albert Brault (1930), *the Bellefonds*, the school in Rouen in Father Reneault's book *Les Frères et leurs successeurs à Gaillac,* notes by a an alumnus (Alphonse Journès (1938), *Les Frères en Savoie*, an exhaustive study by Father Bernard Secret (1944). We do not claim to offer a complete bibliography. In most of our provinces, friends of the Brothers or authorities on education have taken pride in pointing out the accomplishments of the men in the white rabats. Some books have remained in manuscript, like the one by Arnaud Le Méhauté entitled *L'École des Frères à Saint-Brieuc*.[5] Statistics, names and other data have been taken from publications of a more

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[2] Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, the archivist for the District of Rodez, died on February 26, 1947. We wish very particularly to pay the tribute of grieved and grateful friendship to this excellent worker who spared us neither his services nor his counsel. For twenty years of his life he classified documents; and his patient searches, carried on in spite of failing eyesight, were rewarded with spectacular discoveries. He continues to be a model as much for those of his confreres engaged in learned research as for religious dedication.

[3] Brother Paul Joseph was also the editor of *Essai sur la Maison-Mère* that we have used and will continue to do so. Until 1914, he has assumed the editorship of the *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* which after him Brothers Rolland Benignus and Fredebert of Mary edited from 1921 to 1940. We shall continue to depend for information upon the historical articles of this journal.

[4] Frère Albert Valentine.

[5] Preserved in the archives of the District of Quimper.

general nature, where the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle are dealt with in a more formal way; such, for example, is the book by Eugene Rendu, entitled *Sept ans de guerre, l'enseignement primaire libre à Paris, 1880-1886;* the article by Father Lesêtre, pastor of St. Stephen du Mont: *Le bilan des Écoles chrétiennes* (Revue du Clergé francais, for March 15, 1897); Max Turmann's research entitled *Les Patronages*, (1899); the writings and reports occasioned by the *World's Fair of 1900*: *L'Église et les OEuvres sociales* by Stephen Védie, *L'Enseignement industriel et commercial dans les institutions libres catholiques* by Emile Cail.

Religion, education and apostolate are the leading ideas that we underscore from the books by Paul Blanchemain on the subject of Louis Gossin (1880) and on Paul Lerolle (1925),and by Bishop Baunard concerning Philibert Vrau (1907). Politics moves on to center stage in the "fourteen years" of court battles by Gailhard-Bancel (1901-1914). And we are compelled to plunge into the middle of it as we read the reports of the meetings of the Chamber and of the Senate, the legislative drafts and the notorious report by Deputy Fernand Rabier, prefaced by Henry Brisson.

Against the virulence of this pamphlet — more irritating than dangerous — we possess the perfect antidote in "the deposition of the Secretary-general, Brother Justinus, at the time of the inquiry into secondary education", an official investigation conducted in 1899 under the supervision of Alexander Ribot. But in order to avoid — in whatever way — every suspicion of partiality, we recommend among the authors whom it would be well to read Alexis Léaud and Emile Glay who, in 1934, wrote two interesting volumes entitled *L'École primaire en France* and A. Donis, a teacher in Bordeaux who in 1913 wrote *L'Historique de l'enseignement primaire publique* in the capital of GUYANA. The book by Milès, *Banqueroute des maîtres chrétiens au dix-neuvième siècle, ses causes, ses remèdes* (1904), is conceived in a quite different way, but nonetheless makes required reading and should be meditated upon.

The volumes (written between 1899 and 1906) by George Goyau entitled *L'École d'aujourdhui* offers as usual a number of weighty considerations. Among general works the following may be consulted with profit: *L'Histoire de france contemporaine* by Lavisse (Vol. VIII, *l'Évolution de la Troisième République*, by Seignobos), *L'Histoire générale de l'Église* by Fernand Mourret (Vol IX, *The Contemporary Church*, 1878-1903), *L'Eglise de France sous la troisième République* (Vols. II, III and IV) by Father Lecannuet, *L'Histoire politique des Congrégations françaises,* 1790-1914 by Father Raimbault, *Le Prêtre et la societé contemporaine*, (Vol. II, "*Vers la séparation de l'Église e de l'État*"), an extremely suggestive book by J. Brugerette.

We are adding a stone to the work of our predecessor'. Without the work of future historians the work will not be completed.
G. R.

PART ONE

THE STRUCTURE OF THE INSTITUTE

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CHAPTER ONE

The Government of the Institute

Once past the entrance to the Colonial Ministry and at the rear of one of the groups of buildings on Rue Oudinot, there is a coat-of-arms bearing the Star and the motto *Signum fidei*.[6] In such a way, in these secularized precincts, a souvenir of the Institute survives. The Motherhouse in 1874 was as it existed at the end of the Second Empire: long buildings running along public thoroughfares; hidden by these ramparts there was the delightful Montmorin Mansion, and beyond the garden there was a wing that housed the infirmary and the Junior Novitiate. The complex included other units. After the events of 1871 all construction had been halted and not resumed until 1876 under the initiative of the Most Honored Brother Irlide. One of the Assistants to the Superior-general supervised the execution in association with a Parisian architect. The Brother, Brother Arapet, who died in 1880, knew how to talk to people in the trade, and he showed them what was required for an administrative and conventual institution; as a consequence, important renovations were effected in accordance with his specifications. In brief, stout walls were built, various parts of the structure were adapted to their purposes, and the austere decor was softened with shrubbery and flowers.

Two statues of John Baptist de La Salle reveal who was, after God, the master in this house. In the garden the Founder presided over the meditation and the recreation of his disciples; this huge effigy dates from 1875 and was cast by Alexander Falguière, concerning whom we shall have something to say at another time. In the courtyard at the entrance a marble statue sculpted by Oliva in 1862 and originally placed in the parlor welcomed guests; Brother Irlide had it transferred and placed on a pedestal which proclaimed to all the significant text: "The Gospel is preached to the poor" — Christ's program, the Congregation's program.Nothing remained but to see to it that the "Patron and Protector," St. Joseph, was not left in the shaddows. Beginning on March 19, 1877 his image was placed on the pediment of the exterior facade.

Nevertheless, the main building lacked a sort of noble harmony; in any case, it was completely out of proportion with its surroundings. The chapel, blessed in August of 1851, squeezed in the numerous personnel, Superior, Assistants, Brothers working in the offices and in temporal affairs, as well as faculty and students in the novitiates. A renovation and enlargment were decided upon. The plans, drawn up by Brother Pierre Celestine, gave rise to interesting results, although incomplete and making promises for a nearly indefinite future. Between 1879 and 1881 there was built a nave with an elliptical vault, lighted by openings that pierced the vault and by a cupola surrounding the top of the sanctuary. Around the aisles stretched a gallery which gave on to the infirmary and dwelling quarters of the Régime. A group of Brother/painters, supervised by Brothere Samuel, an artist from Béziers, immediately decorated the walls. And then in 1887 the vault and the cupola were ornamented, the former with the mysteries of the Rosary, the latter by the twelve apostles. In the gallery were depicted the Tribute to Mary, Queen of the Rosary and the death of St. Joseph; on he cealing were angels bearing emblems; on the organ there were representations of David and St. Cecilia.

[6]"The seal of the Institute shalll be a shining silver star on a field of blue," the General Chapter of 1751 had decided. The motto "Signum fidei" reminds us of the "basic virtue" (the spirit of faith) that De La Salle prescribed for his followers. (Lucard, Annales, II, pg. 210.

The Superiors had sought to have the edifice sing the glory of God by its beautiful architectural arrangements and its rich ornementation. On the more solemn occasions, in the candlelight and the sheen of the candelabra this nave — thirty-six feet high, forty-eight feet wide and thirty-feet deep — seemed majestic and spendid.

In 1888 it was equipped with a high altar in white and green marble and burnished bronze. During the same year — noteworthy, for a good reason — one of the side chapels provided space for a reliquary of the beatified Founder; later on, two paintings recalled his work and one of the centrally imporant events in his life: teaching children and blessing Gabriel Drolin and his companion whom he was sending to Rome.[7].

A few remnants of the chapel-complex have found a shelter far from France. But on site, there's not a vestige of it. We shall speak of the serious reasons the Institute had for restricting its expenses and of undertaking nothing permanent with respect to the remaining structures. Once the Brothers had been dispersed by the law and condemned by the decision of the court they left their refuge on Rue Oudinot, and the wreckers went to work. The chapel has now disappeared from the "secularized" estate.

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"We loved that Motherhouse," wrote the Most Honored Brother Gabriel Marie during those sad days. It was "the family home, the center of hospitality and the symbol of union among the members of the Congregation."[8] Nine General Chapters had been held there between 1853 and 1884. Ten years after this latter date Athis-Mons, acquired through the efforts of the Most Honored Brother Joseph, offered Capitulants the peace of its terraces and hedgerows in a solitude that was still close to Paris. It had been in this way that Athis had become the temporary center of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1894, 1897 and in 1901.

The very great importance of capitulary assemblies in the life of monastic orders and Religious congregations is well understood. From the very outset of his work, St. John Baptist de La Salle made use of this means of governance. The Bull of 1725 provided for and regulated the operation of General Chapters. In Brother Irlide's Circular Letter of June 2, 1882, we read the following details or points of reference.

According to this document, the characteristics of the Institute's General Chapters are, in brief, as follows: They are elected in order to fill "the principal offices." Actually, the selection of a Superior-general had always belonged to the General Chapter. In 1795, when the Holy See thought it was necessary to supply for the lack of a leader, Pius VI simply appointed a "Vicar-general."[9]

The appointment of Assistants also depends, whether directly or indirectly, upon the votes of the Chapter; we shall reserve for a later time the details of this process.

Secondly, informed by the Superior in active service, or by the Régime or by a *motu proprio* the capitulants examined "the most important matters concerning the good order, and the interests of the Congregation as a whole" as well as those problems the solutions to which are

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[7] Essai historique sur la Maison-Mère, pp. 201-302. — Obituaries, Brother Agapet, 1880 and Brother Irlide's, 1884

[8] Letter prefacing the *Essai historique*, December 25, 1905.

[9] . *Essai*- According to Rule, General Chapters met every ten years. However, under directives dictated by Institute legislation prior to 1946, Superior-generals might call more frequent assembles. Furthermore, in case of necessity the Régime could call an assembly in order to elect a new Superior-general. True, Brother Agathon was still alive, and his absence was completely involuntary. But, in 1940, after the death of the Most Honored Brother Junien Victor in Mauléon and world events prevented the convocation of a Chapter, Pius XII entrusted the government of the Congregation to the Most Honored Brother Arèse Casimir along with the same time title, "Vicar-general," that Brother Frumence had been given.

bound to involve many major consequences.

The three following articles form a set of options of the same sort: however, the very clear-cut ascending order of the powers conferred upon the supreme Assembly should be noted:

It begins by specifying “the rules intended to maintain the vitality of the constitutions and ancient customs of the Institute.” And then it “interprets certain points of the Rule” and it proposes minor amendments “that might be urged by the time or circumstance.” Finally, in case it is “absolutely necessary”, it perfects and completes the “the Rules and Constitutions.”

But there is no question here of adventuring carelessly into this sphere. Brother Irlide wanted to “stay within the rigorous exactitude of Canon Law”: as a consequence, he set up a distinction between the Rules whose text, because literally inserted into Benedict XIII’s Bull, had received the Holy See’s explicit approval and the other Rules or Constitutions which were merely certified or approved conditionally" in that formal decree.

“With respect to the former, no modification” may be interposed, except with the approval of Papal authority, which has “formally and literally ratified them”

“As for the latter”, the author of the circular “admits the possibility of some modifications which do not subsantially alter the spirit, provided a General-Chapter”, with full knowledge of the facts, “agrees that the circumstances require it.”

This kind of distinction, he adds, has on several occasions guided the action of previous assemblies.[10] Before studying in this context the work outlined by the Chapters at the end of the 19th century, we shall pause over some of the texts of 1882. They provide us with an example of the work to which the representatives along with the Regime had to apply themselves.

The Superior of the Institute explained why he had issued his call before the termination of the ten year period since the Chapter of 1875: “In nearly all European nations, and elsewhere as well, educational questions are seizing the attention of governments.” Germany, Belgium, France and Italy were building systems of public instruction that ignored, or were hostile to, religion. “Laws that have already been promulgated and those that will be presently are going to create a number of difficulties” for the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Now is the time to plan and to act.

It was going to be necessary to “increase and strengthen the personnel in the Regime in such a way that the head and members will be able to be in a position to support the hardships that are inherent in their responsiblities and be worthy of the Institute’s confidence” in these critical times.

“The situation” would have “to be examined from all points of view” without hesitating, even if there were room to do so, to undertake essential “restructuring”. It will be necessary to take one’s bearings at the crossroads, meanwhile keeping in mind the uncertainities of the future and the threats that weigh upon Christian education.

Brother Irlide was not only seeking the cooperation of the official representatives of the Society; he was inviting all the members throughout the world to assist him “with their prayers and their insights”. This active collaboration was to be achieved by sending more or less detailed “reports” concerning:

1. The training of teachers, study programs, books and methods;
2. The Religious life, novitiates, practices, retreats, vows;
3. Government: Community direction, administration and finances.

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[10] Henceforth, the question is moot. Immediately after the General Chapter of May-June 1946 the Holy See examined and formally approved all articles of the Rule as revised in their totality by the Capitulants (Pontifical Decree of March 24, 1947). As a consequence, henceforth the Papal authority alone may introduce a change in the legislative texts which have taken on a character that is identical with those that were included in the Bull of 1725.

In this way efforts would be concentrated. A vast organism that has the clearest comprehension of its own unity knows how to defend itself against external dangers and internal risks, to lose none of its vitality, to convey remedies to momentary weaknesses and, in the odd case, to carry off fundamental revisions successfully.

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The composition of Chapters, the number of Capitulants and the manner of their election had for a long time been in need of adjustment. In the beginning thirty Brothers, the Directors of "principal institutions" or professed men with at least fifteen years of perpetual vows made up the Assembly. This was pretty much the portrait of Chapters after the French Revolution. But as the Institute grew in numbers and expanded the list of Directors and of "Senior" members grew considerably; the Brothers-electors, who were being represented, knew only certain ones among those who were eligible; and therefore their votes were sometimes in danger of being cast blindly.

The General Chapter of 1858, while deciding to increase the number of deputies "for France" to thirty-six, made no changes regarding the eighteen Directors and eighteen "Senior" Brothers, the basis of the traditional system. On the other hand, the extension of the Society beyond the frontiers of its initial homeland occasioned the most flexible and the most judicious schemes. With full knowledge "Foreign provinces" — the designation in use at the time —elected their delegates. Provinces having three institutions, after 1858, elected a single delegate, selected indifferently from among the Directors of principal institutions or from the "Senior" professed Brothers. Forty institutions entitled a "province" to two delegates. (Moreover, the Superior-general had the right of directly inviting a second or a third capitulant when a "province" included ten institutions.)

Since it departed from the thirteenth article of the Bull *In apostolicae dignitatis solio*, the decree of 1858 had to be submitted for approval to the Holy See. The "Rescript" of May 6, 1859 permitted only a temporary authorization, for a ten year period. The Chapter of 1861, elected in conformity with the new text, did not alter its wording. For future Assemblies, it increased the "members by right" (active or former Superiors and Assistants) by adding "the Procurator General and the Secretary General of the Regime, the Procurator General to the Holy See and the Vicar General in the Papal States". The role and the experience of these upper-level functionaries was sufficient justification for their participation in the counsels of the Institute. A new Papal Rescript, dated May 30, 1862, confirmed this special arrangement.
At the end of the ten year period allowed for in the previous decision Brother Philippe resumed his appeal to Rome. The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Religious refused to make extend the earlier temporary permission; it thought that the system in force was awkward; that it lacked uniformity; and that it opened up irritating inequalities between France and other countries.

This unfavorable judgment was to induce the General Chapters of 1873, 1874 and 1875 to resume the study of the question. Finally, on July 10, 1875 the following decree was drawn up, which the Holy See approved on November 12: "For the future there will be included in invitations" to capitulary Assemblies: first, "the Superior General and his Assistants; former Superiors General and form Assistants; the Procurator General and the Secretary General of the Institute; the Procurator General to the Holy See; Provincial Visitors; the Vicar General or the Visitor of the District of Rome.
In second place:

> 1. Delegates elected in each District, in proportion to the number of professed Brothers and the number of institutions...Each Province or District will elect as many delegates as there are hundreds — or portion thereof — of professed teaching Brothers. Thus a District which includes 100 teaching Brothers will elect one delegate; those that

have 101 professed — and beyond — will elect two; three delegates will represent a District of 201 professed Brothers, etc.

However, no District will be able hold an election, even for a single delegate, unless it consists of twenty professed Brothers and at least three institutions, or twelve professed Brothers and six institutions.

1. Electors may select delegates only from among the Brothers are are listed as eligible within their own District.
2. The following Brothers are eligible: the Visitors of Districts, Directors of major institutions and professed teaching Brothers, called "Seniors" who have a total of fifteen years of profession.

The Circular of June 2, 1882, which published this fundamental document also supplied its best commentary:

1. According to the new system, the General Chapter, while it will not include many more members that the form system, will provide the most complete representation in the history of the Institute. Each District will have at least one delegate.

The French Districts would henceforth benefit from a regulation initially applied — successfully — to "foreign countries". Their electors were to be restricted to designating one or several delegates whose names and faces would be familiar to them and on whose competence they would be in a position to pass judgment. This was a plan which was certainly more serviceable than lining up thirty or even thirty-six Brothers' names on an official form — Brothers chosen — without adequate means of discriminating between them — out of a total of more than 1500 eligible candidates. The system, its operation and the results of the voting would become uniform in every region in which the Congregation was established.

This overall framework was not altered prior to 1902. At that time some thought had to be given to the fact that the auspicious growth of the Institute was in danger of transforming General Chapters into over-crowded Congresses in which business was less productive and discussion more difficult. Brother Gabriel of Mary sent a "petition" to the Pope; with the view that the number of capitulants "remain within reasonable proportions", he asked:

1. "That each District elect as many delegates as it had groups of at least 150 professed teaching Brothers;
2. "That no District hold an election for a delegate unless it had at least thirty professed teaching Brothers."

The ratififying rescript was sent on March 5, 1902.[11]

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Among the major tasks facing the Congregation's representatives there was scheduled, as we have seen, the re-editing, indeed the revision, of the Rule. Without disregarding and without in any way enfeebling the spirit in which De La Salle and his first disciples had arranged for the Religious life and the government of the Brothers, it was crucial — at more or less close intervals of time — to authenticate texts, to modify terms that had fallen into disuse, to supply the meaning for some passages as well as to adapt certain articles whether to absolutely new circumstances or to a given decision recently taken by the Holy See.

The chapters of the Common Rule, written in 1717 under the direction and inspiration of the Holy Founder had continued to be an object of study and of legitimate veneration. But throughout its history the Institute had always set store by the 1726 edition, the work of the Chapter of 1725, harmonized with the prescriptions of the Bull, as well as expunged of material

[11] Circular no. 111, dated March 19, 1902.

errors and ambiguities which had here and there slipped into the primitive manuscript and its copies.[12] It was this *princeps edition* that Brother Agathon had republished in 1787; and it was reprinted in 1821, 1835 and in 1852.

The Rule of Government, worked out as early as the beginning of the 18th century, gradually supplemented, of course, by comparison with the Bull, but for a long time restricted, in its totality, as the exclusive preserve of the Superiors, owed its most recent form to some distinguished Christian Brothers in the year 1777. It was not in print prior to 1814. The edition which, at that date, had been published by Brother Gerbaud, was far from including the entire text of the original. The chapters having to do with capitulary assemblies, the Brother Procurator General, the Brother Secretary General and several others were left out. After thirty years Brother Philippe filled this gap,[13]

Quite correctly the mere reprinting of the Common Rule seemed inadequate for the General Chapter of 1861. It called for a meticulous re-reading of the articles, a more careful and understandable re-writing and, for some passages, a fresh presentation. But in point of fact, the Chapter was forced to limit itself to a somewhat stopgap volume. And so, in 1882 a genuine revision appeared "indispensable and urgent" to the Capitulants of the time.

The latter decided the Superior-general should appoint a Committee commissioned to do the preparatory work. This first draft was to studied and corrected by an examining board composed of the Regime and twelve Brothers selected by the Chapter. What was primarily intended was a collation of the texts of 1717 and 1726. According to a note in Brother Irlide's handwriting, changes would be introduced with the utmost scrupulosity: only "a judicious precaution" and a concern both for "clarity of style" and for "the appropriateness of language" would enter into play.

Numerous circumstances prevented a speedy conclusion to the task: — external events and internal difficulties, absences, deaths, confusion, tyranny, a childlike desire to await instruction and to comply with Roman opinion.

The Chapter of 1884 besought Brother Joseph to continue the preliminary study. As a temporary measure, he authorized a limited printing of the text of 1861 which, at the time, was out of print. This reprint bore the date of 1886.

In 1895 the Papal decree *Quemadmodum,* concerning "disclosures of conscience" on the part of Religious to their hierarchical superiors, involved some changes in passages of the Rule that had to do with "Reddition". And then, beginning in 1897, a sub-committee, composed of four Brothers Assistants, speeded up the project. It observed the following guidelines:

1. Maintain or reestablish — as far as possible — the words and expressions which, as included in the authentic text of 1717, possess the stamp of De La Salle;

2. Remove the preface which the Capitulants of 1725 had borrowed from the writings of Fathers Rodriguez and Saint Jure; substitute for it the Bull of Approbation along with quotations from the Code of Canon Law;

3. Review in a special way Chapters xvii and xviii which are concerned with the vows; clarify the obligations of the vows, especially, after consultation with the Holy See, the meaning and the limits of the promise "to teach gratuitously 4. Make the prescriptions of Chapter xv concerning prayers for deseased Brothers compatible with the world-wide expansion of the Institute and with its numerical growth;

5. Append to the Rule the capitulary decrees that interpret or modify specific articles;

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[12] Brother Memoire Achille, Visitor of the District of Belgium, Étude préparatoire à la révision des Régles communes. (Unpublished Ms., 1939.)

[13] Circular no. 109, danted December 25, 1901. and the edition of 1844 warranted being used for more than fifty years

6. Closely subordinate translations into various other languages to the original French text.[14] Once this task was completed, the Superior-general, Brother GabrielMarie, convoked the distinguished assembly of 108 members who, at the dawn of the new century, and under the threat of turmoil, were commissioned to fortify souls and confirm them in the knowledge, respect and love of religious law.[15] Beginning with a triduum, the General Chapter proceeded to fulfill its mission and broke up on November 8. Its task had been to sift the fundamental legislation of the Christian Brothers — the Common Rule and the Rule of Government. Some very fine dust, some wisps of straw, had mingled with the ever abundant and vigorous good grain.

The Capitulants, embracing the principles of the Commission and the Regime, approved the method that had been adopted and, with the exception of a few alterations, ratified the edition that had been submitted to them.

In the last analysis, the 1901 revision appeared to be a patient, pious work. Its authors — as the Circular of December 25 emphasizes — had "carefully expunged the document of everything that seemed to them to be inadmissible interpolation, awkward alteration of the pure and simple text of 1717". And while they may have permitted some exceptions to this criterion, they did not resign themselves easily to changing the sacred covenant; such behavior, in their eyes, could be justified only if ordered by a prior directive of the Holy See or, at the least, by the ineluctable demands of the practical order. This was why "some additions" and even "slight modifications introduced by the Chapter of 1725" could not be eliminated.

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We need to enliven these stretches of juridical abstraction by taking a look at some human beings. Four Superiors will turn up successively. Their generalates, taken together, span a period of forty years — scarcely longer than the single administration of Brother Philippe. And even then we shall be pausing well before the resignation of Brother GabrielMarie, the fourteenth successor of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

Brother Jean-Olympe, who was elected on April 9, 1874 and died on April 17, 1875, was — in the words of Pius IX — "rather shown than given to the Institute." But he deserves our taking the time to assess his character. We should be mistaken if we thought of it as indistinct merely because his sojourn at the top of the hierarchy was of a singular brevity. A short-lived leader immediately after an extravagantly long "reign", he is obliterated in the consummate light of his predecessor. But without grievous reasons he wasn't called to ascend to the heights.

From 1837, when Joseph Just Paget joined the Congregation, his teachers, confreres and those who served under him had appreciated his virtues and evaluated his competence. He was born of July 4, 1813 at Chapelle-des-Bois, a village in the Canton of Mouthe, in the Department of Doubs. The third child in a family which numbered thirteen, he witnessed several of his brothers and sisters dedicate themselves to God: two of his brothers became priests. At first his father practiced the trade — common in the Franche-Comté — of clockmaker. And then he was drawn to the vocation of teacher. it was in this way that he opened up for his son Joseph a path along which the latter would outstrip the modest horizons of the world.

In 1831 the schoolmaster occupied the post at Chantrans, while the future Christian Brother

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[14] *Stricto sensu* the Vow of gratuity merely obliged not to demand, and not to accept, tuition from poor pupils. The Rule extended gratuity to all teaching (but not to semi-residence programs, residence schools or to school supplies. *Rivista lasalliana* for March, 1934, pp. 59-64.

[15] Circular, dated June, 14, 1991; Necrology of the M. H. Brother Allais Charles, pg. 113.

assisted him and, at the same time served as church organist. In 1834, the assistant assumed full teaching duties. He was already living like a Religious; and the pastor called him “my head Vicar”. Thus, the departure of the young man for the Brothers’ novitiate on June 17, 1837 musn’t have surprized anybody. His decision went back to the previous year. Joseph had made no secret of it, and he had prepared himself for whatever sacrifices by an eight-day retreat with the Jesuits in Dole.

On July 2 in Lyons he received the black robe and a new name. While he had only a fifteen-day postulancy and a novitiate of a few months, he was immediately considered a disciple of De La Salle; of course, the devout teacher had followed *The Conduct of Schools* and, in his solitude at Chantrans, *The Method of Mental Prayer*. The master-of-novices, delighted with such a recruit, even before the end of his probation surprizingly hastened to employ Brother Jean-Olympe. And, he appeared in the institution in Lyons as a totally neophyte Religious with the title of Sub-director and commissioned to teach and train younger people.

Nevertheless, in an elementary classroom, he had to provide proof of his educational competence. It was a curious venture; he had succeeded in the village, but he failed with a group of youngsters in a large city. His real place was certainly among gifted pupils. The novitiate, of which he continued to be a near neighbor, invited him to return. In 1839 Sub-director for a second time, Brother Jean-Olympe, two year later, received an “obedience” which turned over to him the full responsiblity for the novitiate. He had pronounced his perpetual vows on September 12, 1841, a few days before his appointment as Director. He had been professed at the age of twenty-eight, which was somewhat exceptional at the time; and, at the end of only four years of Religious life he was sufficiently conversant with sacred matters to cooperated with the Holy Spirit in the lives of fervent young men. The novitiate in Lyons was at the time one of the largest in the Institute; it trained as many as 150 novices in a single promotion. Their Director exhibited a constantly growing wisdom. His dedication and his sensitive concern — underneath a rough appearance -earned him the affection of his many disciples.

He guided them until October of 1850 when Brother Philippe, who wished to create the District of Besancon, cast an eye on this native of Franche-Comté who was to be both model and mentor for the inhabitants of his birthplace. Brother Jean-Olympe had now become a Visitor. The program that he was commissioned to administer involved, initially, the opening of a novitiate. Natives of Besancon, henceforth trained in their own region, would benefit from the experience acquired by the former Director of the entire group that had once been assembled along the Saône in Lyons.

In the beginning the quarters consisted of a parlor and a garret in a house called “St. John”. The Brother Visitor might well have said that he found nowhere to lay his head; at night he curled up in a drawer of his dresser — a “humorous” way he had of referring to his bed. But material problems never bothered him. To be well- or ill-housed, -fed or -clothed was unimportant to him. He dealt severely with his body. Wan, shaggy, frowning, and genuinely ugly — it had to be admitted — he was ascetical to the point of refusing to remedy his physical disadvantages. People who did not go beyond the surface experienced a rather disagreeable impression. And under the compulsion of his cold reserve, he would eagerly hasten to take his leave.

His immediate subordinates knew him better. They had made contact with his noble character and beautiful soul. The intransigence that they met with in him regarding points of the Rule was accompanied and tempered by a tireless patience and a genuinely delicate goodness. His austere features softened and, with simplicity, he could make himself kindly, indeed, on occasion, even jovial once his dignity was preserved intact.

He possessed a talent for discerning minds and hearts, and through a tactful distribution of

tasks, of utilizing the gifts of each Brother. He retained a preference for novices, and in their direction, he possessed marvelous insights. As in earlier days in Lyons, his conferences presented ample sustenance for his auditors' reflection. The authors who most frequently inspired him, beginning with De La Salle himself, had steeped him in a lofty, mystical doctrine, perfectly coherent and powerfully active: he made wide use of the *Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola*, the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, *the Imitation* and books by Rodriguez and by Judde; while the Meditations by the Founder of his Institute supplied him with inexhaustible themes.

His cautious, steady administration impressed the Regime. In 1852 the Brother Visitor transferred the novitiate to the Upper-Saône, to the quiet of the village of Neurey. The District developed normally following a rythm set by its leader. No one could expect anything spectacular from him; and people tended to look upon him as somewhat phlegmatic. The silence — broken with difficulty — the apparent torpor concealed work that was constant and undeviatingly directed toward his goals. The Motherhouse was not unaware of him.

On July 14, 1858, at the height of his powers, Brother Jean-Olympe became an Assistant. A rescript from the Holy See had granted the Superior-general a tenth auxiliary, and this place on Brother Philippe's Council was given to the Visitor of Besancon. He did not leave his District without the wrenching feelings of a man who is dislodged from his native land. The separation, however, was not total: the responsibility that had fallen to the supervision of the distinguished Brother included the institutions in Franche-Comté along with the District of Thionville in Lorraine and the "province" of which the Island of Reunion in the Indian Ocean formed the center.

Like his colleagues, the tenth Assistant carried on a profuse correspondence, both administrative and pastoral. And while he was obliged to confine his travelling to institutions in the mother country where he presided over retreats, conversed personally with individual Brothers, provided far-reaching counsel and gave formal addresses, he showed a keen interest in his confreres in the distant colonies and encouraged them in extremely affectionate letters. It was clear that he enjoyed pleasing and serving people. The period immediately following the War of 1870 brought him disturbing difficulties and cruel suffering in Lorraine. Brother Philippe's death grieved him. And the voting in the 1874 Chapter severely tried his modesty. Yet he did not quarrel with his duty. As Superior-general he was, as always, an example of self-sacrifice, mortification and humility. He was wanting neither in courage nor in self-mastery in the complex situation in which his election placed him – the political uncertainties in France which were extremely important for the future of the Institute; and the inevitably heavy legacy shouldered by the new Superior because of his predecessor's immense popularity and the enormous growth of the Congregation.

Brother Jean-Olympe addressed his task without estimating his strength: he immediately proposed to stretch religious energy to the maximum. First Visitors and then Directors of Novices were summoned to Paris for discussions as well as for personal and collective examinations of conscience under the active leadership of the Superior. Two Circulars then appeared concerning regularity, obedience, the supernatural mentality and the dangers of behavior that is insufficiently recollected and excessively worldly. Later on, classifying posthumous manuscript, notes were found exhorting the Brothers to remain faithful to their obligations and especially to their mission as catechists. The author was pondering the preparations for the attack in which the enemies of Christianity were already indulging. "We have to be convinced", he wrote, "that to neglect religious instruction is to conspire with the spirit of the world and to promote the Educational Coalition..."

He increased his work-load excessively. Not content frequently to speak to the Motherhouse Community, he thought he had to alert the Brothers in the Parisian schools. These teachers, who inevitably were involved with the world and at the same time were trail-blazing an

essential apostolate, seemed to him to be in need of diligent attention. Brought together at the Motherhouse, they were urged to fix their thoughts and actions on God, practice rigorously the vow of poverty and inspire their pupils with a profound respect for the sacred.

In October of 1874 the Superior-general visited the Pope. It was a continuation of Brother Philippe's practice and an attestation of the Institute's Roman orthodoxy — an attachment of the Brothers to the person of Pius IX. The Circular on the following December 15 gives an account of this pilgrimage: Brother Jean-Olympe, on the day after his arrival, was welcomed by the Holy Father, treated with the aimiable kindliness and affectionate geniality that the Pontiff was accustomed to employ with regard to the late Superior. At the time for the strole through the Vatican corridors, the white soutane and the black robe proceeded side by side. Between that audience on October 3 and the one that took place on the 25th occurred the visit to the Italian Communities; after the events of 1859-1870 the Brothers of the Christian Schools still operated twenty institutions on "the Peninsula".

In spite of over-work, the sixty-one year old leader of the Congregation appeared to promise a generalate of typical duration. People are so accustomed not to spare themselves, to keep on going in spite of exhaustion in this Congregation which perpetuates the anecdotes of the Founder heroically dedicated to action, prayer and penance! But it happens that a drained organism suddenly flags.

Toward April 10, 1875 Brother John Olympus contracted pneumonia. The illness immediately took on an disturbing characater; so that on the fifth day there was very little hope. The last sacraments were administered and the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Guibert, came to the bedside of the dying man; and the Pope send his blessing.

One of the Superior's brothers, Father Paget, pastor in the Diocese of Besancon was able to rush up to Paris. At his priestly hand, loved and venerated, Joseph — associating once again, in his final moments, in the warmth of a family presence — received Holy Communion on April 16. During the following night respiration became more difficult. The infirmarian alerted the Assistants, the chaplain and Father Paget, and they all entered the sick-room. The dying man, hearing them pronounce the words "Live Jesus in our hearts," replied rather distinctly: "Forever!" After which, he died.[16]

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The Chapter in July of 1875 provided as a successor to Brother Jean-Olympe an Assistant who had been a member of the Regime for only two years and who, moreover, had been a contemporary of his not only by date of birth but — and this was especially curious — by his 1837 entrance into St. John Baptist's de La Salle's Society after having also served as a public school teacher.

We have already met with Brother Irlide.[17] We have seen him in Toulouse as one of Brother Adaucte's novices, and as Sub-director and then as Director of the residence school of St. Joseph; as a colleague of Brother Lefroy in Italy; and as Director and Visitor in Bayonne. In the most painful circumstances, in the most sensitive of missions, in the most burdensome responsibilities whether in 1848 or 1849 or from 1852 to 1873 this man showed courage, competence and, indeed, genius.

In the various sections of the present account we shall complete the story of his amazing

[16] The M.H. Brother John Olympus' Obituary, 1875. — Archives of the District of Besancon, History of the Novitiate and History of the District. — Essai sur la Maison-Mère, pg. 229. — Brother Peter Chrysologus' Report (Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes, for October, 1923.)

[17] See Indexes to Vols. V and VI of the present work.

curriculum vitae. At the moment we need only relate how it began and marvel at the way it ended. Moreover, these indications, taken by themselves, will enable us to sketch the path of a genuinely providential personality; and they will be sufficient for us to identify the character of the man.[18]

The son of Antoine Casaneuve and of Marie Cazaubon, born on March 25, 1814 in Guchen, in the Canton of Arreau, district of Bagneres-de-Bigorre, baptised with the Christian name of Jean-Pierre, this native of the Pyrenees was to replicate the features, the character and the virtues of his people. According to an accurate description of one of his biographers,[19] *"the soundness of his soul suggested the reliability of granite...; his far-seeing views made one think of the sort of horizons one glimpses at the tops of mountains. The pure light at the summits seemed to flow through his mind. And while, like the streams of his native valley, he possessed limpid depths, he had not totally freed himself from the impetuosity of the torrents that tumbled down among the rocks."*

From childhood he revealed an ardent heart, clear mind and steadfast will. It did not seem that such a fragile body could answer for such spiritual energy. Sent by his parents to school in Bagnere-de-Bigorre, Jean-Pierre had frequently to interrupt his studies. He was afflicted with fainting spells, and growth induced a sort of lethargy.

However, he resisted it and sought to conquer it. At seventeen years of age the young man decided to turn to a career in education. He proceeded to study for the examination that would qualify him for a certificate, and on March 16, 1833 the board, functioning in Pau, granted him a diploma. At the outset, tutoring procured the prospective teacher a livlihood; but in February of 1835 he was appointed teacher in the mountains. Azet, the Commune that hired him, was in the Canton of Vielle-Aure, in the Department of the Upper Pyrenees.

His health continued to be shaky, and he was convinced that he would die at a very young age. And since he was a man of very lively faith and exalted conscience he resolved to work exclusively and without delay with the view to an "eternity" which he regarded as imminent; he also wanted "others" to benefit from such an effort along with himself. It was at that point that he set out for the novitiate in Toulouse.

He was twenty-three years old. The Institute had gained a invaluable recruit — a man who was already matured and who, in perfect compliance with the Rule and in the work of education and administration discovered a full-scale unfolding. Physical stability, which had been for so long proved elusive, was recovered under the sway of spiritual joy and a deeply cherished interior peace.

Brother Irlide began, in September of 1841, by obtaining brilliantly an advanced teaching certificate. Throughout a prolific career he was to give evidence of the diversity of his talents and of his facility for rapid assimilation: — a catechist that might have been described as a theologian, a jurist in both Canon and civil law and a secondary-school Director who was at home at the level of his teachers of literature and science; he was a master of foreign languages, conversing in Italian and Spanish when his responsibilities required it; while in the domain of action, he was a builder, an organizer and an intrepid, clear-headed founder who triumphed over difficulties.

After all of this, it is not difficult to explain the election on July 2, 1875. The former Visitor of Bayonne, the Assistant whose merits Brother Philippe had so quickly perceived, was the Capitualant whose colleagues had selected as possessing the makings of a great leader. He had the powerful disposition essential to a formidable assignment, to attacks from hostile forces. The young invalid of days gone by had matured into a sexagenarian whose shoulders were

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[19] The Brother who was the author of his obituary in 1884.

unbowed and whose features betrayed an indomitable and staunch energy.

His manner was more impressive and his personality more sharply defined than that of Brother Jean-Olympe; he was less deliberately paternal than Brother Philippe in his last years. Nevertheless, through his love for Lasallian traditions, through the forms and springs of his piety, through his dedication to the Institute, his Brothers, to youth, and through his ardently "Roman" commitment to Catholicism he thoroughly fitted into the lineage of his predecessors.

On the very day he assumed his responsibilities, he insisted on writing to Pious IX: "Most Holy Father, my most pressing need as wells as my first duty is to come and take my stand alongside the Chair of Peter, the support and stay of the truth and the center of unity." The Pope replied on July 14 by affirming once again the profound and "legitimate" affection he entertained for the family of the Venerable De La Salle.

The Circular of the following August 1 revealed a Brother Irlide pervaded with a sense of his human weakness and seeking comfort in docility to God's orders as expressed in the voting of the Chapter. He confessed to "perplexities", "fears" and "anxieties" that "the choice of his humble person to direct such a diverse Institute" had caused him, which, it seemed to him, was destined to serve more usefully and more widely than ever both the Church and civil society. And as though he regarded himself as powerless to speak without an interpreter, he borrowed the language of former Superiors: "following the example of Brother Guillaume de Jésus, he would, out of obedience, resign his command". And from Brother Agathon, the unforgettable model, he quoted the following passage in full:

> 1. If you can find yourself a more worthy and a more competent leader, I can also assure you [without, I think, being overbold] that no one would be more affectionately and more sincerely in agreement with you [than I]x ...Your interests are my own; all my concerns reside in you; they have no other object than your happiness.

This genuine humility, this fastidiousness of conscience and, indeed, uneasiness that the Superior-general experienced regarding the Congregation's future induced him, seven years later, to take a very serious step. Upon convoking the Chapter of 1882, he said: "The leader must be in a position to sustain the drain inherent in his task." Actually, he considered himself worn out, and he deposited his letter of resignation on the desk of the Assembly. The Capitulants refused to yield to his entreaties; they thought that in the midst of the storm it was unwise to change pilots. Of course, the Superior had aged; but he still had a head full of wisdom and nimble with timely decisions. His wishes met with a unanimous rejection. Such a confidence in the persistent stamina of Brother Irlide existed among the delegates that those from North America besought the Superior to come to visit their institutions.

His age as well as his infirmities prevented such a long journey. It was really "through obedience" that in 1882 — more so than in 1875 — that De La Salle's twelfth successor continued on in the task of chief administrator. His own confreres nailed him to his cross. After the close of the Chapter on November 11 he wrote the Circular which summarized the activities of the Institute's representatives. His return to office was announced in the following language: "The personal expectations and hopes that we had imagined were nullified."[20]

From now on he knew that death would overtake him at the helm. And since that was God's will, he would stand his watch faithfully until the end, which was almost literally what happened.

In the course of 1883 and 1884 health emergencies increased in number. The doctors finally diagnosed cancer of the stomach. Still without knowing the extreme gravity of his situation, but assuming that his days were numbered, Brother Irlide began to outline a "letter proclaiming" a

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[20] Circular, dated January 3, 1883.

new Chapter to be convoked on October 15 in order to elect a new Superior-general.

On July 20 he learned from his confessor, Father Auguste, that he must prepare himself presently to leave this world. He bowed in assent and asked to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction. Seated in an armchair in his office, the ritual in hand in order to follow the ceremonies, serenely at peace, he took part in the prayers and offered his face and hands to receive the holy oils.

The next day at 5:30 in the morning he came to the chapel to receive viaticum. An altar had been set up near the pulpit, where Father Chaumont, the Motherhouse chaplain solemnly carried the Eucharist to the Superior. Brothers, novices and junior novices assisted at the moving spectacle. The dying man thereupon attended Mass.

He returned to his own quarters and his office, where he added a resplendent farewell, three paragraphs which would be read by his Congregation after his death:

1. At this point, my dear Brothers, we shall have to conclude this last general and official report, since our trembling hand refuses to write all that our heart, overflowing with affection, gratitude and dedication to you, wants to dictate. Our last words, then, will be to fulfill a duty for which we have been fortunate to have found an opportunity; it is just one more of the favors for which we shall never be able adequately to thank Divine Providence.

   2. Before we depart to render an account of our administration, we must ask pardon of all for failing to have done for the Institute and for each of its members all that we should have done and that might have better contributed to fulfill the solemn committment that we made at the foot of the altar: ‘to procure God’s glory as far as it is possible and as He would require of us’. Pardon us and pray that God might pardon us the harm thus done to you and to His greater glory. Pardon us especially for the suffering, and perhaps for the unpleasantness that we may have caused you; be convinced, very dear Brothers, that none of it was intended; and we think that we are giving evidence of it in these lines that we are here tracing out with so much difficulty, after having been equipped by the Church with the arms that it holds in reserve for the final combat.

   3. The fact is that we have just received Extreme Unction; and this morning the Divine Savior deigned to grant us Viaticum. And, therefore, as we await the final moment, we say to you: Live Jesus in our hearts, forever! and we embrace all of you in spirit, with the most genuine and the most tender affection, assuring you that the tomb will obliterate none of the warmth of the delight with which we are happy to speak to you for this last time, your most humble servant in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was a far more noble bearing than that of the Roman Emperor Septimus Severus. To the energy of a tireless worker there was added the fervor of a father and a Christian. Until February 24 Brother Irlide arose as the same time as the Community, was present for the exercises of Rule, was interested in the business on hand and coolly discussed solutions.

On the 21st he received a telegram from Rome that delivered the Papal benediction. He thereupon wrote to the Cardinal-Protector of the Institute, the Benedictine, Dom Pitra. And then his concern for Spain induced him to write the Brother Visitor of Madrid.

A fainting spell that happened on the 22nd seemed to forecast that the end was near. The chaplain recited the prayers for the dying and gave Communion to the Superior who had been confined to bed. But he was still able to read and correct the proofs of his Circular.

On the evening of the 24th his condition once again became extremely grave, and on his own he asked for prayers recommending his soul to God. While the members of the Regime surrounded him on their knees with his hand he grasped and held a candle.

In the course of the night of the 25th and on the 26th the fainting spells began again. During moments of remission, Brother Irlide suggested to those about him the prayers and readings

that he wished to hear. But he uttered neither complaint nor sigh.

On the 26th, at about 4 o'clock in the morning, alert as usual, he murmured: "This is the end!" Fifteen minutes later he inclined his head slightly and died.

The funeral was celebrated on the 28th in the church of St. Francis Xavier. At the Père Lachaise Cemetary where the burial took place, Senator Chesnelong, a fellow-native of the Pyrenees and friend of the Superior, delivered the eulogy.

Shortly thereafter at the graduation exercises for the pupils of the Brothers' schools in Paris, the former Inspector-general of Public Education, Eugene Rendu, sketched the following portrait, accurate and delicately shaded, of the Superior-general immersed in spite of himself in he struggle for the schools: [The M.H. Brother was], without weakness and without boasting, as alien to every notion of incitement as he was incapable of grovelling, guided by a spirit of initiative that was controlled by an imperturbable prudence, enlightened by a practical sense which enabled him to measure danger without exagerating or minimizing it and to suit the defense to the attack by delimiting the struggle, tempering the zeal for combat out of motives of charity, sparing his adversaries' intentions and sometimes even imagining them so that he might be able to respect them.

Principles of civil behavior, practices of an educator and directives of the head of a Religious order, we shall presently be in a position to examine the generalate in all its facets.[21]

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Within the Institute the name of the next Superior-general was familiar to many. Brother Joseph, the founder of the Franc-Bourgeois school and Visitor of the District of Paris *extra muros*[22]was regarded as a worthy successor to Brother Irlide. Since 1873 he had been the representative of private education in the Higher Counsel of Public Education, in 1874 one of Brother Jean-Olympe's Assistants and since that time a permanent member of the Regime. Employing other tactics and other methods than those of the imperious and frequently inflexible Brother Irlide, Joseph Josserand — characterized by a will made supple by gentleness, an asceticism steeped in forbearance and an idealism honed by long experience with human beings — had the gifts to govern the progress of the Congregation.[23].

He belonged to a humble family that had originated in Bourg-d'Oisans in the Upper Alps, but had migrated from the Dauphiny to Forez. His Baptismal Certificate in the parish of Notre Dame in St. Etienne bears the date March 31, 1823. He had been born the night before on Rue Saint Roch, in the home of the "day-laborer" Jacques Josserand and Jeanne Croizier, the father and mother.

In June of 1836 the boy of thirteen years came from his birthplace to the Junior Novitiate in the Faubourg Saint Martin. Accompanying him to the conveyance that was headed for Paris, Mme. Josserand told her son: "Go on, my Joseph, win people over".

It was a wish that was to be completely fulfilled.[24] Brother Joseph possessed in the highest degree the gift of making friends. His native charm became almost immediately crowned with the virtues of the Religious life, while losing none of its natural qualities. His was the pleasant joviality so typical of his native St. Etienne, the cordiality of a people who know life's

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[21] The Brother assistants' Circular, dated July 26, 1884. — The M.H. Brother Irlide's Obituary, October 12, 1844. — Eugene Rendu op. cit., (pg. xii of the Introduction to the present volume). Du Saussois, *Vie du Très Honoré Frère Irlide,* Paris, 1885. — *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pg. 229.

[22] It included the Communities in the Seine-and-Marne, Aube and Upper-Marne

[23] For the M.H. Brother Joseph see the Index to Volume V of the present work. Consult also our book written in 1925*, Un Èducateur social, Le Frère Joseph* which contains a number of useful references

[24] Even as a Brother he retained his Baptismal name.

hardships and who, in the concern for justice and the fervor of charity strive to remedy a neighbor's distress. At Franc-Bourgeois first of all and then in his activities as Superior-general his apostolate would reveal this "social" character.

The chorus of expectation that arose in favor of this very visible, very respected figure among groups both of former pupils and friends of the Brothers as well as in the many Communities of primary and secondary schools, this *vox populi* which really concurred with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, could not have gone unheard by Brother Joseph. Yes, he wrote, "rumors have reached me; I have only a single feeling: docility to the will of God. What men regard as a privilege because of the honor of it, for me, actually, would be a painful cross which would overshadow and consume the rest of my life. However, like Brother Jean-Olympe, I do not think that I have the right to refuse to be a victim..."

The election of October 18, 1884, quickly secured,[25] inflicted that distress that he had both dreaded and accepted. As he had foreseen, his days were henceforth characterized by sacrifice. Many men — and not just the adversaries of Christian education — were to heap the Superior-general with scorn. Sometimes opposed, sometimes misunderstood, injured perhaps more by ingratitude than by hatred, besieged by anxiety, Brother Joseph was an extremely sensitive Superior, who held up only by dint of constant effort. His face would become creased with deep furrows; his gaze, so kindly and penetrating under his rather heavy eyelids, would disguise a melancholic strain; while his majestic stature and stride would disclose a slight droop. His mantle which, with a characteristic gesture, his hands drew about his robe, seemed to conceal bleeding wounds.[26].

Surely, Brother Joseph lacked neither divine grace nor the comfort of faithful friends and devoutly obedient inferiors. Until the very end he was able to administer the salve of his own intense charity and of his profoundly evangelical word. He contemplated the crucifix and he repeated the Fiat. "There is only one thing", he said, "that evades the influence of our pride...: — the cross: our nature spoils everything except what torments it."

A similar theme arises in 1896 in his "wishes and recommendations" for the New Year, a Circular letter addressed to the members of the Congregation. In it the Superior-general recalls the great duty of prayer performed in a spirit of total abandonment to Providence; he emphasizes the need for sacrifice; and he exhorts his Brothers to multiply their generosity in the face of difficulties. He proposes for their meditation the poignant and splendid cry in the Book of Job: "Even if you kill me, I shall still hope in You."

What he had thus written and signed on that January 19 was a sort of spiritual testament. For some time, the transformation of his appearance, his palor, more than ever "marble-like", struck those who were familiar with him. They urged him to agree, at least temporarily, to a complete rest.

Earlier, in October of 1895, had had found a remedy in a stay with the Brothers in Arachon. A decision was made to seek the same benefits in the mildness of the climate and the tranquillity of the surroundings. After a final visit to beloved "Francs-Bourgeois", he left for Guyenne on November 11, 1896 and took up quarters in a restful house surrounded by pines, called "St. Mary's Villa".

In the days that followed the pain increased. Brother Joseph, like his predecessor, was dying of

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[25] The tellers did not have to open all the ballots. Following custom they stoppped when an absolute majority had been gotten. Brother Joseph's name occurred repeatedly.

[26] The portrait that serves as the frontispiece of the present volume is a copy of the painting preserved in the Francs-Bourgeois Club. This beautiful work, commissioned from the painter Paul Mathey by Brother Joseph's former pupils was done in 1894 and was viewed by the public in the lounge after 1894. With difficulty Mr. Ferdinand Florentin, one of the most dedicated of the great educator's pupils had wrung a few sitting sessions from a man who was so painfully modest

cancer. He experienced periods of remission during which, in his usual bracing style, he wrote letters.

His last letter, addressed to one of the Visitors, is dated December 13. It is a brief and quite humble glance at the past; it is quite deliberately a farewell: "My very dear Brother, if I had really done all that you credit me with, I might be able to endure the nice things you say about me. But the good Lord knows how often in the variety of circumstances in which I have lived, I have been nothing more than a front behind which have worked and acted the real laborers. I understand it better than I had once thought as, in the solitude enjoined on me by my illness, I review my life as a Christian educator and Religious Superior. People are praying for me in the Institute ... Such prayers will be valuable so that the Congregation may soon have a Superior...That is its great need... "

This influential builder chose to regard himself as a stand-in. The leader was restless to disappear into the background; but posterity would never be able to forget his achievements. Those around him hoarded his *ultima verba*. His infirmarian, Brother Augustine, in an account — a completely monastic document — in which the word *Pax* dominates and summarizes, tells us of the physical sufferings courageously endured, the religious devotions regularly performed, and the lengthy meditations. Brother Amedy, his favorite among his followers and the heir of his work on Rune St. Antoine, rushed to the bedside of his venerable teacher: he listened — we can imagine his feelings! — to the gasping sounds which suddenly broke the silence: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice; all the rest will be added to you. Never forget this passage...I think it's over, I shall not leave this bed...I have dedicated by entire youth and my whole life to the good Lord; may He accept my death!...I hope they do better at Francs-Bourgois than I did...I suffered there...I bless that school... "

On December the 27, Leo XIII sent the dying man, who had already received Viaticum and Extreme Unction, an Indulgence and the Benediction *in articulo mortis*. During the night of the 29th-30th the priest offered the cross to Brother Joseph, who kissed it devoutly, while the prayers for the dying were being recited.

But death tarried. The Obituary continues: "Beginning on Thursday, the 31st, at about 10:00 o'clock in the morning, the M.H. Brother lapsed into unconsciousness, without any detectable contact with the outside world... On Friday, January 1, 1807, at about one o'clock, he suddenly raised his head and open his eyes; he stared at a point above his head as his face beamed and took on a look of rapture. Shortly thereafter he closed his eyes and dropped his head while his features remained illumined for several minutes. Then sighs were noticed, followed by deep breathing: — Brother Joseph dropped off to sleep quietly in the sleep of the just... "

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The mortal remains of the Brother Superior-general had been conveyed from Arcachon to Paris. It was laid to rest on the grounds at Athis, in the vault which, over the course of the preceding years, had become the sepulchre for Brother Philippe and his successors.[27]

The Chapter, assembled on March 15, 1897, held its meetings in a Paris suburb, on the beautiful estate, the Oysonville Manor, called "Our Lady of Retreats" which was an annex of the Motherhouse. From among the Brothers on whom the Assembly's choice might have fallen, Brother Gabriel Marie was designated. The Regime of which he was a member had, four months earlier, appointed him to watch over the ailing Superior. Brother Gabriel had surrounded Brother Joseph with thoughtful solicitude, brought a skillful and dedicated

[27] On December 13, 1884 Brother Joseph had the bodies of Brothers Philippe, Jean-Olympe and Irlide moved to the "Flower pavilion" which, at the same time, had been converted into a funeral chapel. He indicated his own place at their side. But after the Law of 1904, in order to prevent the liquidator of the Congregation's property from contesting the corporation's (i.e., the owner of the estate's) titles and claiming "intermediary" [rights], the Institute became reconciled to moving the remains of the four Superiors to a Communal cemetery.

physician to the Villa of St. Mary; and until the very end his compassion and prayers were joined to the sufferings of the patient. Perhaps he had, in some sense, been put in possession of the inheritance at the beside of the dying man. Similarly, in 1874, Brother Irlide seems to have received a more remote investiture when he attended the death agony of Brother Philippe.

This is only the enigmatic side of events and their outcomes. But history has to be seen from other perspectives. Brother Gabriel Marie possessed personal claims on the confidence of the Capitulants.

In our description of the principles and achievements of the Brothers' pedagogy in the middle of the 19th century we have spoken of Edmond Brunhes' beginnings in Cantal and of his intellectual and moral education, of his novitiate in 1850 in the headquarters of the District of Auvergne and of his twenty-nine years (1852–1873) as a teacher in the school at Brioude.[28] His skill as a mathematician has already been described; his ability in this domain was so remarkable and so extensive that, if it weren't for the daily grind and the self-effacement demanded of him as a Religious, Brother Gabriel Marie would have brought distinction to the Brunhes name well before his nephews — a geographer, an astronomer and a Bishop respectively. But he embraced the enveloping responsibilities of a Brother of the Christian Schools. And after having tirelessly taught the youth of Brioude, on September 15, 1873 he was placed at the head of a residence school, Notre Dame of France, in Puy. The faculty needed stimulation, the program of studies needed a more rational order and the pupils needed stricter discipline. Firm and not given to effusiveness, the new Director demanded knowledge, work and regularity of his staff. Programs were broadened, classes experienced a constant liveliness, an unprecedented attractiveness. And there was a religious growth that accompanied intellectual development. Piety, especially Marian piety, flourished in this city of great pilgramages and in this school that was dedicated to the Most Blessed Virgin.

The native of Aurillac in Auvergne seems to have been become completely the citizen of Le Puy. Beginning in 1877 he was obliged to combine with his duties as Director of the residence school the reponsibilities as Visitor, along with all the travelling from one end of the District to the other that that involved. His painstaking attentiveness extended from the Communities in the Upper Loire to those in Lozere; he safeguarded their vigor and increased their number.

But his gifts, no matter how fruitfully employed, deserved a broader field of action to be fittingly rewarded. As a consequence, there were further tasks and further difficulties; and on October 28, 1882, Brother Gabriel Marie was elected Assistant. He still controlled his former District and he now administered the Districts of Lyons, Clermont, Avignon and Marseille. Furthermore, inquiries and temporary direction in other regions were sometimes entrusted to him. At the Institute headquarters itself for nearly a dozen years he presided over most of the Committees and developed textbooks. His influence was indispensable in the selection and cultivation of projects; while his sage judgment conferred a great deal of latitude on authors of books.

Brother Joseph respected him as a priceless aide, and the Congregation was conscious of the regard in which the Assistant was held by his colleagues. And by way of the testimony of its respectful submission, it was to ratify the formal choice of the twenty-ninth General Chapter: — the election of March 19, 1897.

Since the Superior was born on November 16, 1834, he was beginning his generalate at the threshold of old age. Unlike his two predecessors, he was not much to look at. Short, puny looking and apparently of fragile health, he was to surprise those who preferred broad-shouldered superiors. "No one would take him for a native of Auvergne", commented a journalist from his birthplace who drew "sketches of the people of Cantal". However — this

[28] Vol. V of the present work, pp. 503-504.

neighbor was quick to add — Brother Gabriel exhibits the qualities of his people: “Patience, energy, quick and intelligent assimilation. He is hard-working and tenacious.”

It was a judgment that the Brothers of the period confirmed. The Superior, they said, had a tremendous capacity for work and an astonishingly reliable memory; he managed his mind in the Cartesian manner — striving after what was logical and clear, definitions and exact relationships. A favorite expression of his was frequently quoted: — “In all things we pursue order.” Without trying to call into question the range and the acuteness of his mind, people agreed on all sides that for him “order” superseded both “the number and variety” of intellectual concerns. A few principles, tested and solidly grounded, were at the base of every decision.

His language was clear-cut, “measured and incisive”. Looks, gestures, walk, his entire person disclosed “that precision that the mathematical sciences bestow on those that pursue them.”

As a geometrician, the Superior did not propose to surrender control to fantasy or feeling; he fixed limits to what was real or to what was reasonably possible, to the discretion of his influence. As a man who “preferred to stay in the background”, who “shunned needless entanglements,” who enjoyed “working in seclusion”, his ability to sparkle could never rival that of a Brother Joseph.

But, at the level of the faith, he was the equal of the best disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle. The Founder’s canonization was to take place during the fourth year of this generalate — a providential arrangement of which Brother Gabriel Marie was entirely worthy. He lead the life of an ascetic, and his behavior, like his conversation, bore witness to the quality of his prayer; and having placed his conscience and his mind under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he surrendered himself to God.

In the early days of 1900 a most appalling assault threatened the Institute in France. Steps taken to temper its effects, humanly speaking, appeared inadequate. Some of the principal members of the Regime had entertained exaggeratedly generous expectations of politicians. There were certain approaches that gave rise to chaos; and other postures that incited harrowing repercussions or bitter anguish in the souls of excellent people. Nevertheless, the Congregation and its leader emerged from the crucible with their honor. Because Brother Gabriel of Mary willed only the glory of God, not only did he preserve, in spite of everything, situations for the future on French soil, and not only was he heartened by the heroic fidelity of a great number of Brothers; but, by opening to the Brothers the roads to nations, both near at hand and far-off, he himself was able to achievement goals that the boldest ambitions of a simple mortal would never have been able to have conquered.

Beginning in 1905 a new era, even more rich in achievements than the era of Brother Philippe, had opened up for the Institute. Having taken refuge in Belgium the Superior-general reorganized his lines of command and his troops; the duration of his administration enabled him to register positive successes. After resigning in 1913, he lived three years more. And while the dark hours of the European conflict had cast a pall over his universal charity, his religious attachments and his patriotism, he persevered in his habits of work and of trusting prayer. He had fully guaranteed the right, as an octogenarian reaching the twilight of his life, to repeat: In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in aeternum".[29]

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In theory and in practice the Superior-general and his Assitants formed an invisible group. Not

[29] M.H. Brother GabrielMarie’s obituary. — Cf. pg. 144 of Brother Basil Joseph’s biography (by Brother Albert Valentine).

that the supreme authority functioned collectively; in fact, the government of the Institute perpetuated a monarchial structure — an elective and lifelong monarchy, the offspring of the General Chapter. The Assistants performed the role of indispensable counsellors and irreplaceable auxiliaries; they supplied the Superior the insight of their judgment and the benefit of their experience, and together with him they deliberated without the power to compel his decision. They released him from some administrative correspondence, since they replied to the personal letters of the Brothers, visited Communities and presided at retreats. Their authority was strictly a delegated command, temporary and occasionally altered as regards the regions assigned to each of them.

Nevertheless, it appeared to be considerable. The growth of the Society demanded, quite independently of serious problems, general discussion, the sharing of responsibilities and the employment of individual competencies. An Assistant enjoyed the most justifiable prestige, which he owed to his position, but especially to his qualities as a man and as a Brother.As a rule, he was empowered by the votes of a General Chapter for a period of ten years.[30]

But if a vacancy occurred in the Regime during an interval between capitulary assemblies, there was a special procedure to replace the Assistant who had died or resigned. In these circumstances "the Election Committee" was convoked.

Between 1873 and 1884 this Committee was composed of the Superior-general, the Assistants in office and twenty Brothers elected by the Chapter who voted for candidates on a list without distinction as to Districts. The Capitulants choices, placed in a sealed envelope, would be opened should the occasion arise by one to five former members of the most recently Assembly; and the twenty designated electors would then be called to Paris. Joined to the Regime, they would then fulfill their mission; and the new Assistant would be invested with the powers of his predecessor until his eventual eventual confirmation or extension at a future meeting of a Chapter.[31]

The Assembly of 1884, in consideration of some very sound reasons of propriety and prior customs,[32] brought back into the elective committee former Assistants, the Procurator-general and the Secretary-general. The Chapter of 1897 retained a place for the Procurator-general to the Holy See.

The eight Assistants of 1844 and the ten Assistants of 1858 worked hard to stay ahead of their tasks; nevertheless, the flood of work continued to mount. In 1874 it was in danger of inundating the most stouthearted. At the time there were 10,664 Brothers spread over 1,191 Communities.[33]

A Papal rescript, sought at the outset of the Chapter and sent on April 16 authorized a numerical increase in the size of the Institute's Counsel: — they were allowed to elect two additional Assistants. At the suggestion of the Superior-general, Brother Jean-Olympe, they were satisfied to name a ninth Assistant, Brother Osee. It was decided that the elective Committee would elect the twelfth when the Regime had determined that the time had come.[34]

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[30] An extension was always possible.

[31] In fact, during this period General Chapters were sufficiently frequent so that they themselves elected all the Assistants.

[32] In force after 1844. At that time a General Chapter had abolished the "Triennial Committees" established by the Chapter of 1787. The Committee that replaced that agency secured a variety of duties, among which was the power to elect Assistants (outside capitulary sessions).

[33] Figures included in the Circular dated November 1, 1897.

[34] Circular no. 396b, dated May 7, 1874.

The seat continued to remain empty until 1884. The Chapter called by Brother Irlide and assembled after his death determined itself to provide Brother Joseph with the twelfth counsellor to whom the head of the Congregation had a right. Having extended until 1894 the terms of Brothers Exupérien, Patrick, Renaux, Osee, Phileter, Junian, Aimarus, Gabriel of Mary, Raphael and Louis of Poissy, Assistants already in function, it gave them as a colleague Brothers Visitors Cyrus, a delegate from the District of Clermont and Apronien of Mary, delegate from the District of Rodez.

During the preceding years the individuals who had surrounded Brother Philippe had all disappeared from the scene. The skillful organizer of the schools in Belgium, Brother Amos, had resigned in 1873 and died in 1877. Brother Calixtus, the distinguished Superior's *alter ego*, joined his friend in death on May 31, 1874. A lengthy obituary soon appeared to recount to the Lasallian family the career and the calibre of Nicolas Leduc.[35] Brother Facile, "the father of the American Brothers", died in Marseille on April 2, 1877. Brother Judore died in 1879 and Brother Firmilian, the Régime's "dean" in 1880.

Brothers Patrick, Renaux and Exuperien, who had been elected by the Chapter of 1873,[36] were the link between the members of Brother Philippe's Regime and Brothers Irlide's and Joseph's Assistants.

As an Irishman who had become a Canadian and one-time Secretary to Brother Facile, Brother Patrick, "a power in Montreal", in charge of the Districts in North America and Englandin a few years' time came to the end of his service. We mention him here only as a reminder, since we had occasion to view him more closely in other volumes; we merely allude to his last days at Fleury Meudon where he died on April 25, 1891.

Louis Boniface Renaux, whose family name was converted into a Religious name, suvived his colleague until 1894. The son and brother of teachers, himself an alumnus of the Normal School in Rouen who had practiced his trade in Bertreville-Saint-Ouen, cut a handsome figure in the galery of schoolteachers who had completed their entire vocation under the Rule of St. John Baptist de La Salle. In 1843, at the age of twenty-three years, he had taken the first step. He had taught with Brother Libanos' bright group; and Passy had pushed him into prominence. Brother Renaux was called upon to direct the residence school in Rheims and thereafter to supervise the District of Paris *extra muros*. In the counsels of Superiors-general he occupied the prudent position of a man both kindly and gentle and rich in knowledge and experience.[37]

After this "veteran" had disappeared, Brother Exupérien remained the last of the "Ten". Although younger than either Brother Patrick or Brother Renaux (at the time of his election he had just turned forty-five), in 1884 the distinguished Brother, appointed before his two confreres, occupied the first place in the Lasallian counsels. And throughout the Institute, he was so venerated and so respected that it is impossible to exaggerate his influence. It was exerted profoundly, as we have seen,[38] on the novices at Rue Oudinot between 1859 and 1873. And we shall be made continuously aware of it in several areas until the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The director of souls now found himself faced with problems of administration, and his livliness of mind and accuracy of judgment were equal to the task. He had a feeling about what

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[35] For Brother Calixtus, see Index for Volumes IV and V of the present work. His obituary was published on October 1, 1874.

[36] At the same time as Brother Irlide.

[37] Concerning him see Volume VI of the present work. — Cf. *L'OEuvre d'un siècle*, pg. 112. Obituary, 1894.

[38] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 444-448.

people were really saying to him, and he was sensitive to the temperaments and characters of others. With him there were no preconceived ideas and he readily sought counsel. On this point, his basic modesty jeopardized his undertakings. “Because he was easily disengaged from his personal opinions” — notes his biographer, Brother Paul Joseph — “and because of the carefulness of his inquiry, Brother Exupérien altered his plan in the course of their execution.” He himself admitted to this fault: “I lack consistency,” he wrote.

But then he was quick to add: “But God has given be Brother Alban.” This was his matchless partner, Brother Alban Joseph who placed his tenacity and appetite for achievement at the service of his spiritual director. He did not always succeed ultimately in imposing his point of view; but he was humble enough to accept disappointment, and, following the example of the Brother Assistant, supernatural to the point of confiding in the efficacity of prayer. He had a marvelous way of explaining success without in the least alluding to his personal role in it. Brother Alban said: “The saintly Brother Exupérien seeks the glory of God with such zeal that God rewards him for it. Sometimes the means he adopts would defeat anybody but himself. But in ways that we haven’t chosen, he ends up with results that we, in spite of our best efforts, would never have been able to achieve.”[39]

Everybody in the Congregation agreed about the holiness of the first Assistant, and, in the man’s lifetime, nobody doubted it; it is currently being submitted to the Church’s judgment. But far from being cloistered between walls where it devoted itself to prayer and mortification, his holiness glowed in the wider world. It was an obligation of Brother Exupérien’s calling that he propel himself onto the stage of the world, where he won abundant approval.

Succeeding Brother Joseph, between 1897 and 1904, he represented Catholic education on the Public School Board. He held a seat on the Commission for Legal Affairs and Discipline that was responsible for examining appeals made against objections to the opening of schools and against approbations issued by Academic Councils. Brother Joseph had charmed his academic colleagues, but Brother Exupérien was no less highly regarded. Not only did they acknowledge his competence, but his balance, his graciousness, his refinement and his civility disarmed unbiased minds. One had to recognize that asceticism was no barrier to human qualities or talents.

On the other hand, this access into official circles afforded the Brother new ways of observing and grounds for judging without prejudice. In an unpublished text, the Brother Secretary-general Justinus has made a remarkable analysis of the of the great Servant of God’s attitude in the presence of the powerful and the illustrious of this world:

> 1. The lively sense he had of his own weakness induced in him a sincere humility of mind and heart, and, at the same time, inspired him with a respectful deference toward the representatives of authority.

Christian concepts in these matters were obviously sufficient to justify such respect.

> 2. But two other conideraions helped Brother Exupérien to take a rather optimistic view about the exercise of political power: as a man who himself shared authority, he appreciated the concerns and the crises that faced administration; further, he had been made frequently aware of the settling effect that acts of public power generate among political personalities and of the much clearer understanding that results; of the genuine conditions and urgent demands of the common good; and of the morally elevating energy of work in the daily and conscientious fulfillment of professional duty. By associating with men of towering intellectual caliber he had learned to pay the tribute — so often refused — that the constant effort of a life of labor and sacrifice deserves.

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[39] Vie du Frère Exupérien, pp. 83-84.

3. Some of our fellow-Catholics eagerly divide humanity into two groups: the first combines everything that the name "Catholic" implies and that possesses a monopoly on virtue; the other composed of people ticket as "non-Catholics" who are supposed to be devoid of all the genuine gifts of soul and mind.

Brother Assistant did not fall into this error.[40] Such a portrait, penned by the most diligent of the associates of the Superior-general and of the Regime is not lacking in zest. However, it is nothing if not accurate. It emphasizes an innovative and perhaps unexplored side of a revered personality.

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At the sides of Brothers Irlide, Joseph and Gabriel Marie, Brother Exupérien occupied the top place. However, just as his personality did not engulf the Superiors of the Congregation, so neither did it overshadow the character and quality of the other Brothers who had been successively called to the highest counsel.

Presently we shall list the twelve men who were serving in 1884. For the moment we shall briefly sketch the features of those Brothers whom we have only barely mentioned. The longest in point of service was Brother Osee, Pierre-Francois Louis Lassus. He had been a member of the Regime since 1874. His region of responsiblity included the Districts of Mans, Quimper and Nantes. He was a native of the Compté who had migrated to the West. The son of a farmer in Genevrekuille in the Diocese of Besancon and a member of a very large family, he was one of three out of ten children who consecrated themselves to God — a Sister and two Christian Brothers. The eldest was Brother Romeze. Brother Osee had entered the novitiate in Lyons on June 6, 1835 at the age of sixteen years. Having taught at St. Etienne, Dijon and Aurillac, in 1849 he received an "Obedience" for the residence school in Nantes, Bel-Air. By 1856 he was directing the institution, and from then on he had become, in effect, a Breton. As Visitor of the District between 1864 and 1874, he earned the respect of his confreres, and occasionally he attracted their misgivings with his intensely penetrating look, his wrath and his spirited exhortations. But he also edified them with his lofty example of piety, and touched them with certain gestures of sensitive tenderness. The colorful and succulent style of his conferences became famous. He was a man who had achieved "the art of subtle command", which he would keep with him at Rue Oudinot until his resignation in 1894. He returned to Nantes where he died on Easter Sunday, April 14, 1895.[41]

Less conspicuous, actually quite blurred, emerges the portrait of Brother Phileter, Augustine Deygas who was an Assistant between 1875 and 1891. A native of Louvesc, in the Diocese of Viviers, he grew up close by to the tomb of St. Francis Regis, in an fervently Christian home; one of his brothers was a priest, and two of his sisters took the veil. Once Augustine had embraced the life of a Brother he took to it calmly, generously throughout the stages of novitiate, teaching career and important administrative functions.[42]

His contemporary both in age and in entrance into the duties of Assistant was Brother Junian — Pierre Saurel — who brought with him his prompt and friendly southern smile. He was a personal friend of Brother Irlide: "While he did not possess the same power of quick decision or the same energetic leadership, he did have to a very high degree the same keenness of mind and the same strength of will." His birth place, in 1822, was Carcassonne. He came to the

[40] Motherhouse Archives, File Cp j.

[41] Obituary, 1895. — Cf. also in the Appendix to the Vie du Frère Camille de Jésus (by I. De Cicé) the interesting note no. 8.

[42] Obituary.

novitiate in Toulouse in 1837 and stayed on as teacher in the schoolmaster in Daurade, and then as teacher, Sub-director and Director of St. Joseph's residence school. The institution, under Brother Junian's guidance, secured such a degree of prosperity that, in 1875, he attracted the attention of the Capitulants. At the age of fifty-five, the new member of the Regime remained an eager worker and tireless in whatever circumstances. The Districts of Bayonne and Bordeaux had devolved upon him. And with the death of his colleague, Brother Judore, he was also put in charge of the Communities in Toulouse and, temporarily, the Communities in Rouergue. To all of this was added a huge territory overseas: — Chile, Colombia and, in 1889, Argentina.

He took an interest in a great variety of problems, which testified to the extent and the depth of his reading. His religious conferences relied for their solidity on the Fathers of the Church. His legal learning enabled him to be of valuable assistance to the Superior-general. He collaborated with Brother Irlide in the publication of reports dealing with the corporate nature of the Institute and the legal recognition of residence schools. As an expert in school legislation, he took an active part in surmounting political and technical difficulties and in the discovery of urbane, judicious and effectual solutions. He resigned only in 1906. In his eighties and nineties and retired in Toulouse he saw unfolding, from afar, events which were unsettling the world. He was called back to God on the 26th of December 1917, just falling short of a hundred years of a very productive existence.[43]

Also belonging to the "class" of 1875 was Brother Aimarus. A linguist and traveller, a bold builder and a great leader, he warrants very special attention. But precisely because he played his principal roles outside of France, we deal with his character and his accomplishments elsewhere than in the present context. We have already observed him in London, Tunis and Algeria.[44]

We shall meet with him again in Canada and in the United States, and then, by way of Africa, in Palestine, India, China and Japan, on his way to America. Until September 8, 1906, when he died, we shall observe him at our leisure conspicuous in the counsels of the Regime because of his physical presence, his kindly manner, his lordly bearing, the deliberateness of his speech and the sureness of his judgment.[45]

The General Chapter of 1882 left in place with Brother GabrielMarie on Rue Oudinot Brothers Raphaelis and Louis of Poissy. The former had been Pierre Michallat, born in Voreppe in the Dauphiné, while the latter, was Albert Bruny who came of an old middle-class family in Nice and who was quite proud of his noble forebearers.

Brother Raphaelis' ten years as Assistant came to a tragic end. He perished in the calamity that struck Saint-Gervais-les-Bains in 1892. At the urgent invitation of Brother Joseph he had gone to that city in the Savoy for his health. During the night of the 11th of July an enormous liquid mass surged down from the glaciers and inundated the ravine in which the spa was located. The waters swept away everything in its path. A wing of the building was over-turned and the cataclysm conveyed debris a distance of several miles. The Brother's room was situated on the edge of the ravaging torrent. His body, submerged and overwhelmed, was driven along with the flood. It wasn't until four days later that, his skull crushed in a mass of mud and wreckage, Brother Raphaelis' body was found.[46]

The Superior-general was deeply afflicted by this misfortune: "It's sad to see", reported a witness. He thought very highly of his Assistant, with his honest looks, his plain-spoken

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[43] Obituary, 1919.

[44] Vol. VI of the present work.

[45] On Brother Aimarus, cf. *L'OEuvre d'un siècle*, pg. 332.

[46] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes*, for October 1923, pg. 332.

character, his energy and optimism, and he loved him dearly. Brother Raphaelis had always exhibited an extraordinary intensity. As a teacher in Lyons, he was inspired to read Bossuet's sermans and Lacordaire's conferences to his pupils. Subsequently, he brought his enthusiasm to Caluire, where, as Director of the Junior Novitiate in 1875, he was guiding the entire institution when he was invited to take part in the Regime.[47]

For more than thirty years Brother Louis of Poissy's career unfolded in Béziers. Albert Bruny came to the residence school in this city in 1847 as a small boy of about thirteen years of age [48] A brilliant student, a good, well-stored mind and particularly gifted in philosophy, an upright and pure soul, he consecrated his talents to the Institute which had developed them. In the Brothers' habit he returned to the school of his youth, where, as an educator, he followed in the footsteps of his teachers, Brother Leufroy, Brother Exupère, Brother Theoctene and Brother Exupérien. His instruction revealed his vast knowledge and a genuine capacity for rational thought. The best of all of this found a place, in 1875, in a book which was highly regarded in Rome and anticipated the Thomist revival. As Sub-director and then as Director in the residence school of the Immaculate Conception, Brother Louis of Poissy distinguished himself by the appeal of his ititiatives: he revised the study programs and adapted them to the needs of the region. In their new, more rational form there was no further need to modify them for a quarter of a century. Young teachers, like the pupils, were the beneficiaries of his instructions in philosophy and pedagogy. The Brother's zeal, which was everywhere manifest, inspired the growth of Eucharistic and Marian devotions. By inviting his presence and changing the duties of the Director of Béziers, the Chapter of 1882 appointed him to a post for which he was particularly worthy.

Brother Louis of Poissy, under three Superior-generals,[49].pursued his intellectual work and earned a reputation for being a learned and perceptive Canonist; and he administered his French and foreign Districts with a firm hand.[50]

Brothers Cyrus and Apronian of Mary completed the group of Assisants who were functioning at the beginning of Brother Joseph's generalate. The former of these two died shortly after the Superior of the Congregation, whereas the latter's career, on the contrary, was prolonged for seventeen more years.

Brother Cyrus — Pierre Lesage — was older than his confrere. He was born in 1829 in Saint Christophe du Jambet, in the Diocese of Mans. A missionary by the name of Father Raingaud had preserved the memory of this town from the days of his exile there during the Revolution, and he returned to it in 1842 to preach. In a conversation with the son of a laborer, Father Raingaud thought the young man gave signs of a Religious vocation; and on this suggestion, the boys' parents sent him to the Brothers' Novitiate in Nantes. These were Brother Cyrus' beginnings.

The sequel involved nothing more complicated than moves from Bretonny to Poitou and Auvergne. A teacher at the Bon-Port school in Nantes, instructor in the residence school in Poitiers and subsequently Director of this school, to which he provided a resolute thrust forward, Director of the residence school in Nantes, Visitor of Clermont-Ferrand, and, in this District, a pioneer in the founding of private schools in the wake of secularization, the Brother, at fifty-five years of age, had collected enough titles and accomplishments to justify greater responsibilities. On the 23rd of October 1884 he became the eleventh Assistant. He wrote in a very pleasant style, and he adopted an impeccable form for the rich substance of his

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47 Obituary, 1892.

48 At the same time that Adrian Mas was leaving the school to become Brother Exupérien in Toulouse.

49 He submitted his resignation in 1913 to the General Chapter that had been convoked at Lembecq

50 Obituary, 1924.

conferences. This was all the more surprising to those who met him personally, with his terse, dry speech and his glacial aloofness.[51]

Alongside this cold native of Mans stood the no less hardworking, no less faithful, Brother Apronian of Mary — August Petitnicolas — of Lorraine, who was born in Arraincourt in the Diocese of Metz and was won over to the Institute by his older brother, Brother Archangel. Sons of a farmer, they owned property in the Moselle region, and the younger of the two had no intention of giving it up. In the end, however, he listened to his brother: "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." The young man — he was twenty years old — left for the novitiate on October 15th 1853, and from that moment on his heart belonged solely to God. Body and soul, Brother Apronian of Mary was at the service of his Congregation. In the capacity of teacher and of Sub-director he served in the residence school of Beauregard from 1855 to 1874. A stay at Saint Dizier was the prelude to larger tasks — in Reunion, Quimper and Rodez. Successively Visitor of these three Districts, it was as Rodez' delegate to the Chapter of 1884 that Brother Apronian received a majority of votes, on October 25, to take over the twelfth Assistant's post that had been provided for by the Papal rescript of 1874.

His official biographer writes: "He brought a great deal of prudence, candor, deference and common sense to discussion." There dwelt in him the wisdom of the peasant who is suspicious of adventure and does not get involved except deliberately and after all appropriate calculations. There was a slogan that rose repeatedly to his lips: "Organize, control, approve." He made careful preparations; and he never passed from one stage of a project to the next without serious investigation. And while he did not arrive at his goals as swiftly as other, he did not fail to move without loss of time. Furthermore, he was never so consumed by administration as to neglect religious direction. He was always concerned with souls; and in the Rouergue, he opened centers for "long retreats". In his office at the Regime he conducted an profuse spiritual correspondance. To this he added religious studies and prayer throughout the Communities.

As an old man of eighty years and relieved of his responsibilities at the Chapter of 1913, he returned to Rodez where he lived a period of time before his death. His former subordinates in Rodez attended upon his last breadth on January 25, 1914.[52]

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After the Chapters of 1894 and 1897 the make-up of the Regime continued to include the names of Brothers Exupérien, Junian, Aimarus, Louis of Poissy, Cyrus and Apronian of Mary.[53] But it was opened to new members who, for the most part, will be introduced in the course of our account. It is important, therefore, to arrange them with their predecessors at the threshold of the history of the Institute in France prior to 1905.

We need only mention here Brother Clementian, who had been elected by the Special Committee in November 1891 to succeed Brother Patrick, and Brother Madir Joseph who had been selected by the General Chapter on October 18, 1894. The former was in charge of Ireland, England, the United States and Anglo-India: we shall inquire into his activities when we resume the story of the missions. The latter was the Assistant for Belgium, and he, too, will, as a consequence, remain out side of our designs until further notice.

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[51] Obituary, 1897. — Brother Cyrus died at St. Omar on June 1, 1897.

[52] Obituary, 1914. — Cf. also Archives of the District of Rodez, District monograph.

[53] Brother Renkaux, who died in November of 1894, was not replaced until 1897. — Brother Gabriel Marie, who was as Assisstant at the time of the Chapter of 1894, was elected Superior-general by the Chapter of 1897.

The same thing is not true for their two colleagues, Brother Reticius and Brother Narcellian. Brother Reticius was an energetic and commanding figure from whose superb endeavors the Lasallian Congregation benefitted for more than a half a century. Under no set of circumstances was the man ever in danger of going unnoticed. His imposing height and Bourgognian demeanor singled him out to all present. His features inspired a intimidated awe; he had eyes that searched his interlocutor and pierced him to the soul, and an enormous nose that seemed to hasten ahead of him; while thin lips, bracketed between wrinkles at the mouth, sketched a smile that somehow suggested derision. The total determination of his will resided in his immense jaw, while from the vast forehead there shone a marvelous mind.

This striking, inflexible, quasi-formidable person nature had, of course, supplied with a good number of the components. An interior strength, where the supernatural contributed to reinforce free decisions, controled him and pushed him to the point of fulfilling himself in the most vigorous way.

When Louis Gonnet — the future Brother Reticius — arrived at the Brothers' place in Neurey-les-Lademie on October 21, 1857 to begin his novitiate he seemed so pint-sized that there was certain hesitation about accepting him; and the Director yielded only to an order issued by the Brother Visitor, Jean-Olympe.

Once admitted Brother Reticius complied effortlessly with the Rule. His health was no longer a matter of concern, while as to studies there was never any problem. In his birthplace, in Laroche-Pot, in the Diocese of Dijon, this son of wealthy grape-growers had been taught by the pastor in the village; and, then, in 1854, his family sent him to the Brothers' school in Nolay. The following year, in pursuit of a career in schoolteaching, he studied in Beaune, where Brother Namphase, acclaimed in his District, took of the young man under his wing. This special care lead eventually to a credential in September 1857 and to the unveiling of a Religious vocation.

He took the habit on the 8th of the following December. Once his period of probation was over, he was appointed to the post of assisting the Master of Novices — not at Neurey, but at Dole to where the house of formation had been moved; in addition, he also taught a class in the elementary school. In 1859 he received an "Obedience" for Pontarlier where he won the respect of, and docility from, the older boys who, at first, stood up against the newcomer.
From 1865 to 1880 he disclosed his powers as a guide to souls. These were his fifteen years as Director of St. Claude's near Besancon. It was here that the District's Novitiate found a final home and a lofty leader. His disciples devoutly harvested the words of a mentor particularly well apprised of their aspirations as well as of their reservations; they admired the versatility of his discourse; they were sometimes amused by a quip tossed off, quite deliberately, as a serious presentation unfolded. And they were sustained by a theology that derived from the best sources.

But now a whole new world was opening up for Brother Reticius. Well aware of his merits, the Superior-general tapped them to the full by naming him "Provincial Visitor" of Canada.
After a productive seven years in the New World there remains only a single reminder to throw additional light on the portrait of this religious leader; it's a letter written by Gideon Désilet, a French-Canadian, the editor of the *Journal des Trois-Rivières* and a Papal knight, to his son, a Christian Brother, when he learned of the Assistant's death in 1916: "The lucidity of his mind and the correctness of his judgment, his profound knowledge of men and events, his indomitable energy that despised obstacles, and especially that uprightness of intention that subordinated everything to the glory of God inspired him with an invincible repugnance for half measures, compromises and concessions whether openly proposed or skillfully veiled by the subtlties of diplomacy...The serenity and joy he preserved at the height of the struggle, as a man who considered his adversaries as negligible because he had God on his side made me think of my beloved General Charette on the battlefield."

He was a fearless and intransigent fighter. Whether it was a question of contending for the rights of Christian education or for deference to the Brothers' Rule, his tenacity operated everywhere and equally. His valor inspired opposition, but it also roused enthusiasm. It won adherents and indefectible fidelity to Brother Reticius's cause. After his departure from Montreal, when the novices and junior novices understood that he was gone for good, they broke down in tears.

His mission was continued in the American District of Baltimore: — but only for a few months, because in 1887 Brother Joseph urgently recalled him to Paris. The "Second Novitiate" — the origins of which we shall recount — had been definitely established. No one seemed better suited to direct it than the acclaimed mentor, the exemplary Religious, whose initiatives had been crowned with such success. And while he continued to forge Lasallian leaders on his relentless anvil, Brother Reticius inspected the regular canonical novitiates; and then on November 16, 1891, at the same time as Brother Clementian, he became a member of the Regime. For nearly a quarter of a century Canada and Franche-Comté were the principal fields of his apostolate. Between the two countries, so far removed from one another on the map, would take shape within the Institute bonds of close solidarity.[54]

It is understandable that we should pause and take delight in contemplating this portrait of the common father of these two Districts. But we shall have, at various points, to sharpen its outlines and heighten its colors.

Brother Narcellian was scarcely less learned or less virtuous than his exceptional colleague. He enjoyed only a brief time during which to prove himself. Appointed in October of 1894, he died May 8, 1901. As Assistant he administered the Districts of Clermont, Chambéry and Lyons.[55] These were regions that he knew rather well and did not come as one totally unfamiliar with them.

Born in Roanne, Brother Narcellian (Antoine Gardet) went from the Loire to the Rhône for his novitiate, which he made at Caluire in 1849. Nevertheless, it was in the Bourgogne that he established his reputation. For twenty-nine uninterrupted years he worked in the residence school in Dijon where the Director, Brother Namphase, the Sub-director, Brother Pol of Leo and Brother Narcellian, teacher in the primary grades after 1858, composed, for the institutions greatest achievments, "the Dijon trinity", according to an expression current among their friends. Vainly did the educational establishment equip one of the Ministers of the Second Empire against an all too flourishing institution.[56]— a broad and solidly founded education continued to be dispensed at the residence school of St. Joseph. The teacher in the introductory classes captivated his pupils with the clarity of his mathematical demonstrations.

He also seems to have had the ability to guide future teachers, since in 1879 he was placed at the head of a normal school in Aurillac. But almost immediately thereafter, because of current political alignments the Superior-general withdrew the Brothers from these public centers, where they had fallen under suspicion. Brother Narcellian went on to Puy to edit textbooks. He was then called to direct the residence school in St. Etienne.

His key qualities were asserted between October of 1884 and October of 1894 at the head of the District of Auvergne. He was a diligent administrator and attentive to specific results. He played a particularly active role in the houses of formation and had a considerable influence on the young Brothers. His apparent inflexibility did not deceive those who had frequent dealings with him; in the long run they found that he was a profound and warm-hearted man. He

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[54] Obituary, February 4, 1918. — Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique du district. — L'OEuvre d'un siècle, pg. 113. — And in the biography of Brother Isidore of Mary (by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel), pg. 50.

[55] And, outside of France, the District of Equador.

[56] See Volume V of the present work, pg. 394.

combined piety with kindness in such a way that he could make exciting aspirations toward the most generous ideals. Quite correctly singled out by the delegates to the Chapter, Brother Narcellian became an outstanding addition to Brother Joseph's high command.[57]

It remains for us to speak of Brother Viventian Aimé and Brother Perial Stephen who, beginning on March 25, 1897, took their places in the counsel of Brother Gabriel of Mary.

From his earliest childhood there was associated with Brother Perial Stephen (Paul Bargel) a story whose complete authenticity did not preclude the retaining something of the zest of myth. On July 28, 1846, at about noon, the saintly Curé of Ars was leaving the parish church where he had just celebrated Mass, prayed and heard confessons for twelve solid hours. As he was returning to the priests' house, a women, on her knees, presented the baby she had brought with her from very great distance for his priestly blessing. Whereupon John Vianney told the mother: "The child you hold in your arms has been chosen by God for His glory. He will become a Christian Brother and do a great deal of good."[58]

"And so," explained Brother Perial one day to a close friend, "I was called to the widest possible charitable endeavors. But I shudder to think that I have been unable to correspond to this divine call." Humility finds a way to say these things, but in point of fact the Saint's prophesy would be realized.

The Bargels who were simple people — the father was a carpenter at Pontcharra, near Tarare — were typical of the fine Christian families in the Lyons region. The son, raised in a religious environment, developed in a way that might have been expected from one for whom so much had been forecast. He entered the novitiate in Caluire on September 5, 1864. A year later he made his debut, a teacher of twenty years of age, in the residence school that had been set up on the slopes of Fourvière. He was to teach generations of pupils, and — as "inspector of the lower division" — was to direct the pedagogical training of young teachers until 1887. Without leaving Lyons, he left the old Vincentian residence to become Sub-director, and later on Director, of the huge Community of St. Polycarp which comprised forty Brothers teaching in seven "neighborhood" schools. By 1897 he had been performing the functions of Auxiliary-Visitor of the District for two years when he was elected Assistant. Of less than average size, with a plump face and a manner of charming gentleness, Brother Perial Stephen, with his "heart of gold" and his talk stamped with cheerfulness, left behind him — at the end of twenty-six years of administration — the memory of an excellent Religious and of a paternal leader.[59]

Brother Vinventian Aimé's was a quicker mind and a loftier will. He had been Claude Francis Aymonier-Davat, the son of middle-class Savoyards, who was born on June 6, 1851. After a novitiate in 1867, Brother Viventian Aimé occupied a variety of teaching posts in Chambery, La Mott-Servolex and a number of other places. Assigned to the District of Clermont-Ferrand as Visitor, he showed his zeal and functioned like a man having authority. His rapid rise and his labors also made an impression on the Regime. And finding himself administering, not only the Districts of Clermont and Rheims, but Equador and Columbia as well, he stood revealed to be a missionary at heart. South America was to provide retirement for the extreme old age of this great servant of the Institute and also to preserve his remains: he died in Venzuela in 1937 at the

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[57] Obituary, 1901. — And the Archives of the District of Clermont-Ferrand, Historique du district.

[58] Francis Trocu, Vie du sain curé d'Ars, 1932, ed., pg. 213. — The author dates the incident at 1847. The Perial Stephen's obituary puts it at "July 28, 1846," which is in better agreement with the future Brother Perial Stephen's date of birth (1845).

[59] Obituary, 1924.

age of eighty-six.[60]

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Recording in one of his notebooks some "notes on Canon Law", Brother Louis of Poissy raised the question as to who had the right to be called a "Major Superior". And after a study of the Code issued by the Holy See, he concluded that: In our Institute only the Superior-general, the Visitors and their auxiliaries are Major Superiors — in brief, only those who have power analogous to Provincials in other Religious Societies. The Brothers Procurators-general, the Brother Secretary-general, regardless of the importance of their responsibilities, are not included in the category under consideration; it appears as though the Brothers Assistant themselves do not share in it in the Canonical sense of the term. In any case, actually they possess only delegated powers the modalities and the extent of which are left to the Superior-general's judgment.[61]

These are, of course, theoretical considerations the value of which must not be denied. But a study of the main mechanisms of the Congregation must chiefly take realities into consideration. In practice the hierarchy descended in stages from the Superior-general and the Assistants to the Brothers Visitor by way of intermediary steps occupied by the Procurators-general and the Secretary-general.

In the preceding volume, in connection with Brother Floridus,[62] we have described the role played by the Procurator-general to the Holy See. The process of the Founder's canonization will supply us with an opportunity to emphasize certain qualities of the man — the successor to the humble Gabriel Drolin — and on the way in which an ambassador harvests the inheritance of a herald.[63]

And, then, in future sections on Italy there will reappear the names of Brothers who, by reason of their residence and their competencies were necessarily connected with the life of the Brothers in Rome.

The other Christian Brother who, at this time (and for a long time to come), also bore the title of "Procurator-general"[64] "attended" the Regime. He was the Institute's treasurer and legal expert. And his genuine importance grew as the relations between Religious groups and the external world became more complex. The activities of a man like Brother Dominatoris will better inform on this point than a lot of abstract definitions.

In 1875 the post had been vacant for several years, and Brother Irlide did not think the time had come to appoint a permanent occupant. Rather, he brought to Rue Oudinot, as "Director of the general Procure" a Brother who was born in the Diocese of Angers and had not long since been made a member of the Community of the residence school in Poitiers. The man thus designated for the rather thankless task of reorganization was Brother Dominatoris. He had a reputation for having a sound and clear head, and he had been a credit to the Christian Brothers who taught him in Anjou. After having studied superbly under their direction, in 1851 he received their habit. For nine years he taught drawing in St. Peter's school in Nantes. Subsequently, he taught mathematics and French in that city. He had become a first-class draughtsman and a talented mathematician, and he had practiced in these areas his taste for

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[60] Father Secret, *Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes en Sovoie,* 1944, pp. 94-96.

[61] Motherhouse Archives, File BE p 3.

[62] See Volume VI of the present work, Index.

[63] We refer to Brother Robustinian, of whom we shall then be speaking.

[64] Currently this designation, which breeds obvious misunderstandings, has been replaced by the term Econome General.

observation and precision; his rare good sense and business experience he picked up in his capacity as procurator for the huge establishment in Nantes. Brother Osee, who had witnessed his work, had not forgotten this very imporant auxiliary. In 1868 he appointed him Director of Rosmadec where the central Community of the schools in Nantes resided. Somewhat surprizingly the exile to Poitier did not last for long. The Superior-general's invitation put an end to it.

Brother Dominatoris' task was to guarantee the smooth functioning of everything from book publishing to the administration of Institute property. By his patient intelligence he was able to correct errors and overcome difficulties. In 1881 his appointment to become Procurator-general was a reward for his accomplishments, but it did not change his way of living nor his working habits. Undemonstrative but of easy access and practicing a spacious charity, he had a gift for obliging unobtrusively; and he made use of his many connections in order to assist people in difficulty. Relieved of certain secondary chores, he worked the harder to defend the interests of the Congregation. Fiscal law, so complex and so productive of pitfalls, ceased to have any secrets for him. From all corners there came appeals to his expertise. The corporations, which were the landlords of a great number of the Institute's schools, maintained constant relations with the Brother Procurator-general.

He spared neither his time nor his health. An apparently tireless traveler, he braved heat and cold and went hungry for days at a time rather than eat at restaurants in railroad stations; and, after nights spent on trains, he would have hardly entered his room before hurrying to finish off work that had been pending.

Over-work had to have shorten the life of Brother Dominatoris. A species of meningitis struck him down on April 28, 1896 in his sixty-first year. He left to his successors, along with the example of a marvelous — if not always prudently imitable — life of action, a rational system of administration.[65]

Parallel with the services of the Procure-general there functioned in the offices of the Motherhouse the General Secretariat with its director and its employees. We are far removed from the days when Blessed Brother Solomon wrote letters and kept Brother Agathon's registers up to date.[66]

That the position had taken on the importance of a ministry can be understood from the earliest years of Brother Philippe's generalate, when the Superior called Brother Leon to his assistance.[67] The tradition begun by this hardworking and methodical aide to the great superior was to be continued by Brother Cyprius.

The Secretary-general from 1865 to 1893, Brother Cyrius had prepared himself for administration as well as for rapid and accurate reports by a thirty-year career as teacher, Director, and subordinate responsibilities for documentation at Rue Oudinot. A native of Angers, like his confrere Brother Dominatoris, he had been a pupil in the Diocesan seminary in Combrée and had intended to become a priest when he experienced the beginnings of a vocation to the life of a lay-Religious. Pushing aside whatever obstacles, he joined the Brothers at the age of fifteen years. After a novitiate in Nantes in 1833, successive "Obediences" took him to the Bel-Air residence school in Aurillac, and then to Montbrison, Marseille and to St. Chamond. In 1857 he came to Paris to be assigned to the offices of the Secretariat, and he became so completely the man for the job that nobody was surprized eight years later when the promotion came. He spoke and wrote with ease; he was particular, assiduous and fastidious and

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65 Obituary, 1896. — Cf. also note no. 21 in the appendix to la *Vie du Frère Camille-de-Jésus*.

66 See Volumes II and III of the present work.

67 See Volume V of the present work, pg. 227.

in no way disconcerted by sensitive problems. His deafness, which at forty years of age was already evident, increased with age and constrained him to adopt a sedentary life, and isolated him still more completely than it had Brother Leon who suffered from the same infirmity. Deaf like his predecessor, Brother Cyprius, too, had a fiery, irritable nature. The frustration he experienced in the verbal exchange of ideas forced him into a sort of withdrawal; as a consequence, he lived within himself, scarcely endured contradiction and vented his authoritarian tendencies. But while the moral life of the man was subjected to defective and painful natural influences, his mind remained lucid, his conscience scrupulous and his activity unrelenting within the uniform structure of tasks to be performed, within the monotonous daily flow.[68]

Brother Cyprius might depart the scene. But already the star of the most representative and the best known of the Secretaries-general was rising. Since 1886 Brother Justinus had been given the title of "director of the Secretariat". Not long ago we left this Southerner with his quick gaze and his unfettered mind in Bordeaux.[69]

Having directed the Community in St. Eulalia and taken the place of Brother Liacim in the main Community of St. Charles, where he headed fifty Brothers who taught 2,000 pupils, he experienced the secularization of 1880. Six parochial schools were opened; in one of these Brother Justinus started higher primary grades which, under the name of the "Rue Margaux School", attracted a brilliant reputation. There he brought together, by means of competitive examinations, talented youths from Christian homes equipped with sound knowledge whom he guided according to the needs of the Bordeaux business community. He himself found time to improve his own mind as he followed the lectures given by Achille Luchaire and Emile Faguet in the Department of Literature. Neither history nor literature were to be superfluous in his career. Brother Justinus, whom Faguet one day singled out for public praise, learned to serve with his pen and to join a knowledge of the past to his experience as an educator, psychologist, and man of action.

He was prepared for the role that Brother Joseph had assigned him. In a visit to the Gironde, Brother Joseph had half-guessed, half detected that this Brother was worthy of his confidence, and he was delighted with himself for having selected such a man. "I thank Providence,", he would say, "for having provided me with a secretary who reads more rapidly than I do privately."

Indeed, the penetrating glance of the Brother from Bordeaux made a marvelous fit with the wisdom of the Superior. Leo XIII's Nuncio, Bishop Ferrata, during difficult times, praised Brother Justinus' "feeling for the occasion" and the courage that refuses to recoil from facing reality.

In 1887 the Minister of Public Education appointed Brother Justinus as a member of the Committee on statistics for elementary education. The director of the Secretariat-general behaved frankly and with dignity in his relations with the bureaucrats in the School Commission. Among them he met with people of lofty minds and sincere hearts whom he respected and learned to recognize their worth. Within these official circles he formed enduring bonds of genuine friendship; and in a number of instances, the cause of private schools benefitted from these relationships.

In 1894, after Brother Cyprius' death, the title of Secretary-general fell legitimately to the one who had, in fact, assumed, during the precedeing years, a good number of its reponsibilities. Until its end in 1922 Brother Justinus' life was inextricably bound up with the history of the Institute. His mind was absorbed in anticipating threats and alleviating emergencies. His faith kept him afloat in the midst of the storm; it inspired patience, a towering

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[68] Obituary, 1893.

[69] See Volume V of the present work, pg. 508.

obstinacy and a consistency of positions which, further, should the need arise, accommodated itself to temporary solutions, half-way measures and practical compromises. In the words of the prayer that he had composed for daily recitation, "full of confidence in the infinite mercy of God and, following the example of the Holy Founder, (he) adore(d) in all things the dispositions of the Divine Will."

In this life, he enjoyed the Superiors-general's broadest appreciation; and through his graciousness, the equanimity of his disposition, and the charm of his conversation he earned the affection of those who worked with him. In the most diverse sorts of groups he was surrounded by friends: — whether it was in the Higher Commission on Public Education, where he accompanied Brother Exuperian, or in the Catholic Committee of legal experts where he took part in the most serious deliberations, or in the General Association for Education and Instruction, or in the Society of French Agriculturalists. George Goyau, himself so perfectly balanced, so profoundly Christian, found in the mind and heart of Brother Justinus singular affinities with his own. And the picture he paints of the late Secretary-general is concluded — to nobody's special surprise — by the tribute paid to the Brother, with sincerity and feeling, by an adversary who was sensitive to qualities of mind and heart, Ferdinand Buisson.[70]

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The leverage of the central government of the Institute was transmitted through the Visitors to the whole of the Congregation. A Visitor presided over the proper operation of each District.[71]. "Could a District be considered as a Province according to the meaning of Canon Law? The question was Brother Louis of Poissy's, who also supplied the answer. "Our Districts are not set up as genuine Provinces although they bear a number of similarities to them."[72]

A Visitor depended more immediately upon the Superior-general and he was more restricted in his activities than Provincials of Religious Orders. Custom had created Districts; for custom had gradually defined the role of the special inspector who, from one end of a constituency to the other, supervised the regularity of Communities, the zeal of the teachers, as well as educational achievements and financial management.

The division of the Institute into Districts was not approved, at least formally, until the Chapter of October 1882. But the nomenclature that had been adopted by the twelfth decree did not appear to be of a nature to dissipate all occasions of — at least verbal — confusion: "There are Visitors [reads the text] whose principal functions consists is seeing to it that a number of novitiates are visited in order the better to guarantee uniformity in the formation and spiritual direction of novices as well as exact observance of canonical prescriptions and the Rule of our Institute governing these institutions.

They shall have precedence over all Visitors of the constituency whose novitiates they are visiting and who are called Provincial or Regional Visitors.

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[70] Obituary, 1923, passim. In the final lines of this paragraph it is important to mention an inestimable collaborator of the Superiors of the Institute. We refer to Brother Tempier. After a superb career as teacher and educator at Montpellier (See Volume V of the present work, pp. 502-503.) Brother Tempier specialized in civil and Canon law. In the Institute he was referred to as "Master Tempier"; actually, throughout the many legal suits occasioned by secularization he served as the Superior's lawyer. His work and his knowledge were no less when he prepared the ground for capitulary deliberations: "The convocation of a General-Chapter" — says his obituary — "presented him with the opportunity for redoubling his activity: he informed himself about anything that might throw light on the spiritual or temporal interests of the Congregation, or its organization and its operations. He brought to this research the same patience and the same application that he bestowed on legal matters."

[71] For more details see Volume V of the present work, pp. 426-432

[72] Motherhouse Archives, BE p 3.

Provincial Visitors may be responsible, at the same time, to make regular visits to all the institutions in a District, or only some of them, whatever may be the District in which they are. They visit especially the institutions in which Visitors of their constituency reside, when the latter are also the Directors of them."

The term "Provincial Visitor" might suggest a new structure replacing or superimposed upon a District. Actually, the system that had proved its flexibility and effectiveness was being retained intact. There were no other geographically stabilized constituencies[73] than those whose normal presiding officers continued to be the Brothers Visitor, recognized over a long period of time under that name. Provincial Visitors appeared to be something like extraordinary representatives of the highest authority in a position to compel Visitors of Districts and who enjoyed, at the least, the rights of precedence and marks of respect. But "Provinces" had not been established. And if this term was employed, it designated nothing more than a group of institutions placed under the personal dependence of a special missus dominicus, or, more simply, as in times past, countries in which the Congregation had been established beyond the French frontiers.

The main mission of "Provincials" in this Lasallian sense, at this time, involved and continued to involve novitiates and junior novitiates. Their's was the task to maintain or restore the spirit of the Institute. That is why the Superior-general might make them responsible, over-and-above and temporarily, for the government of certain Districts or certain Communities. Ultimately their official designation was, happily, modified: today they are called "Visitors-general".[74]

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It is understandable that the District — the administrative unit — should be of interest to us before all else as we cast a glance over the region and the men of the Institute in France.
During Brother Irlide's generalate there were thirty-three constituencies within the continental limits of the French Republic. They were of unequal size; at the time the Chapter of 1882 was convoked Lyons had the right to the largest number of delegates: five representatives for 433 professed teaching Brothers, followed by Paris *intra muros* with 392 professed teaching Brothers who elected four delegates.

Clermont, Rheims, Nantes, Cambrai, Marseille, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Paris *extra muros*, Béziers, St. Omer, Rodez, Caen, Besancon, Moulins and Chambéry, i.e., thirteen Districts, each had two representatives in the Assembly by reason of having more than 100 lectors.[75].
Le Mans, Le Puy, Quimper, Bayonne and Ajaccio were listed last, with a considerable gap between Corsica (which had been reduced to thirty-eight electors) and the four continental regions (which were growing and showed between seventy-three and ninety-seven professed

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[73] Except for possible modifications.

[74] The special and, in the beginning, temporary role of these officers was carefully defined by the Chapter of 1875, which was also primarily responsible for the way terms are used: "In order to maintain and to bind more closely...the union of all the parts of the Institute with the center" [states the Circular of the 1st of August 1875] "and in order to assure a greater conformity both in the direction and in the customs and methods of novitiate, the Chapter recognizes that there is utility in establishing Provincial Visitors when circumstances permit or demand it. These Visitors, appointed for three years, shall have as their normal mission the visitation of novitiates and residences of Visitors/Directors within the Districts of their provincial constituency." Decree VII of the same Chapter adds that they shall visit exceptionally, "on explicit orders of the" Superior-general, institutions over which they have no immediate authority. "The number and identity of the Districts intended to constitute provincial constituencies are subject to circumstances and left to the judgment" of the Superior-general."

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[75] One-hundred-eighty-two for Clermont and 118 for Moulins and for Chambéry

teaching Brothers).[76]

Fifteen years later, in January 1897, the two Parisian Districts were combined; but the tiny District of Ajaccio had long since been stricken from the list. Twenty-one constituencies sent sixty delegates to the Chapter that had been convoked after Brother Joseph's death. Bayonne was the only District to elect a single representative, because it fell three electors short of the requisite number. But Le Puy, with its 106 professed teaching Brothers, outstripped Le Mans which had reached 141 and Quimper 129. Lyons, Rheims, Marseille, Clermont, Nantes, Avignon, Béziers, Rodez, and Toulouse continued to be, after Paris (which they, however, had populated with Brothers) the most productive regions in Brothers and in schools. The Chapter of 1901 made is evident that the District of Lyons had doubled in numbers; St. Etienne became the headquarters of a new District and took with it 200 professed teachers from metropolitan Lyons. That was the only significant change at the beginning of the new century; meanwhile the four years that had just elapsed brought from 4,795 to 4,881 the numbers of electors to the Chapter in the twenty-two Districts of France, i.e., a modest increase of eighty-six members, which authorized the nomination of sixty-two, in stead of sixty, delegates.[77]

What were needed at the head of these groups was good leaders — one or two in the provinces, whereas Paris and its suburbs required at least three. At the time of the Chapter of 1884 the Visitors for the District of Paris were Brothers Nicholas of Mary, Anthymius and Angelum. The Superior-general knew the first and the third of these especially well, since they were classmates in the junior novitiate.[78] He "revered" the wisdom of Brother Nicholas (Jean Warville), a sober and generous native of Lorraine, who had distinguished himself as Director of the Motherhouse Community between 1863 and 1875, and then as Visitor of the District of Normandy before assuming the same responsibility in Paris. Residing in the school at St. Sulpice, the Brother Visitor for several years directed this huge parochial institution without imparement to his wider obligations.[79]

Brother Joseph had shown no less affection for, and confidence in, Brother Angelum whom he had the misfortune to lose in 1888. Under the weight of this bereavement his mind went back to a whole lifetime of friendship. Both men had been born in the city of St. Etienne where the Superior was to deliver the funeral prayer: Brother Angelum, he wrote, "has enriched our Institute with his dedication; for fifty years he represented for us the marvelous combination of the most perfect religious virtues and the most remarkable qualities of mind and heart."[80] And in a notice devoted to the late Brother, he hoped that people would recall the charm of his conversation, the purity of his soul as well as "a kind of genius for organization" especially as exerted in the schools in Paris.

Brother Anthymius, like his two colleagues, had worked strenuously for the success of Christian education. We have already met him in the normal school in Rouen as a first-class

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[76] Figures found in an appendix to the Circular of June 2, 1882. With 3,586 professed teaching Brothers France elected forty-five delegates. Foreign countries — including the French colonies — amounting to a total of 241 schools and 1, 036 professed teaching Brothers were represented by nineteen Capitulants. "Members-by-right" came to twenty, of whom nineteen were actually seated.

[77] .[77]Circular no. 74, January 8, 1897. Circular no. 105, June 14, 1901.

[78] See Volume V of the present work, pg. 155.

[79] Obituary, 1904.

[80] Letter dated March 5, 1888 to Brother Rudolfo, a teacher in St. Etienne.

educator and psychologist.[81]

He took his place fittingly in a District that demanded a great deal of professional quality, a great deal of tact and a great deal of administrative foresight. In about 1880 the Department of the Seine alone eighty-five Brothers' Schools, and nearly 900 Brothers distributed over sixty Communities.[82] The secularization of the period was involved numerous intrusions: it was essential to make decisions that were both judicious and rapid. The Assistant, Brother Exupérien was, under every set of circumstances, superbly seconded.

Extra muros, the second District at that time had been placed under the guidance of two, equally respected Brothers: Brothers Gustave and Lucard. The latter's name recurs repeatedly in the present history of a Congregation whose "Annals" he had written.[83] We know that after Brother Cecilian, Brother Lucard enveloped the future lay-teachers in the Lower Loire with very sound supervision and that he prepared to lead them back into the old St. Yon's when the followers of De La Salle were obliged to abandon abandon the direction of training schools for elementary education.[84] The distinguished Director was sent from Rouen to the residence school in Marseille, where, evidently in a temporary capacity, he played a subordinate role. In 1882 he was designated Visitor. In that position he served successively in Paris,Bordeaux and Cambrai; and whether in the north or the south, Brother Lucard conducted his learned research, his work as educator, his extensive apostolate among the young and his administrative tasks.[85].

Brother Gustave also functioned as Visitor in various places: four years — between 1881 and 1885 — in Departments around Paris; thereafter in Nantes; and finally in Le Puy. In Rue Oudinot he directed the Scholasticate in the interval between his tours of administrative duty. It amount to an array of responsibilities that made possible a carefully ordered life, constant effort and total self-denial. Nantes and Vellaves had been made aware of the man's merits, and they celebrated his refinement, his sound learning and all the other virtues of his calling. Everywhere those who heard Brother Gustave speak recalled the example he gave of "viril language" and thought that was as clear, precise and concrete as it was profound.[86]

At the end of the century, the Distirct of Paris — now unified — profitted from a special arrangement. Several Brothers Visitor shared the direction of eighty-nine Communities, 1347 Brothers, 102 schools attended by 86,600 pupils. In order to exchange views and to decide matters having to do with the overall order they met together in a Counsel, presided over by either Brother Alban Joseph, or by the Assistant appointed to administer the institutions in the French capital, i.e., Brother Exupérien himself. After 1896 the principal Visitor-of-record was Brother Agilbert of Mary who remained at this post until his death in 1925. He was born in the Upper Loire and, in 1865, began preparing himself for a career of teacher and educator under the aegis of Brother Peter Celestine in the Juniorate in Paris, and then under Brother Exupérien in the Novitiate. The influence of these teachers made a very definite impression on him; and it continued to do so when Brother Agilbert joined the school of St. Nicholas-des-Champs and when the saintly Assistant, secure in the knowledge of his pupil's obedience, called him to Rue Oudinot to impose on him the heavy burdens of Director of St. Roch.

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81 See Volume V of the present work, pp. 511-512.

82 Vie de Frère Exupérien, pp. 91-94.

83 On this subject see especially the Indices of the first three volumes of the present work.

84 See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 512.

85 Obituary, 1895

86 Ibid., 1898.

Brother Agilbert of Mary enjoyed considerable acclaim in the District; the Brothers had for a long time looked upon him as a model; the clergy defered to his dedication, and the young listened to him respectfully. His character and his personality attracted people to him. In him "nature and grace" harmonized marvelously. He had a way of uniting authority with kindliness, dignity with a manner that was without strain and without pomposity. St. Ignatius Loyola might have been speaking of him when he said: "He bears with him the entire reputation of his Society." The distinguished features, which remain vivid in the memory of many of our contemporaries, would join the gallery of the most loved in the Congregation.[87]

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We need to people the outlying areas with names and faces...passing shadows in the eyes of the worldly...but for believers, immortal souls (and bodies at the moment of the Resurrection). For the Institute which cultivates fidelity to their memory, they are the witnesses to the past. We shall call them up within the framework of their terrestrial time and place.

In Avignon there was Brother Sophonius who presided over the District after 1871; blind in his old age, he died as "Provincial Visitor" in the course of 1898. A teacher and Director during the first part of his Religious life, he was subsequently obliged to contend against the adversaries of the Christian schools. Political passions had been unleashed and, in the Southwest region they turned violent. Brother Sophonius marshalled his resources to save the threatened undertaking, "to keep in check open or devious attacks and to prepare counterattacks" and to seek a thriving heroism for the triumph of good in resistance to evil.[88]

In Bayonne, Brother Calimer of Jesus, a Breton from the Diocese of Vannes, who had been a novice in 1848 and had given forty years of labor. He had been closely associated with Brother Irlide's initiatives. As Sub-director in the residence school founded by the dynamic Irlide, he succeeded the latter as Director in 1873 and as Visitor in 1882. He was a superior educator, and, when he took his place on Institute Committees, he was a skillful expert in the editing of textbooks. He was also usefully consulted on questions concerning the Rule, of which he had made a penetrating study, and the numerous prescriptions of Canon Law that had to do with the Vows, General Chapters and the management of Communities. In administrative situations he acted vigorously and deliberately. Difficulties left him unperturbed, and eventually people were brought 'round to his views.[89]

Brother Namphase, Visitor of Besancon, died before the Chapter of 1884. He had played such a large role in Bourgogne and in Franche-Comté that his influence was felt long after his death. The inspiration that he had provided for youthful minds in the residence school in Dijon,[90] all the Brothers experienced starting in October of 1869 and for fourteen years thereafter. Many of them earned official diplomas and so put themselves in a position to preserve the future of the Christian Brothers schools. Brother Namphase had a talent for selecting at a glance the best candidates. Of an extremely lively character, resembling in his rough appearance his celebrated cousin, Brother Facile, and, like him, disdainful of averting disapproval, the man from Beaujolais was not a respecter of persons in Franche-Comté. Nevertheless, he conciliated them because his fairness, his frankness, devoid of any ulterior motive, and his patient moderation had a pacifying effect. Even though he was known as an

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87 *Choix de notices nécrologiques*, Vol. III, pp. 551-612.

88 Obituary, 1898.

89 Obituary, 1906.

90 See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 394.

austere worker and miserly with his time, no one had to fear a poor welcome: more than anybody, Brother Namphase was charitable in the practice of hospitality.[91]

On April 10, 1876 in the eighty-fifth year of his age and the seventieth year of his Religious life, the distinguished Brother Alphonse died in Bordeaux. For more than half a century Antoine-Guillaume Goudet had directed schools in Bordeaux, exercised authority over the institutions of the Southwest and represented his constituents in General Chapters. A few months before his death he had been honored with the title of "Provincial Visitor". In the days following the imposing funeral with a Requiem Mass celebrated in the Cathedral by a professor in the Faculty of Theology, public gratitude sought a more durable memorial. One of Brother Joseph's former pupils at Francs-Bourgois, Ernest Hubert, director of a branch of the Bank of France, headed a committee to raise funds for a statue to be erected on Brother Alphonse's tomb. Charles Beylard, who had also graduated from an Institute school, executed the work: quite successfully he found a way to fix in bronze the expressive figure of the teacher holding his rosary in one hand and his three-cornered hat in the other.[92]

The nursery created on the banks of the Garonne continued to produce choice plants. Brother Liacim whom we shall study as the founder of the St. Genes residence school, continued in the traditionof Brother Alphonse. He possessed the solid virtues of ancient Bordeaux Christianity, the heirs of Brothers Eloi and Paulin. He also inherited from his people the distinction of flawless good manners and the art of elegant and interesting conversation. Those who served under him were edified by listening to him talk about education, the apostolate, catechism and the monastic life. They assisted him in the restructuring of the schools, which had been disrupted by the rage for secularization. These were difficult times for Brother Liacim for whom obstacles arose not only from hostile quarters. The exemplary Religious who had earlier experienced opposition at the time of his efforts at St. Genes, sometimes thought (and not without reason) that he had been cruelly misunderstood. In 1884 he was transfered to Toulouse,[93] where he gave evidence of his exceptional experience, his tact, his talents as a negotiator by succeeding in preserving nearly all school sites. In 1896 the Superiors assigned him to the post of Procurator-general that had been made vacant by the death of Brother Dominatoris.[94]

Another great personality — in the Guienne region — was Brother Just Joseph. After having lived a life of consuming activity in the institutions in Chartre and then in Talence (where, between 1877 and 1890, he directed the novitiate that had welcomed him as a youth in 1854), Brother Just became the Visitor of the District. And whether he inspected Communities, or presided over the monthly conferences of the Brothers Director, or convened the committee on private education, in all circumstances he proved himself to be a powerful and persevering organizer, a cautious supervisor, an effective counsellor and a judge with an appetite for clear-cut decisions, although frequently bearing the marks of a rather rigid traditionalism.[95]

For twenty-three years Brother Bertulian had lived and worked in Normandy. Born in 1825 in the Diocese of Verdun, the former classmate of Brothers Joseph and Angelum in the Juniorate in the Faubourg St. Martin had been well passed fifty at the time Brother Irlide

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[91] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique de la maison de Saint-Claude. — Brother Namphase's obituary, 1884.

[92] In the Chartreuse Cemetery in Bordeaux — Archives of the District of Bordeaux. — Brother Alphonse's obituary.

[93] He was replaced in Bordeaux by Brother Lucard.

[94] Brother Liacim resigned in 1907 and died in Mauléon in 1909. — Archives of the District of Bordeaux — obituary.

[95] District Archives; obituary, 1908.

appointed him to the District of Caen. Classes in St. Sulpice that Brother Bertulian had directed since 1874 had established his reputation for being a skillful educator, kind and gentle. In Rouen, where he had chosen to dwell in the venerable and picturesque residence on Beauvoisine Street, he turned into a remarkable administrator without losing any of his paternal qualities. He rediscovered his talents as an educator in order to redirect the work of the schools; and zealously and effectively he cultivated vocations to the Religious life, tripling the number of his Junior and Senior novices.[96]

The first Visitor of the District of Cambrai, established in 1867, was Brother Evergile, who died in a railway accident in Seclin on September 3, 1871. Thereafter, the great names in the Northern constituency were those of Brothers Eleutherius (1871-1888) and Brother Maurice Lucian (1895-1907).[97] The former took the time necessary to provide the District with the wherewithal for its future successes: — a house of formation, a residence school and, during the period of hostile school legislation, a number of private institutions that answered to the demands of the public and of prominent people. A mixture of caution and action, of simple dignity and graciousness, Brother Eleutherius' character won him deferential affection. When he died in Lille on November 8, 1888 in his sixty-second year, he left behind him a flawless reputation.

Brother Maurice Lucian's personality was much more striking. When French and Catholic Flanders spoke of this Brother, one of its own, it was always in terms of high praise; for, as worker in God's vinyard, he had labored mightily there. As Assistant to the Superior-general Brother Gabriel of Mary from 1903 to 1913, he was in a position to offer to vast regions — unfortunately, for all too brief a period! — the service of a brilliant mind, a body of learning maintained by reading and reflection and a particularly strong will.

Gustave Lucian Lemaire belonged to a family of farmers. His father worked rural lands whose buildings were situated within the city limits of Lille, on Rue des Dominicans. And it is here that the child was born on September 24, 1853. Beginning in 1860 he attended the Brothers' school, and, in 1868, arrived to complete his studies in that beehive of educational, religious and social enterprizes, the "Notre Dame House", better known as the "Monnaie" school.

A commercial clerk in a linen business and then in a fabrics plant, he remained devoted to his former teachers. He was a member of the "St. Aloysius Gonzaga Society", that the Brothers had founded. There he added to his knowledge of literature and improved his speech techniques. One of the younger teachers, Brother Edouardis, who exerted a real mastery over minds, introduced Gustave not only to poetry, history, and the principal themes of Christian philosophy but also to the practice of the apostolate.

His vocation was awakened, but his family was opposed. Rather than contract debts among his relatives that might present future problems, the courageous young man — waiving the advantages of a year of volontary service — followed the common lot of inductees who were drafted into the armed services. From January 1875 to the end of 1878 — four full years — he lived in a barracks in Senlis as a soldier, a corporal, and a cavalry sergeant in the 6th Cavalry Regiment. He was indeed a mounted cavalryman, a non-commissioned officer, armed with powers of command, and a Christian who professed his faith and practice the severest morality. His officers wanted him to re-enlist, but he declined the honor. Before leaving the service he was granted a sergeant-major's stripes. He then travelled to the novitiate in Namur where his

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[96] Obituary, 1903.

[97] In the meantime, Brother Hyacinthe-de-Jésus was a Visitor for only a few months (1888-1889) and Brother Lucard for six years (1889-1895).

soul could blossom in peace.

On December 25th 1878, with the humility of one of the shepherds in Bethlehem, Gustave Lemaire put on the Religious habit. Upon his return to France, Brother Maurice Lucian was once again to reside at "Monnaie" but now as a leader and guide: he taught class, directed young peoples' clubs; and finally he directed the Community until he was appointed to the post of Visitor.

In these roles he exercised remarkable varieties of qualities, skills and virtues, fascinated those who listened to him, evoked religious fervor, and demanded an effort both of mind and conscience from teachers and pupils alike.[98]

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It is impossible to highlight all the superb men who served the Institute, French youth and Christian education. We shall have to be satisfied with a rapidly sketched picture of group of Brothers who deserved to be remembered: — Brother Hilarin, Visitor of Clermont-Ferrand, Paris and Besancon before working with the M. H. Brother Joseph as his private secretary;[99] Brother Hugolin who was selected to lead his countrymen and confreres in Le Puy and who then pursued a career of charitable initiatives in Moulins;[100]Brother Altigian Louis, from Lozere, a saintly man, a disciple of Brother Exuperien and, like him, a dominant force in the formation of young people consecrated to God, Auxiliary-Visitor in 1898 and the year after Visitor in that region of the Upper Loire and in the Diocese of Mende which, at the time, included fifty schools and which continued to increase its treasury of merit and its army of religious teachers.[101]

In Lyons in 1884 there was Brother Paramon, a former bank employee, who had successfully transformed himself into a teacher, a Director of a residence school and the beloved leader of the Community in Forez, on the banks of the Saône and the Rhône;[102] and in the same city in 1887, and then in Savoy and — after returning from Egypt — once again under the aegis of Our Lady of Fouarvière, there was Brother Polentius who was so dedicated to the working class and his fellow-citizens, the silk-weavers.[103]

In Marseille Brother Trivier, who had built a magnificent residence school,[104] was Visitor of the District until 1875, when he became Visitor-general with jurisdiction over the houses of formation in Provence, Auvergne, Corsica and Algeria.[105]

Brother Theodotius of Jesus who had taken his place in the supervision of the schools, gradually liberated him completely from administrative burdens. Theodotius, a native of Nîmes who had made his novitiate in Avignon, was a marvelous, expansive and generous person. For fifteen years teacher in the residence school in Marseille, for ten years Director of a very large Community on rue des Dominicans in the same city, and for thirty-three years Auxiliary-Visitor, Visitor and Visitor-general, Brother Theodotius had stamped his personal

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98 Elected Assistant 27th April 1907, Brother Maurice-Lucian retired for health reasons in 1913 and died in 1919. Archives of Cambrai, *Historiqu*e, Notices nécrologiques.

99 Archives of the District of Cleremont, *Historique.*

100 Obituary, 1899.

101 Ibid., 1912. — See also Vie du Frère Exupérien.

102 Ibid., 1887.

103 Ibid., 1895.

104 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 392-393.

105 Obituary, 1893.

mark on a constituency whose interesting history he has written.[106]

The District of Moulins, begun in 1851 by dividing the District of Clermont, had as its Visitor between 1888 and 1896 Brother Blimond who had, earlier, been so highly respected at Saint Bonose school in Orleans. The Provincial residence on rue Paris in Moulins and the Communities in Allier, Nièvre, Cher, Indre and Loiret were happy to greet the soft-spoken, approachable superior who had such a keen judgment and a sensitive, compassionate heart.[107]

Brittany was divided into two districts, Nantes and Quimper. The former, administered by Brother Cyrion in 1884, extended far into the southwest in the direction of Poitou and Saintonge. It was one of the most important Districts in the Institute, covering seven Departments, several hundred Brothers and well of 10,000 pupils. Finistère, Morbihan and the Cotes-du-Nord had been separated by Brother Philippe to constitute the District of Quimper, to which St. Malo and the Ile of Jersey had been added in 1885. Lower Brittany had been the citadel that dominated the entire stronghold. Even though the Brothers of John of Mary de La Mennais had also labored here in popular education — as did the Brothers of Father Gabriel Deshayes in Vendée — the followers of John Baptist de La Salle found recruitment between the Channel and the Loire easy and they managed flourishing schools. In 1903 in the District of Quimper there were 473, of whom all were natives of the region, thirty-two scholastics, nineteen novices, forty-six juniors, fifty-four schools with 11,500 pupils.[108]

Of this achievement, Brothers Dagobert, Anicetus and Namasius were successively the artisans. “An unexpected success crowned most of Brother Dagobert’s undertakings”, writes the author of his obituary in 1879.[109]

Brother Anicetus encouraged young Brothers to pursue their studies; his brief work entitled *Teaching and Education in the First Grade of Elementary School* includes very practical directions for inexperienced teachers.

Brother Namasius, Visitor in Brittany for fifteen years, doubled the number of their institutions during the first period of his administration; and the total number of candidates in formation went from seventy-four in 1883 to 166 in 1893. The Assistant, Brother Osee had vigorously supported the Visitor’s initiatives. The supreme command over this region having been placed in others’ hands, Brother Namasius found that he was less appreciated. But in 1900 he was given the direction of the District of Rodez.[110]

In Champagne, where we conclude this long and complicated journey, Brother Bajulian had preserved the traditions of the Holy Founder. Born in Franche Comté, enrolled with the Brothers in Passy and then sent to Mézières, he came from the Ardennes to Rheims in 1869. And as the Director of the residence school, the physical and moral fulfillment of that institution was his great accomplishment. As Visitor in 1883, he continued to be a builder: the four hundred Brothers under his authority had their headquarters on rue Courlancy, on the threshold of “De La Salle’s city”. In September of 1888 Rheims was affected by the premature death of this superior in his sixties and gave him a triumphal funeral.[111]

Brother Victor Nicholas, who was from the Diocese of Nancy, had, five years earlier, come into the inheritance of the superb institution on rue Venise. In the words of Cardinal

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[106] Obituary. — Brother Theodotius of Jesus died in Marseille on January 20, 1914 at the age of eighty-two. — The two volumes of his Historique (in manuscript) exists in the Motherhouse Archives.

[107] Obituary, 1896.

[108] Obituary, M.H. Brother Imier of Jesus, 1929.

[109] See also Vol. V of the present work, pp. 388-389 and 431.

[110] Archives of the District of Quimper.

[111] Obituary.

Langénieux, he had worked prodigiously. The respected Brother Amase Leo secured him as Auxiliary Visitor in 1894; and at the end of a few years Brother Victor had become the Visitor. "A splendid human being, endowed with qualities that were as sound as they were luminous...Sensitive to everyone...A model Religious...God inspired him with productive ideas and an opportune boldness...," as the former Bishop of Verdun, Bishop Pagis, described the cherished friend whom he had lost on January 17, 1905.[112]

To how many more Brothers would these words of praise apply! But to leaf too long through a family album where resemblances grow exponentially generates an invincible tedium. The spiritual progeny of the Canon of Rheims strives to model itself on the soul of the Father; and in every generation and under the most varied circumstances it succeeds in doing so. Among the Superiors who have provided examples of prudence and courage, of intelligence and knowledge and of justice and piety we have been only able to name a small number. Our silence is only a measure of our inability to say everything. However, we mean to break that silence at appropriate moments.

[112] Obituary of Brother Victor Nicholas, born in Millery in 1848 and died in Momignies (Belgium).

CHAPTER TWO

The Religious Life in the Institute

A people, they say, has the sort of government it deserves. But gifted human beings can straighten out the soul and the history of a people. On the life of a Religious Congregation, leaders, designated not by mere earthly motives and not by an impressionable and inept mass but by a special group in prayer exercise a decisive influence. The vow of obedience, uttered in God's presence, confers the most sacred character upon the basic commandments of authority. The inferior sees in the superior's order the manifestation of God's will.

The Superior on the other hand knows the extent of his responsibilities. He meditates on the words of Jesus Christ: "Among pagans it is the kings who lord it over them...This must not happen with you. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves."[113] Power is a service, not a property, a responsibility, not the gratification of an ambition.

Like the recoiling action of a weapon, the holiness of subordinates comes to the aid of those who direct them. The secret prayers and the obscure sacrifices of the gardener and the cook in a monastery have a great deal to do with the success of spiritual direction. The example of those at the bottom of the community works together with the orders and the example of those at the top. When reforms appear necessary, counsellors who have influence are listened to and individuals are given the mission to bring them about. And perhaps they have had their source in unwitting hearts; but surely they are promulgated and confirmed because a generous and heroic individual has offered himself up as a victim.

This "Communion of saints" is realized wherever Christians give unfeigned effect to their faith. It was upon such a foundation the De La Salle's Institute was founded. And the Rule gave its complete attention to it, uniformly, at every level of the hierarchy. Nothing separated, whether in external behavior or in personal efforts for perfection, the young "First Grade" teacher from the teacher of special mathematics, or the Director of a major residence school from a member of the Regime. A strong fraternal current moved through the entire Congregation. Unobstructedly, it brought to all alike a tide of grace and merit.

At the natural, as well as the supernatural, level a General Chapter was thoroughly well planned. "Reports" and "notes" that Committees would dissect and analyze contained — along with, of course, inappropriate or superfluous comments — important observations and laudable suggestions that had been thought out in the silence of prayer and expressed with clarity and frankness. The assembled Capitulants would listen to these voices that asked them to refine a point of the Constitutions, or restore, if possible, an antique custom or enlist the Institute in the various religious renewals that were being encouraged and advocated by the Church. The best of such demands and those, therefore, that were most conformed both to the Brothers' traditions as well as to the guidelines of the Holy See would have the best chance of finding their way into the Capitulary "Decrees". A Papal "Rescript" would show up, if need be, to confirm certain ones of the decisions. The Superior-general, who would have presided over the deliberations and who would have sometimes guided them, but always brought them to a successful conclusion, felt singularly sustained when he came to act. Each Assistant, each Visitor and each Director, within their own competencies, were to watch over the execution

[113] Luke, xii, 25-26.

with a determination that expressed, following the designs of Providence and the intentions of the Founder, the collective soul of the Congregation.

It was in this way that men like Brother Irlide, for instance, or Brother Joseph were able to carry to a successful conclusion the work of religious renovation that had earlier been conducted by their predecessors. The sometimes anxious concern of Brother Philippe strove not to compromise, in a period of rapid growth, what was essential to the virtues that had been practiced since the beginning. To remain like De La Salle's early followers, to remember Rheims, Vaugirard and the "Grande Maison" and especially to raise one's eyes toward the model, the perfect imitator of Jesus Christ that was "the Venerable Father", such were the themes for meditation and the guidelines for behavior that were constantly proposed to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

During his all too brief generalate Brother Jean-Olympe stressed these elemental duties. Until the end of the century the most efficacious means would be taken in this area and the most assiduous workers would be employed to spare the Institute every form of tepidity and deterioration.

Human weakness is a permanent threat to holiness. But what vigilance, patience, staggering diligence, cooperative action and prayer are required to maintain and move an every growing mass rather than a tiny group! The Brothers, including novices, numbered 11,570 in 1874; but ten years later they were 13,257 and ten years after that 14,989

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From the beginning of this period they had been listening to some somber warnings. On January 25, 1870 Pius IX had given the Congregation as its "Protector" a famous monk, one of the most distinguished members among modern Benedictines, Cardinal Jean-Baptist Pitra. Formerly a co-worker with Dom Guéranger at Solesmes, he was not only conspicuous for his immense and exact erudition as philologist, Hellenist and Canonist; he was also among the most intrepid defenders of the faith, the freedoms of the Church and Pontifical authority. At the same time, he was very warmly dedicated to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

In August of 1875 he visited Rue Oudinot where he was received by Brother Irlide who expressed the pride the Brothers felt at being placed, as it were, under the shepherd's staff of their distinguished guest. He added: "Your Eminence, who has worked with the great Abbot of Solesmnes for the restoration in France of an Order which is the source of the monastic life in the West, seems to bestow upon our Institute a reflection of maturity and of venerable antiquity and affords us the means of drawing directly from the genuine and integral deposit of religious discipline."

Indeed, the Cardinal believed that his should admonish his protégés as St. Benedict, returned to earth, might have spoken to the sons of De La Salle. On August 24, after a week's visit at the Motherhouse, Dom Pitra addressed the Community: "As you grow and become more successful there exists a grave danger for yourselves. The adversary of all good cannot observe such things without entertaining an implacable hatred for them...Believe me, he will seek to sew tares in your Congregation. Honor paid to virtue is always something to be feared. Be vigilant, therefore, which is to say, be humble and firm; attribute the outcome of your enterprises to God alone.[114]

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[114] Brother Irlide's Circular, January 6, 1876. — Brother Irlide's obituary. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for July 1913, pg. 264. Cardinal Pitra died in 1889. Leo XIII entrusted the position of "Protector"' of the Institute to Cardinal Lucido Maria Parocchi, former Archbishop of Bologna and a distinguished member of the Roman Hierarchy, since he had been Cardinal-vicar since 1884 and in this capacity attached to Rome's administration for Religious. In 1899, Cardinal Parocchi became Vice-chancellor of the Roman palace. But in spite of his numerous responsibilities, he retained his relations with the Brothers until his death in 1903.

The Superior-general shared this watchword with his 11,000 confreres, to get whose attention nothing proved more effective than the counsel and the prescriptions that came from the Holy See. With the accession of Leo XIII a letter from Brother Irlide conveyed to the new Pope the traditional and filial tribute of obedience. On March 11, 1878 he received a response that was as unreserved as he could have hoped for. The Sovereign Pontiff was, first of all, pleased to recall the thoroughly "Roman" viewpoint of John Baptist de La Salle. As educators of children and youth, the followers of this remarkable man had lost nothing of their heritage. They propagate the Gospel teachings, and they preach and practice total fidelity to the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

As a consequence, they must expect persecution: "The more you are united to the Hierarchy and to the chair of the Supreme Pontificate, the more actively and purposefully you work to form hearts to love religion and good morals, the more you will become abhorrent in the eyes of those whose every effort strives to dissolve the unity of the Church, to corrupt peoples and to exclude God from human affairs. This is why you must experience the truth of Our Lord's words: 'You will be hated by all for my name's sake'".

To drink the chalice to the dregs ... to carry the cross ... to perpetuate the Redeemer's Passion...These are the obligations that are thrust upon us; and the Brothers have been duly apprised of them. Let them beseech God for the courage not to balk at them! Like the Apostle, a spectacle to men and angels, their flinching, their hesitation would have tragic consequences. But by both word and gesture Leo XIII reassured them, congratulated them and blessed them. In May of 1878 Brother Irlide made an ad limina journey. The Pope granted him two audiences. "Quite familiar with what has to do with the Institute, he said he was satisfied with the good that the Congregation was effecting and the service it rendered the Church." The Pope showed him the same kindness as the previous pontiffs, especially, as Leon XII who opened the school in Spoleto: "Oh, I know how he loved you!" exclaimed Leo XIII, who was so profoundly attached to the memory of this particular predecessor whose name he chose to bear.

The cause of the Founder of the Brothers that had been introduced during the papacy of Gregory XVI "keenly interested" the immediate successor of Pius IX. Anything that had to do with Christian education was at the top of the list of his preoccupations. Early evidence of this was the Encyclical Letter published at Eastertime: it called for "a skillful and sound method of education"; but it especially advocated an instruction that was totally impregnated with the Catholic faith. To raise John Baptist de La Salle, priest and educator, to the altar figured directly in the plans of the Holy Father. This was a powerful motive for confidence and enthusiasm among teaching Religious.[115]

At about the same time the Brothers were approaching an anniversary that was dramatically designed to inspire the most generous resolutions. The Superior had determined to settle on the year 1880 as the second anniversary of the founding of the Institute; and he supplied the reason for this decision in a Circular dated January 6: "During the year 1680, the venerable Founder wrote the first Rule for the young Society...which, from then on, began to take on the structure of a Religious Community.

The date of June 24 was selected for the commemoration. De La Salle had, in a variety of ways, provided the starting-point for this project. The feast of "St. John in the Summer", once an occasion for popular merry-making, also gave rise, among city dwellers, to new furnishings and to labor contracts. On these heads the feast had already entered into the life of the Institute. But we should especially not forget that the devout Canon of Rheims had a special devotion to the Precursor, his baptismal patron".

Brother Irlide wanted to preserve a quality of familial simplicity for these commemorative

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[115] Circular, June 15, 1878.

celebrations. People would simply thank God in novitiate and residence school chapels and in oratories in school buildings. Blain and other biographers would be read again. Senior Brothers and recent recruits would alike be edified once again by the heroic virtues without which the bold project of Madame Maillefer and Adrian Nyel would have quickly collapsed. The entire Institute would meditate on the example provided by the humble teachers of earlier times: — the disinterestedness, zeal and perseverance of the best of them; the enthusiasm, followed by self-interest and distaste of the most frivolous, the most egotistical.

As a matter of fact, the bi-centenary did inspire an outpouring of prayer, a new burst of effort and a renewal of the interior life. On this score the Superior-general's intentions were in no way disappointed. They were, however, simply outstripped by events. In France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, Spain, in both North and South America and on into the mission countries imposing spectacles were the tribute of gratitude that the people paid to the Christian Brothers. Eighteen-hundred-and-eighty, an important stage in a long journey, permitted a backward look upon a two-hundred year past, a comparison of the Institute with itself — as it existed a hundred years earlier on the eve of the French Revolution, as it had become as the result of the labor of its members after a difficult restoration between 1803 and 1830, i.e., grown in a remarkable way, but not changed. It was the work of its inspired Founder, commended by the Church, acclaimed by believers and by the mass of those whom it served, and respected by honest adversaries.

The Superior of the Congregation commented on the triumph in the following terms: "Since our Religious family, without official pressure, without either instigation or invitation on our part, and, indeed, in spite of the instructions to the contrary that we gave, has been the object of universal, openly displayed affection and extraordinary enthusiasm, the reason is that everywhere people want to recognize, encourage and honor services of a higher order than simple primary education. For those who seek to penetrate beyond passing and superficial impressions, it must be clear that these very characteristic manifestations spoke, before all else, to those who provided a profoundly religious education: the sort of education that pupils are receiving and will continue to receive, regardless of what happens, in the Christian schools."[116]

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Educators motivated by a fervent faith, working for God, opening souls to Grace because it entirely ruled them — this was the ideal toward which the Brothers moved and many realized. It was set before them in conferences by superiors, in spiritual retreats which, after endorsements by Chapters and after the successful experiments of Brother Jean-Olympe increased in number, became more varied, longer and served as the foundation for a quasi-permanent institution, as we shall see in what follows.

We shall pause here momentarily to dwell upon some significant details. In 1877 Brother Irlide, with the approval of the Archbishop of Tours, published a prayer-book for the use of the Brothers, in which a privileged role had been given to the official prayer of the Church. Benedictine influence was certainly not foreign to this liturgical development. It was also a "Roman" influence. The argument of Dom Guéranger and the learning of Dom Pitra had met with a favorable reception in an Institute which, assuredly, had sufficiently cultivated the modesty of not wishing to dictate rules to the Clergy nor upsetting the practices of the faithful but which had always rebelled against Gallicanism and aspired toward unity and universality both of discipline and of doctrine.

A mark no less specifically Catholic and Lasallian was a lively devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. Long ago the Brothers at St. Yon had, on each December 8th, solemnly consecrated themselves to the Most Blessed Virgin. The proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate

[116] Circular of 1880; and Brother Irlide's obituary.

Conception in Brother Philippe's time further reinforced the Congregation's Marial piety. Supporting this movement with all his authority, the new Superior issued an order for the republication of the antique formula that had been recited prior to 1792. According to his instructions this prayer was to be recited on the great feastday in all Communities, except novitiates which were to preserve the traditions established by Brother Irenée in which the prayer was recited at the end of the octave on December 15th.

On March 25, 1877 the construction of a "Lourdes Grotto" in the Motherhouse gardens was completed. Faith in the Immaculate Conception was here asserted in a structure that evoked the then recent apparitions and numberless miracles. And, at the same time, grateful and confident Ave were uttered in the sanctuary to which the Holy Founder, after moving to Paris, journeyed to pray: on May 24 Brother Irlide renewed the 1690 pilgrimage to Aubervilliers; there he had a marble plaque mounted to commemorate for the future De La Salle's visit to the ancient church and the protection granted to the new Institute by "Our Lady of Virtue."[117] Devotion to St. Joseph also goes back to the beginnings of Institute. As a legacy of the Spanish 16th century to the France of the 17th century, it had flourished in Carmelite centers and took root in the Sulpician Seminary, caught the attention and won the souls of theologians and mystics. John Baptist de La Salle, following the example of his counsellor and predecessor, Father Nicolas Barré, placed himself and his sons under the protection of the Head of the Holy Family. The 19th century witnessed the spread of this devotion throughout the Catholic Church; the Brothers would not allow themselves to be outdone. In their school in Beauvais, they vigorously assisted their chaplain, the saintly Father Claverie, to begin the Archconfraternity, approved on September 24, 1861 by a Brief from Pius IX and widely propagated, beginning in 1862, by the periodical *Messager de saint Joseph*; they dipped into their finances and they lent their artists to build and decorate a huge chapel whose altar was the gift of the French clergy and the Stations of the Cross a gift of the Spanish kings.[118].

It is possible to consider the work of Bishop Claverie as the glow of the warm piety that had built up in Brothers' institutions. And far from suspecting a lack of enthusiasm at the organization's center, we observe there a more intense zeal, which Brother Irlide worked to support. We recall one of his earliest gestures: after March 19, 1877, the statue of St. Joseph set in the facade on Rue Oudinot proclaimed to Parisians that this house was his.

In the re-reading several of the Superior-general's Circulars we grasp the importance that he assigned to religious doctrine and its introduction into lived experience. On January 5, 1878 he urged the Brothers to meditate on Grace and on real Peace. The Christian, and, all the more so, the man especially consecrated to the Lord, is marked with the sign of holiness; he belongs, as St. Peter says, "to a chosen race, a royal priesthood";[119]

Grace enables him to participate in the divine nature. The Spirit, which resides in his soul, teaches him and assures him of Peace — the Peace of the just that has nothing in common with the illusory tranquility of the sinner, the Peace of Christ that is realized in complete abandonment.

It has to be understood and sampled under the threat of war, persecution and social upheaval. In these moments when the flesh is troubled one has to work harder than ever; Jesus has to be brought to the world through the school. And, in a very visible way, Providence watches over the Institute to which this mission is prescribed. Thus, as the Brothers persevere in humble

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[117] Brother Irlide's obituary.

[118] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for March 1907, pp. 64-72. — Canon Bezard, *Vie de Mgr Claverie*, 1931. The author minimizes the role of the Brothers or is completely silent about it. He seems to be unaware of any place that devotion to St. Joseph occupied from the beginning of the Brothers' Institute

[119] Peter, I, ii, 9.

adoration, in peace, in silence and prudence, standing aloof from political squabbles, the rivalries of cliques and parties, inspired by nothing but charity for all human beings, they shall be fulfilling perfectly their duty as Religious, the obligations of their vocation.

Three years later the January letter took up an essential consideration: — the method of mental prayer. At the time the Communities were in a position to employ an invaluable guide: — the actual text of the Collection of 1711 enhanced with notes and commentary. The whole thing was like a message from the Founder, since, to the text published during his lifetime there were added a good number of interpretations borrowed from a book published pothumously: — *the Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer*. While casting the Founder's thought in a brief and accessible form, the Superior-general strove to facilitate the practice of a fundamental observance. He insisted on the place that this daily conversation with God had to have in the life of a Brother, the renewed sense of the creative Presence within us, union with Christ our Mediator, a trusting and simple account of our faults, aspirations, desires and needs, and clearly defined resolutions made under the patronage of our heavenly models and protectors. Obviously, without recourse to a method, this observance ran the risk of being confused, sluggish and ineffectual; for it was either laziness or temerity to pretend to wander about haphazardly without an itinerary that had been previously reviewed and without the least system of stages. God hides Himself from the presumptuous who merely mark time, are quickly wearied and broken by their own powerlessness. But by rigorously restricting oneself to the same pauses along the same route — in other words by subjecting oneself to the triple series of acts — one falls into another danger: — routine, accompanied by boredom, exhaustion and sterility.

The wisdom of these counsels were adapted to various levels of intelligence and confidence. It struggled to leave no one behind, so that progress for some very special individuals meant an escalation of expectations for those who were somewhat sluggish. The Institute continued during these years to have Brothers who, whether out of qualms of conscience or reservations about the future had not renewed their first temporary vows. They were Religious in that they wore the habit as well as, most often, they were regular, devout and hardworking, but the bonds that tied them to the Institute were none but gratitude, custom and material security.

A number of "reports" had been submitted to the Chapter of 1822 concerning this abnormal situation. And Brother Irlide in his Circular of January 3, 1883 summarized and supported the decisions that had been passed. He, too, "deplored" the attitude of those who hesitated, the quasi-truants. And he supplied the reason for the tolerance of which these tepid individuals, these rather discreditable shirkers, took advantage: "The Council of Trent has legislated that novices be admitted to profession[120] immediately after the novitiate year is completed, and that they be sent back to the world if they do not seem worthy to pronounce the vows of the Religion ... Since our Institute was approved before the Holy See had finally applied to Congregations of simple vows the prescriptions of the Council relative to the time when the vows were to be obligatory, we have not yet been instructed to conform. But it is in the interests of our Society, as well consistent with its honor, not to await such an order. It would be far better to anticipate it and conform to the law that is today thoroughly generalized.

Brothers without vows, generally called "employed novices."[121]

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[120] Brother Louis of Poissy, in the notes that have been cited several times, states that the term "professed" must not be restricted to Religious who have made perpetual profession, but it designates all those ho have made an act of profession. (Motherhouse Archives, BE, pg. 3.)

[121] Included also in this category were true novices who, for various reasons, were completing their formation in teaching Communities under the guidance of the Director who assigned classes to them became increasingly less common until they completely disappeared. In this category there could also be found true novices, who, for various reasons, carried out their formation in a school community, under the responsibility of a Director who

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Brother Joseph's collected Circulars, in so far as they touch upon asceticism and piety, offer the reader analagous themes. In 1892, for example, he wrote on prayer and mortification, practiced, of course, within the strict sense of the Rule, In 1894, in a most sensitive manner, the Superior commented upon the reasons why, shortly after its foundation, the Institute was placed "under the patronage of the Holy Child Jesus the Brothers should receive the devotion to the Child Jesus a more supernatural zeal" for the education of their pupils.

Brother Joseph, however, exercized his influence as much by the spoken word as by his writings. Not that he possessed the gift of eloquence to an exceptional degree. Rather, more so than by what he said, he persuaded by his profound conviction, infectious emotion and his attitude.

Several generations of Brothers had been exposed to a twofold influence. They had been shaped by Brother Exupérien and by the thirteenth Superior-general. These were two very different personalities: one, exceptionally austere, the other suffused with human kindness: — two souls striving for the summit, meeting in the splendor of Thabor, the presence of Christ and the company of John Baptist de La Salle, their father.

Former disciples who — in the halls of Athis-Mons or the Parisian scholasticate on rue des Sevres — heard both Brother Joseph and his first Assistant liked to compare them. Just as they remembered Brother Exupérien "standing, both hands in his sleeves, for ten minutes without a gesture, conversing in rapid assertions, picturesque and surprising images, threats and prophecies, preaching renunciation and total immolation," they recalled the majestic Superior "draped in his mantle, leaning slightly forward, like an orator who want to lay hold of his audience, who searches faces, speaking in a sort of relaxed way, stressing syllables, moving his enormous arms elegantly to emphasize principal points, to underpin doctrinal statements and poignant exhorations.[122].

"He began by recounting an episode from the Old Testament, a miracle or one of Our Lord's parables or by citing and explaining a Biblical text." He had his favorite modes of development. *Quis ascendent in montem Domini*? The moment he pronounced this passage the teachers in the scholasticate knew that he was going to extol chastity and that he would be "sublime and brilliant". Indeed, at such moments the flame and the pure light of his very being seemed to pass into the flash in his gaze.

The beauty of the Religious life, the beauty of the educator's vocation, the beauty of the apostolate — by presenting such subjects within the framework of a Christian aesthetics Brother Joseph inspired enthusiasm. He spread a sort of splendor over every virtue. He heightened the value of the details and actions of everyday life. Describing the symbolism of the habit, the mantle and the rabat he charmed novices: "We are all proud", these young people used to say, "when we have heard a conference by the saintly Brother Joseph." He reminded them — sometimes in tears — that the child would be a sacred trust in their hands, the most precious thing parents have, one of the genuine treasures of the Church, and they felt their hearts pound within them.

There was a talk given in the chapel of St. Theodore at Athis that had been especially memorable. *Beatus qui intelligit super egenus et pauperem* the speaker announced. Immediately he posed the questions: "How can, how must, a Brother be understanding and dedicated to the needy and the poor? How is the Brother who possesses and practices this virtue happy?"

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gave them charge of a class.

[122] Brother Adon Bertand's personal notes

There then followed a series of prescriptions that had been framed by De La Salle: tuition-free teaching, a generous reception to the poorest, vigilance against aversion for and harshness toward pupils who have been disinherited by fortune or nature. Intellectual and moral penury demand careful attention and enormous mercy. Furthermore, whatever disgusts worldly people — material poverty, physical disfavor, defects of character and mental feebleness — must absorb the dedication of the Brothers and their affection, much more than their pity.

Only by striving to understand and love the poor can a Religious educator be happy. He never forgets Christ's words: "He who receives a small child in my name receives me." The vocation of the Brother of the Christian Schools is summarized in the words, "God served in the poor and the lowly". And the reward for all this is virtue inserted more fearlessly and easily into the succession of the hours and days, a foretaste of heaven here below, God serving the man who has given himself to Him, God coming to the aid of suffering, "turning the bed of the sick", in the words of the Psalmist, tempering the pangs of death.

There was nothing complex about the thought of Brother Joseph. But there was a fundamental core, a richness of experience, prayer and a wisdom that was of the heart.

This was enough to understand his influence, and his genuine spiritual authority. A subtle analyst of character, and a powerful and principled master of the art of winning confidence, he had a considerable impact on individuals both through conversation and correspondence. Elsewhere we have recounted the stories of his relations with the friends he made at "Franc-Bourgeois" who were now fathers of families and launched into industry, commerce and administration.[123] There are also fascinating letters written to former students making their way to the priesthood. For the moment we shall listen to the educator and Superior speaking to those of his sons who were closest to him, those who belonged to the Institute. And so as not to drag out the examples, we shall make do with a single one of them.

Paul Martin, who became Brother Amedy and later on would direct the institution founded by Brother Joseph, took the teacher of his adolescence as his model. His imitation, however, was not servile. Possessed of a strong nature and a temperament that was both vigorous and sensitive, he did not efface himself to make room for a shadow or to turn himself into reflection of another man. His own will remained in control when he determined to pursue the virtues that would enable him promote his personal value by a factor of ten. Paul Martin used to say that he had begun to "blossom" in the warmth of the atmosphere created at the "Francs-Bourgeois".

He thought that the life of a teaching Religious would enable him to fulfill himself according to the pattern of Christian perfection. Brother Joseph, as Director of the Community, Assistant, and Superior-general continued to follow the spiritual progress of Brother Amedy between 1866 and 1896.

On the eve of his entrance to the novitiate he ascertained and analyzed the causes of a joyfulness that he authenticated as untainted by any selfish considerations; in a sense, he wanted to fasten on it and make it the foundation for perseverance.

"Your serenity [he wrote] is God's first recompense. More than that, it is a noble sentiment of inner happiness wherein are combined the consciousness of an approved sacrifice, the certainty of not upsetting your beloved parents and a clear vision of the life to which God calls you...This serenity, a great present Grace, will be a greater gift for the future. When stormy days come (and come they will) the memory of a past happiness dots will prevent you from faltering.

With a generous person precautions and reservations are unnecessary. One who is determined to become a Religious the next day will read without a tremor: "Do you have a good idea, my friend, of the difficult and humble path on which you are setting out?...Nothing

[123] G. Rigault, *Un Éducateur social, le Frère Joseph*, pp. 107-188.

is less likely to stimulate enthusiasm than the life of a Brother, especially at the beginning of his career. For this reason I am going to do everything to have you study the divine model of the hidden life that the solitary God of the tabernacle represents. In your own secluded visits ask Jesus Christ to introduce you immediately into the mysteries of self-abnegation."

Nevertheless, somber days arose that had been foreseen by the astute guide; periodically a build-up of clouds would hide the light of the Holy Spirit. A man who believes he is alone calculates his vulnerability and is on the verge of losing hope. At that moment it is important to stimulate the will. By getting it to cooperate with all its power with the Grace that has been humbly entreated, we advance toward the restoration of supernatural forces. "God only awaits your call. Seek out motives for willing, reasons for acting...In a way, you should be the architect of your own sanctification...Get to work!"

Paul Martin worked for God, and God shaped Paul Martin. We have met this deserving heir of a superb undertaking at the death-bed of Brother Joseph. With his sensitive features, refined mind and upright heart, no one, in such a solemn moment, could better represent the innumerable band of Brothers whom the Superior had guided, braced and edified concerning the majesty of their vocation.

Individual conversations reinforced the exhortations that the indefatigable correspondent cheerfully wrote in his running hand-writing. From the day on which he had assumed the responsibility for a Community, he had heard "redditions", i.e., conversations in which those under him met with him to give an account of their fidelity or their failures, confide in him their difficulties, seek his advice and his encouragement. Without encroaching upon the confessor's territory, he was simply acting out his role of "father". When the Pontifical Decree *Quemadmodum* of December 17, 1890 was issued Brother Joseph did not have to change his procedures.

On March 19, 1891 he wrote to the entire Institute: "We are convinced of the care that the Brothers Visitor and Director take to conform to the counsels of our venerable predecessors and our own. It is forbidden to induce anyone whomsoever to make an intimate manifestation of conscience. Questioning must be confined to the assigned tasks and external discipline. On the other hand, we must not forget that even in the very terms of the decree, inferiors are in no way prevented from freely and spontaneously opening their souls to Superiors in order to obtain, in doubt and anxiety, prudent counsel and direction.[124]

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The more a Congregation tends to holiness, the greater its possibilities for growth. Example given by Brothers to families, schools and parishes was never lost. Doubtless — and it's a good thing, too — the secular and regular clergy benefited fully from vocations the seeds of which had been cultivated by a Christian teacher. In Paris, between October 1886 and October 1896,

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[124] In Brother Louis of Poissy's notebook (Motherhouse Archives, BE, pg. 3) there is the following preface to "Counsel concerning Brothers Director's conversations with their inferiors:" "Our Blessed Father vigorously advocated these individual conversations...which he stressed as one of the four supports of the Institute. This practice, understood in the sense that it obliges the Director to ascertain the exactitude with which each one performs his duties, to make useful recommendations, and to listen tot he inferior in the free and filial account of his anxieties, to provide him with the counsels his weaknesses may demand...such a practice, we say, must be faithfully preserved in our Institute. Understood in this way, it is in no way contrary to the recent decree of the Holy See. This decree suppresses any prescription of Rule relative to the opening-up of conscience, as tit prohibits all pressure, whether direct or indirect, to induce an inferior to such a revelation. But apart from the fact that it in no way seeks to impinge upon the functioning of the regular life in a Community, it does not at all oblige an inferior to close off his soul..." Brother Louis of Poissy then goes into the necessary details in order to dissipate all "inhibition" on the part of Brothers Director and any "uneasiness" on the part of the Brother who comes to "reddition."

schools directed by the Brothers initiated 260 priestly vocations for the Junior Seminary of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet alone.[125] Francs-Bourgeois listed, among the former students of Brother Joseph, a distinguished cast of vicars-general, canons, and pastors of parishes.[126] In Versailles, a 1905 statistic points to the fact that fifty-one per cent. of junior seminarians came from elementary schools in which Brothers taught class. We have the statistics for the same year for the dioceses of Le Puy and Mende; in the Upper Loire which, during this period, thrived with 375 junior and senior seminarians, the Brothers had contributed half of them: forty-six in the major seminary and eighty-two in the preparatory school of Chartreuse and fifty-six in the school in Monistrol. In Lozère the proportion was lower, but still quite considerable; in Mende there were forty-two major seminarians and fifty school-age boys preparing for the priesthood, in Marvejol and Langogne twenty-nine and fifty-five, respectively, belonging to that second category could claim the Brothers as their teachers: over all, these former pupils of the Institute represented more than a third of the total number.[127]

Paris and Le Puy were the Districts placed under the aegis of the Assistant, Brother Exupérien. And it was here that holiness appeared particularly fruitful.[128] But where, indeed, does holiness not inspire imitation? With regard to the District of Rodez, about fifteen years ago a chart was drawn up on the basis of documents and testimony that marshalled nearly a thousand priestly vocations since the beginning of the constituency.

To this figure were added the scarcely less numerous vocations to the Religious Life (clerical or simple Brothers [129] Nine-hundred-and-fifty-five priestly vocations and nine-hundred-and-twenty-three religious vocations.Christian Brothers made up the major part of this army of Religious; which was natural, since a well-ordered charity begins at home. A group would be strangely remiss, indeed, it would appear to lack confidence in its mission, if it failed to assure first its own recruitment.Among the children it taught, the Institute's will to survive pushed it to discover those would carry on its life. For St. John Baptist de La Salle's Society the question arose: who are the people capable of understanding the educator's ideal and fit to pursue its realization with the full participation of intellect, character, and physical energy? Every teacher was called upon to detail a response. And as, presently, we shall run through the houses of formation opened up in the Institute, we shall be able to detect the various levels in the project and in its success.

Pupils of the Congregation, however, were not alone, and, sometimes they were overtaken along the path of perfection. In a District as important as Rodez, for example: in the headquarters' novitiate the proportion of candidates who came from schools, private or public,

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[125] Father Lesêtre, *Le Bilan des Écoles chrétiennes* (Revue du Clergé francais for March 15, 1897). "We should add," notes the author, "to the total at St. Nicholas those of the Brothers' pupils who came to the priesthood by way of the Junior Seminary of Notre Dame des Champs or other secondary institutions."

[126] See our book on Brother Joseph, pp. 274-280.

[127] One-hundred-and-sixty-six out of four-hundred-and-thirty-six. — Archives of the District of Le Puy. — Cf. *Vie du Frère Exupérien*, pp. 108-109.

[128] Similarly, although on a much reduced scale, the sojourn of the saintly Brother Alpert at the St. Joseph Mission (the Alsacian school in Paris) was evidenced by the sending of nine candidates to the Brothers' novitiate, eight to other Religious Congregations and ten to the seminary. (Vie du Frère Alpert, pg. 146).

[129] .[129]District Archives. On November 24, 1946 a former student of the Brothers in Lisle-sur-Tarn, the Franciscan Theodoric Balat, put to death by the Boxers in China on July 9, 1900, was beatified. The same school was distinguished by another martyr, Father Eugene Garrigues, Missionary Priest, crucified and burnt in Peking, a victim, as well, of the xenophobic and anti-Christian movements at the end of the century. (Brother Ildefonse Gabriel's notes.)

operated by the Brothers had scarcely ever exceeded 45%. If we were to examine the figures attentively we would notice something extremely curious and, yet, altogether understandable: the Departments of Tarn and Lot, whose contributions were not very abundant provided a detachment composed of a majority of former pupils. L'Aveyron furnished more novices than the other two regions together; and yet, it was here that the great number coming from outside surpassed the number of young people taught in the schools of the Institute. The explanation for this anomaly must be sought in the religious fervor found in the countryside around Aveyron: the Brothers did not reside there, but they were known there and respected; when the Institute's recruiter visited the villages and the farms, he met with a great deal of courtesy and was listened to. Frequently, people would promise him one of their sons; vocations that took shape in this way lost no time in taking root. And they were decided neither by illusion nor constraint.[130]

In these profoundly devout areas parents could not imagine a greater honor than to give their children to God; and children consecrated themselves to the Lord with a youthful spontaneity. Rouergue, moreover, did not have a monopoly on the faith; around this powerful citadel there arose many bastions of Christian belief. Michael Chabbert, from Boissezon, in Tarn, observed among his own relatives a whole mass priests and Religious. His father, talking to him about a cousin, a Brother of the Christian Schools let slip the words: "I would very much like to see one of my sons follow the same road." "I'll do it," said Michael. He became Brother Xenophon of Mary, a teacher in Espalion, Director of the school in Gua and Vice-principal of the residence school in Rodez. At his funeral in 1926 his brother, a priest, and his nephew, a Vincentian Father, officiated.

Brother Imbert Alfred died in 1935 as Director of the private school in Mazamet, at the age of seventy-two years. He had belonged to a family of farmers in Upper Quercy. In his family, the Dellucs, prayer in common was recited every day, and education was viril. Two Christian Brothers came from this family: along with Alfred there was his brother, Ildefonse Felix, a teaching-missionary in Madagascar.

We conclude with a description of the modest household of a shoemaker in Castres. The Maravals had nine children; six of them were living at home at the time their mother, still a young woman, suddenly fell ill and died. The father decided to supply for the needs of his brood. Day and night he worked at his trade, and maintained the home besides; nevertheless, he attended Mass daily and, following the custom of his forebearers, he visited the church to meditate and serve as chorister. He was an unlettered Christian with an upright heart and given to stern language. He had the look and the dress of a patriarch and this was the name his neighbors instinctively gave him. On evenings during the winter people came to the Maravals to recite the Rosary. If the Lord wished to have the entire family as His own, His servant was prepared to let Him have it. The eldest sons, Joseph and John, were going to be foreign missionaries; they set out for Korea, where they would be buried. A daughter entered the convent. Henry, a schoolboy with the Brothers in Castres, donned the habit of his teachers. Become Brother Ignatius, he, too, was to leave his native land, no matter how harsh exile appeared to a young man constrained by familial attachments. In Egypt he was to become Director of the professional school in Bab-Sidra.[131]

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One of the surest guarantees for the future of the Institute resided in the establishment of Junior Novitiates. These nursuries for future Christian Brothers were increasing in number. To

[130] Archives of the District of Rodez, District monograph.

[131] Archives of the District of Rodez, Castres file.

the institution in Paris, the beginnings and growth of which we have already studied,[132] had been added several houses in the provinces. As early as 1875 the Districts of Béziers, Caen, Cambrai, Lyons, Marseille, Nantes and St.Omer had their own "Juniorates". The General-chapter at the time decided to extend these essential and successful foundations to the entire Institute.

During the same year, at the urging of Brother Irlide, the "project of the Junior Novitiates" which the political events of 1851-1852 had apparently doomed, was revived. The Superior-general found active cooperation and the promise of a regular income to support scholarships for youngsters apt to become apostles in the field of religious education. An inaugural meeting in the office of the Archbishop of Paris was presided over by Cardinal Guibert on December 15. The Coadjutor, Bishop François Richard and Fathers Melun, Noailles and Denis Cochin declared their interest in the recruitment of Brothers. Along with these leaders, no less distinguished individuals composed the support committee. There was the former Bishop Marguerye of Autun, Bishop Gaston Ségur (the saintly blindman), Father Maurice d'Hulst, the future Rector of the Catholic Faculties, Adolph Baudon one of Ozanam's successors at the head of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Drouyn de Lhuys, former Foreign Minister, Eugene Rendu, Inspector-general of public education ... Brother Exupérien, representing the Institute, occupied a seat alongside Father Chaumont, head Chaplain at the Motherhouse.[133]

The project, named after "the Venerable de La Salle", would, throughout the course of its existence, render outstanding service. Until 1904 Junior Novitiates owed to it something of their success. In his reports, M. Eugene Rendu supplied some figures relative to Brothers' student-populations: from the 120 junior novices for all of France in 1874 the total went to 1,798 in 1886. As early as 1879 there were nearly a thousand candidates. In the years that followed, the whiff of anti-clericalism, frightening a lot of simple people — mothers and fathers — occasioned a rather serious decline: in 1880 the total dropped to 733 youngsters, and in 1881 there were less than six-hundred. But hope was quickly reborn, and the figures took a leap: a total of 2,264 were listed in the report of 1884. Ten years later, the figure was climbing toward three-thousand. And a dip did not begin to appear until the threat of turbulence appeared clearly on the French horizon.[134].

These tendencies were quite noticeable in the curve representing the student population in the Junior Novitiate in Paris, the prototype of other analogous institutions. Once the critical period was passed, the figure tended in this instance to stabilize between 180 and 250, but suddenly jumped to 300 for the year 1899.

In the beginning the buildings on Rue Oudinot housed these youths. When Brother Pierre Celestine was obliged to discontinue their direction, Brother Alban Joseph, to whose dedication the Superiors had never appealed in vain, assumed charge of the "Juniors" at the same time as Senior novices. But favorable circumstances enabled the Brothers to relieve the congestion at the Motherhouse.

In 1877 the Duke of Cadore, a descendant of Nompère Champagny, one of Napoleon I's ministers and himself a former diplomat, agreed, upon the entreaties of Count Anatole Ségur to become a member of the administrative counsel of the "St. Nicholas Project". The Duchess,

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[132] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 154-157 and 448-451.

[133] Brother Irlide's Circular. — And *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pg. 212.

[134] Eugene Rendu's Reports to the Society for Education and Instruction; and Brother Joseph's Circular, dated November 24, 1894. — As, needless to say, a good number of junior novices were after a period of time thought to be ill-suited to the Brothers' life, a weeding-out process was quite painstakingly put into operation

niece of Bishop Ségur, shared the concerns of her husband for schools designed for the education of the masses and so astutely directed by the disciples of De La Salle. She possessed a magnificent estate situated at the gates of Paris: it consisted of about 124 acres of woods, grass and lands overlooking the valley of the Seine opposite Mt. Valerian and surrounding a pleasant mansion. In 1883 Mme. Cadore's will bequeathed this Buzenval estate, not to the Brothers' Institute, but to the wholly independent "Project" founded by Father Bervanger and recognized as a non-profit corporation.

There was a plan to open a branch of the schools that had been flourishing on rue Vaugirard, in Issy-les-Moulineaux and in Igny. To this end what was needed was gradual liquidization. To start with, how to take advantage of the magnificent gift? Providentially, Brother Exupérien interceded with the administrators, among whom, as the Superior-general's delegated representative, he took his place like the other Counsellors.

"Allow, at least provisionally," he proposed to his colleagues when the pressure to evaluate became imperative, "the introduction of a group of our Junior Novices". The proposal was adopted. And on January 8, 1888, Brothers Aidean and Agathon Lucian led twenty of their pupils on foot from rue Oudinot to Buzenval. The following day, a second group arrived — thirty boys invited by Brother Exupérien from the District of Le Puy. This became the nucleus of the Junior Novitiate placed under the guidance of Brother Adéol. Classrooms and dormitories were fitted out in the ducal mansion, which had been extended by the construction of a chapel. And then a tall building was erected along one of the sides at a reasonable distance. In 1898, it became agreeable to execute the terms of the will: the Institute, in accord with the administrative Counsel, assumed the responsibility for the construction of a suitable dwelling behind the chateau. The other school building, modified and doubled in size, became the fourth "St. Nicholas."

During the sixteen years that preceded the diaspora of 1904 the school at Buzenval admitted about 1300 candidates, or annually an average of eighty. Of these, 452 went on to the Senior Novitiate where they donned the Religious habit. Among their teachers and superiors were a future Assistant, Brother Anacletus, an informed educator and strong personality, disinterested and forgetful of self.

In Paris the leader among those who trained candidates for the Institute between 1898 and 1904 was Brother Adrian, the future Superior-general. He wrote beautiful prose but he especially developed a striking doctrine that he had adapted to the very young, those singled out among his pupils. He surrounded himself with exceptional auxiliaries, brilliant minds who understood the crucial importance of their role among youngsters who were intended to form the "relief forces."[135]

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This is not the place for a detailed history of each of the Junior Novitiates. But by means of a few dates and a few facts, we shall attempt, in a quick survey of France, to complete the sketch of this institution.

The District of St. Omer followed Paris's example as early as 1872. It was a thoroughly modest beginning in a part of a building that served as the Visitor's residence on rue Soleil. All formation groups were housed there. In 1885 an estate well out in the countryside had become available. It was called "La Malassise", from which the Benedictines of the Blessed Sacrament had withdrawn. The purity of the atmosphere and the peace of the location contributed to the

[135] Eugene Rendu's Reports to Association for Education and Instruction; and Brother Joseph's Circular, dated November 21, 1894. — It goes without saying that a large number of the Junior Novices, after a period of time, were thought unsuited for the life of a Brother: an extremely conscientious process of selection had been set to work.

vitality of spirits. Novices and Junior Novices living in the same space, without mingling their work and their play, came under similar influences, a "climate" that awakened emulation and inclined to prayer. Nineteen "classes" of pupils, trained in a monastic style, succeeded one another at Malassise. The last one, unfortunately, was to experience suddenly shattered all its dreams for an apostolate. Practicing a prudence that was doubtlessly excessive, the superiors, at the time the legal persecution broke out, refused to preserve a single one of these youngsters for the Institute. And for long years on end, the residence knew nothing but the voices and the footsteps of old men contemplating the destruction.[136] Whether in Artois or Flanders, Normandy or Brittany, Lyons, Provence or Languedoc, they all conformed to the rules handed down for Junior Novitiates during Brother Philippe's Generalate. They included directives that seem particularly severe in our times. While the Junior Novices was receiving a sound elementary education, he was dealt with as a future monk: extremely early rising, many religious observances, a diet devoid of the least delicacy and diminished during the days of penance prescribed by the Church; and no other relations with one's family apart from letters and the occasional parlor visit.

Such austerity was no burden to most of the boys who had been raised in a country environment and surrounded, from the cradle, by virtuous example. Young city dwellers, who had also come from quite Christian families but from more advanced cultures, were perhaps somewhat more painfully habituated to the change in life-style. At first there were tears and sometimes a feeling of abandonment would threaten to consume the young people. This sort of sadness would vanish as thoughtful classmates were quick to help the newcomers adjust; recreation time was cheerful; and work, directed by dedicated teachers, tendered its diversions and enticements. Initiation into the Religious life had its charms and its moments of profound elation. After schoolwork was completed, with serene conscience the junior novice went to the chapel where he prayed, sang and even meditated a little. With regularity the high feasts recurred to break the monotony of studies and the rigor of Lent and the Vigils. The Brother Director made every effort to temper discipline with affection and to maintain throughout the house a healthy, unaffected cheerfulness. Time passed quickly. And while vacation time did not bring home a bit closer, it did procure a relaxation in the daily schedule. There was more time for play and outings; but no one was allowed to remain idle. Such a life, of course, was suited only to a very few; and on the advice of the Director, many withdrew, among whom there were those who maintained close ties of gratitude with the Brothers. The few whose vocations took root turned their attention to the Novitiate that was drawing every closer.

For these youngsters who had genuinely every right to the quasi-maternal concerns of the Institute it made every effort to secure the setting within which they might thrive. No one insisted that it succeed immediately. Elsewhere than at St. Omer the beginnings were associated with a great deal of trial-and-error: there was makeshift teaching personnel; living quarters were cramped and wanting in rudimentary comfort. Successful relocations were to take place and more or less rapidly. Thus Brother Armand Joseph who opened the Junior Novitiate of Bar-le-Duc in 1876 supervised the removal in 1885 of his young men to a huge building in Rheims.[137]

When Clermont-Ferrand decided to found a Juniorate, Brother Artheme Claude was compelled to assemble his twenty-five pupils — the youngest in the Novitiate separated from the eldest — in a gloomy corner of a former Dominican monastery. It was a place that had been honored with the name of "Bethlehem" but it was quickly abandoned. It was in use only

[136] Archives of the District of St. Omar, Historique of the District (by Brother Érard).

[137] Obituary, 1906.

between October 23, 1876 and May 1, 1877. At Montferrand the Institute owned "The Recollects Cloister" since 1844, where at the outset it had signed a lease with a farmer and thereafter entrusted the development of the farm to the youths in St. Andrew's Orphanage. After this arrangement had been terminated, a few Brothers, occupied with temporal affairs, had singlehandedly over many years functioned as caretakers and continued the cultivation of the vast gardens. Obliged to build, the first structure, hastily thrown together, became home for the Junior Novices. Construction continued until 1880 and was resumed in 1884; a tall, lightsome chapel arose on the spot between 1894 and 1897. By this time "the Recollects" was home for three Brothers' Communities, one of them being the teachers of the Junior Novices. And the Statue of Our Lady of Vocations — which later would be transported to Lembecq-lès-Hal — watched over the play of the youthful Religious.

Artist, poet, architect and man of lofty enterprises, Brother Artheme Claude, between 1880 and 1893, succeeded the seraphically featured Brother Herman Joseph; there followed Brother Gervinus and Brother Hilarin. Studies had been wisely organized and powerfully promoted, while the piety at Montferrand was fervent. If the old monks, followers of St. Francis of Assis, had returned to their earthly home, they would have smiled on the 153 youths who inhabited the place in 1899.[138]

The Junior Novices in France-Comté were treated no differently as regards their training and their living conditions. There were eight of them in 1876, under the direction of Brother Redempt. The training quarters in which this future promise had begun to blossom had been started fifteen years earlier for Senior Novices. In the beginning it consisted of three groups of buildings surrounded by about twenty acres of gardens, orchards, groves, meadows and arable soil, in Trey-Saint-Claude, in the nearby suburbs of Besancon. It was expanded under the direction of Brother Jean-Olympe and the corner stone of the chapel was laid on April 15, 1874, six days after Brother Jean's election as Superior-general. He was never to witness here below the blessing of the chapel which was finished in August of 1876, in time to bring into God's presence the pupils whose numbers would grow under the direction of Brother Raphael Joseph. The future, indeed, promised fair: above the ancient city encircled by the Doubs River, "St. Claude" arose like a spot close to heaven, where the young stood their armed watches and the Senior Brothers took their final retirement before their eternal reward.[139]

How could Pibrac not deserve an equally splendid title? Future Brothers in Upper Languedoc would converge there under the protection of Germaine Cousin, the patron of the region, the gentle and saintly shepherdess whose memory was recalled in the wretched house where she suffered and whose relics in the parochial church attracted throngs of pilgrims.

As early as 1874 Brother Jouéry Hector had begun a Junior Novitiate in the old residence of the Community in Toulouse. Four novices, scarcely emerged from childhood, served him as nucleus; combining them with a few Postulants of the same age, he was concerned to supply them with teachers and a special rule of life. In practically no time the project grew. Henceforth, the District supported a regular recruitment. When an an all-pervasive flowering occurred after the Chapter of 1875, Toulouse transplanted its select seedlings to better soil. In 1877 Father Montagne, the pastor of Pibrac, purchased seven and a half acres of land on the southern slope of a knoll at the summit of which his church stood. In order to procure teachers for his school, he offered the Institute the free use of the land. The Superior-general agreed,

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[138] District Archives of Clermont, Historique. — In 1900, after a fire, the Junior Novices were sent to Saint Four. In 1901, they were returned, not to the Recollects but to the former Dominican monastery.

[139] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique abrégé. — Between 1885 and 1886 new buildings were added; at the same time, on orders from the M.H. Brother Joseph, the chapel was extended.

undertook to appoint two Brothers for duty in the parish and authorized the Visitor, Brother Jomes, to construct a spacious building.

On December 6 the fifty-two Junior Novices who had covered the twenty miles between Toulouse and the village of the Counts of Pibrac occupied the quarters that were intended for them. A former Director of the residence school in Rodez, Brother Innocent, became their mentor.

He was a fine educator who was to leave his work in the hands of exemplary successors. One of them was Brother Leandris, who had been a teacher in the residence school on rue Etoile, had earned a well-founded reputation for his ability to teach all the sciences, but especially for his eminence in French literature. In September 1888 obedience brought him to Pibrac where he stimulated minds with his enthusiastic, vivid and striking speech as well as for a skillful structure of examinations.[140]As Auxiliary-Visitor beginning in 1897 and then Visitor, Brother Leandris was elected Assistant by the General Chapter of 1907. He died on July 3, 1914, at the age of sixty.

Another was Brother Lemandus, the future historian of the District, who had a remarkably lively mind and creative, sometimes daring ideas. His intelligence was revealed in 1873 when he entered the Novitiate at the age of fourteen years. Too young to be placed in the classroom, he remained — after the completion of his probationary period — the most prominent of the candidates selected by Brother Jouéry Hector. At seventeen years of age he was already teaching the Junior Novices in Pibrac. He returned to them as their Director in his more mature years and at the height of his powers after teaching the resident pupils and then the Scholastics in Toulouse between 1881 and 1901. At the time the institution in Pibrac was enriched by a imposing white chapel that had a sanctuary floor adorned with mosaics and stained glass window commemorating St. Germaine. A vast vegetable garden, a vineyard and an oakgrove surrounded the cluster of buildings. However, the number of young people had been declining: while, between 1889 and 1897 the figured had fluctuated between eighty and a hundred-and-ten and in 1900 it had risen to eighty-seven, it suddenly dropped to sixty with the arrival of Brother Lemandus. Neither the institution nor its superior were responsible for the situation; its cause was only too well understood: during a period of uncertainty, when angry attacks were anticipated, it became difficult to maintain the regular operation of institutions. As the disastrous date drew closer the Junior Novitiate emptied out; and it stopped supplying the Senior Novitiate with a large enough group of candidates. In 1902 out of forty Junior Novices thirty-four opted for the Lasallian Congregation. The following year an equal number of Juniors produced only twelve vocations.[141]

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Systematically, unwaveringly the preparation, the planting and the cultivation of suitable soil was pursued during the generalates of Brothers Irlide and Joseph. In the heart of Brittany was begun Quimper's Junior Novitiate on July 9, 1877. It was opened in an old structure, a part of the "White House", not far from the residence school, Likès. The seven pupils of the first days increased by several classmates during the course of the year. Of the total number of nineteen only six persevered. Of the twenty-eight who were admitted in 1882 nine eventually became Brothers. The proportions, however, changed rather quickly and positively. Of the "classes" of 1892, 1896, 1899 and 1901 a half or more than a half of the former Junior Novices met the expectations of their teachers. Finistère, Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan and Côtes-du-Nord each sent their share of recruits. Statistics covering the entire existence of the "apostolic school" —

[140] Archives of the District of Toulouse, Historique produced by Brother Ligouri, and a new Historique by Brother Leo Hilary.

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i.e., prior to 1904 — show that overall perseverance was particularly high for those who came from Quimper and Léon: 61.93%, followed by the St. Malo region with 48.78%, Morbihan with 36.36% and Côte-du-Nord with 35%. The mean, and indeed even what fell below the mean, was more than commendable. The Catholic families in Brittany, who had already given their sons to the priesthood, the missions and local Congregations, had generally supplied the best of what they had for the Brothers' Institute.

The most handsomely endowed of these western provinces especially had contributed their very best. After 1895 many of them resisted. It was a grievous position inspired by political dissatisfaction. The moderate policies of Brother Joseph in relation to the civil authority had disturbed the intransigent and impetuous opponents of the Republic. At the time it had become necessary to take official note of the collective resignation of the administrators of Blessed de La Salle Charity in Quimper. Even the clergy, with a few exceptions, seemed to dissociate itself from the search for future Brothers. This unfounded bias eventually evaporated.

While it lasted, the activity of the Brothers and the good will of the pupils and parents prevented it from become prejudicial to the growth of the Institute. The huge building which, in 1888, had replaced the antique "White House" gave shelter to sixty candidates. Under these conditions the future seemed guaranteed; and the Superiors were able to think of opening new schools in the region. Such a program became all the more compelling in that any uprooting of Junior Novices had turned out to be a disappointment. One of the Visitors had given several Juniors to the Districts of Mans and of Caen; far from their Breton homes, they experienced intense homesickness, and defections ensued.[142]

Far from pouring out its treasures on other provinces, Cambrai, in spite of a well earned reputation for Christian spirit, was obliged from time to time to appeal to the generosity of Rouergue and even of Savoy, which had agreed to part with some of their young candidates. At this cost, the Junior Novitiate in Annappes experienced some flourishing times.

Brother Eleutherius in 1875 purchased ten acres of land in the flat country around Lille for 25,000 francs. The vendor, Mme. Clercy, turned out to be not very demanding. She forgot the 25,000 francs in exchange for a promise that the Institute would open a tuition-free parochial school. With the start of the project thus facilitated, it was possible to complete the construction of a building 180 ft. long and 17 feet wide as early as 1877. Eight years later a chapel was built, which was blessed on April 27, 1896 and, spared in the terrible fire of April 27, 1887, it was elaborately decorated in conformity with the wishes of the Superior-general. Instead of scorched walls there arose on a green oasis the majestic facade of the District's Motherhouse.

At the outset the Junior Novices set up here in 1881 were thirty in number; they would exceed an average of forty annually until they reached the figure of seventy-five on the eve of the retreat to Belgium.[143] In the South of France, apart from the foundations that had already been securely established on the banks of the Saône and in the province of Bouches-du-Rhône, in Avignon, a city cherished by, and for centuries attached to, De La Salle's Congregation, a school had been endowed in the Spring of 1877 for religious formation directed by Brother Tarlet. Gradually, it became filled with the most serious and gifted boys who emerged from the elementary schools of the diocese.

The final arrangements for the Junior Novitiate in Talence go back to the same period of time. Brother Jouan, who became responsible for the youngest residents in the institution, exercised his gentle authority not only over youngsters from Bordeaux, but from Perigord,

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[142] Archives of the District of Quimper. — The Junior Novitiate in Quimper was licenced on January 28, 1904.

[143] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille. — The majority of these boys were sent to the Belgian institutions of Chaumont and Overyssche in October of 1904.

Aveyron, Béarne and the Basque country. Indeed, the neighboring Districts still leave to Bordeaux the task of watching over the blossoming of Lasallian vocations. From fifteen young men the number rose to about fifty in the course of two years. A falling off then occurred, but in 1889 seventy-three Junior Novices were assembled in the chapel that had been earlier constructed by the excellent architect Brother Justinian Dioscorus.

In 1893 there were ninety-three intellectually gifted and devout youths who were subject to the zestful leadership of Brother Ireneus of Mary, and who displayed a superb spirit and a magnificent ardor for work. Brother Ireneus died of tuberculosis, and in 1896 his successor, perhaps overwhelmed by the inroad of candidates — of which, at that date, there were 104 —noted that a certain coolness had set in. But the growth in numbers did not halt until the beginning of the new century.[144]

It was so much the more remarkable that, after 1885, the District of Bayonne no longer sent its candidates to Bordeaux. A formation center — at the same time, a retreat for the sick and the elderly — had been set up the Monléon region, in midst of the splendid scenery of the countryside of Soule. Mlle. Angelina Arthez owned, at the gates of the small city, the Aguerria estate which she sold in 1880 to Father Arbelbide. A few years later he concluded a contract with the Institute, by which Aguirra became one of the most delightful places the Institute possessed. It was a particularly satisfactory outcome for the spiritual descendants of a saint whose ancestors, according to an authenticated tradition, had come of Pyrenean stock. And it was a solution that harmonized with the thinking of the former owner who had wanted to dispose of her property in favor of a religious charity and prided herself on being among the distant relatives of the Canon of Rheims.

In October 1885 Brother Calimer of Jesus, the Visitor, announced in a letter to his Communities the opening of a Junior Novitiate (and a Scholasticate) at Monléon. The institution — called "Our Lady of Aguerria" by Brother Joseph — soon received a swarm of boys split off from the hive at Talence.

The native environment would assist the overall progress of the youths returned to the region of their birth. Woods and pasture lands rose in tiers up the slopes of the mountains. The picturesque city and the verdant valley lay open to view. Upon the terraces arose, rectangularly, a spacious building constructed in 1888. With the active support of the Visitor, a former teacher of art in the residence school in Bayonne, Brother Juminian Joseph, took care of the painstaking appointments in the classrooms, dining rooms, dormitories, the farm and in the vast permanent work area. In May of 1889 the plans were approved by one of the best architects in Bordeaux, M. Mondet, for a chapel that was to be a jewel of the pointed architectural style: — it was faced with a steelblue-grey stone, quarried on the estate; the stainglass windows spread a very soft light over the sanctuary, around which the stations of the cross were spread out against their basalt background.

On August 10, 1896 Bishop Jauffret of Bayonne consecrated the main altar, which was made of marble. Henceforth, "Aguerria" was fully functional. The list of Brothers there included a young teacher, born in Béarne: it was impossible to touch upon the subject of Monléon without recollections of him. He had, over a long period of time, been identified with the institution where he had gone to great pains to serve the young. Become Superior-general, the M.H. Brother Junien Victor would return to die in this place which he loved. And for several days his body was to lay at rest in the ancestral soil at the foot of the Pyrénees.[145] Vals, a neighborhood

[144] Archives of the District of Bordeaux; history of the Junior Novitiate. — In 1903 the total number fell to thirty-seven. — The break up occurred on January 21, 1904.

[145] Monléeon Archives, Historique du district de Bayonne. — Obituaries: Brother Calimer of Jesus, 1906 and Brother Juminian Joseph, 1911. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for January, 1936, pg. 86. — Obituary, M.H. Brother Junien Victor, 1947.

of Le Puy, quite rightly retains fond memories of Brother Bernard Louis. Born in Luneville in Lorraine, he entered the Institute in 1864 and was thirty-eight years old when Brother Exuperian sent him to the Upper Loire where he was set the task of launching a new establishment. The District's novitiate had been operating in rather cramped quarters alongside the Carmelite church, occupying the space that had at one time been used by an old monestary. To set up a Junior Novitiate within the same walls presented a very serious problem. But for the want of anything better, Brother Bernard Louis first gathered around him the youngest of the Postulants and then drew up plans for a building.

By chance he learned that the Jesuits would be delighted to lease the major portion of their Scholasticate in Vals. The Junior Novices were moved there in February of 1885. In November they made up a group of 120 of very happy youngsters under the guidance of the Brother Director. In 1887 he left them to launch out into a surprizingly extensive career. We shall meet with him presently in Paris and thereafter in the Far East. He returned from Asia in 1892, anemic and exhausted. Vals asked that he be returned to them — but not to offer him a total respite. However, the former missionary's energy seemed to be restored in the atmostphere of Velay and in the presence of children who, quite unexpectedly, kept coming.

The Jesuits wanted to resume the use of their building. Where would the Juniorate be located? It became necessary to think once again about building and facing the heavy expenditure building involved. Brother Exupérien was to provide for the financing. The District of Le Puy had been supplying him with excellent candidates for the Parisian schools. In the present instance, the Upper Loire was to receive a fortune. The fabulously wealthy Mme. Lebaudy donated 400,000 francs which were put to use by Brother Bernard Louis. On a piece of land of adequate size and excellent situation in Vals there arose a building whose attractiveness resided in its simplicity. People caught the flavor of its rational design and acknowledged its concern for sanitation, its preoccupation with light and fresh air. The chapel, which followed sound models, had been decorated by the painter, Brother Scipion of Mary. The period between 1893 and 1898 were five years during which the clearheaded and enterprizing Director had time enough here to complete his task. He wasted no time between the concept and the realization.[146]

So productive of vocations were the Districts in the central Plateau region of France that apart from the Junior Novitiates from which their own Communities were supplied, others obtained a foothold in their sector in order to provide vocations for less favored areas. An institution of this sort was opened at Gramat, in the Department of Lot in June of 1889, to which the Superior-general had prescribed the transfer of some of the many candidates in Rodez who had been crowded into the splendid, meticulously constructed building at St. Joseph's residence school. The students at Gramat were submitted to a sort of preliminary observation and a rudimentary training. If they appeared to be natively intelligent, capable of living a virtuous life and ambitious one day to be admitted to the Congregation, they would go on to pursue their studies in their adoptive Districts. Thus, between 1889 and 1903, out of approximately 550 youngsters from Aveyron, Albi and Cahors signed into the institution, 245 were sent to Moulins, Rheims, Bordeaux, Annappes, Hérouville or Paris. The last ones, before its closure, except for the few who returned to Rodes, were parcelled out among Lorraine, Flanders, Champagne and Maine.[147]

There was a similar school in Lozère. Mende's Junior Novitiate opened in 1891. Brother

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[146] Archives of the District of Le Puy, Historique, Vol. I, Brother Bernard Louis, pp. 336-370.

[147] Archives of the District of Rodez, Historique de Gramat and Monographie du district.

Navit Victor, a native of Lozère and extremely zealous, fitted out for his compatriots and future confreres an annex to the residence school he directed. It was attended by fifty or sixty youngsters each year. And after a selection had been made it was usually the Junior Novitiate on rue Oudinot or its branch in Buzenval which benefitted by the addition.[148]

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The terminology "house of formation" applies to novitiates no less than to those institutions for which they seem the logical outcome. Indeed — and this is particularly true during the earlier phase of this double-staged training program — we frequently meet with junior novices and novices scarcely distinguished the one from the other. The groups were, of course, clearly separated; prudence and sound educational policy dictated such an arrangement. There is nothing more dangerous, nothing more reprehensible, than to mix boys of thirteen or fourteen years of age with older youths who, even more seriously, are experiencing the crisis of adolescence. The Junior Novices remained under the guidance of specific teachers and of a special Director or, occasionally, a Sub-director, if a Director-general presided over several Communities living under the same roof. But — as the latter comment suffices to indicate — in many places junior and senior novices lived in close proximity. Gradually, the Congregation realized the importance not only of a moral autonomy but of a physical one as well that would not allow the very young and the older to breathe, so to speak, the same atmosphere. Under these conditions the progressive initiation into the Religious life would be effected under the best conditions possible. There would then be less danger of deforming the branch of the seedling. The Junior Novitiate is primarily a school where the reason and the memory are set to work while allowing the soul the time and the means to prepare itself for its consecration to God. The Novitiate is not concerned with the human sciences; its function is to situate the mind, the conscience and the heart in the presence of God.

In the light of these preliminaries, it appears to be a rather barren undertaking, in a monotonously repetitive analysis, to dissect the group of 760 novices in 1884 or the 680 in 1886 or the 1200 in 1894.[149] And since the external structures into which various groups evolved were as we were just describing — Besancon-Saint Claude, Pibrac, Mauléon, for example — we shall confine ourselves to noting, in passing, a suggestive statistic, an important feature or an unusual setting.

The Senior Novitiate in Paris supported its candidates within the confines of the Motherhouse. It had appeared desireable to set up in the solitude of some countryside — a less austere Vaugirard, a Buzenval — these young men who, in 1872 numbered nearly 200, and in 1875 still came to more than 130. And while an extremely sudden decrease occurred in 1881, the average rose thereafter to reach more than 100 in 1887 and between 1893 and 1899 it fluctuated between seventy and eighty.[150]

As we see, apart from the exceptional crisis, the ranks remained crowded on Rue Oudinot. However, the contract of 1819, which set aside a building within the City of Paris for the use of the Institute, required the presence of personnel in training. And furthermore, the "Regime" was delighted to be surrounded by a troop of promising young men, the first batalion, the "St. Cyr" of the Lasallian army.

It provided the "Regime" with the leaders who would guide the soldiers of the future to

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[148] Archives of the District of Le Puy; and Brother Navit Victor's obituary, 1925.

[149] Statistics provided by the Circulars dated 1886 and November 21, 1894.

[150] *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pg. 215.

victory over the forces of evil. After Brother Exupérien, there would come the Alban Josephs, the Abdasius, and the Bernard Louis'...

We have already penciled the portrait of the first of these.[151] It was nothing more than a sketch that needs to be resumed and supplied with details and corrections. People were seduced by that face — with the vast forehead and contemplative look — that bore in upon its interlocutor. And people waited expectantly for the words that poured from lips marked by sobriety, goodness and gentleness. His entire being radiated a nobility that was both human and divine.

"Lofty principles, strength of character, integrity of life and generosity of heart" — so, in 1859, was described the young man of twenty-one years who was about to be reunited with his two brothers who had entered De La Salle's Congregation before him. Up to that time he had been a source of edification in the parish of his birth, Tencin, in the Diocese of Grenoble. He also won the friendship of his confreres and the special attention of his Superiors. In 1867 Brother Exupérien had selected him to be his auxiliary. Elected Assistant, Exupérien retained him as his secretary and irreplaceable adviser. But, on the other hand, Brother Alban Joseph succeeded as Director of novices in Paris the man of whom he was in some sense the *alter ego.*

Some of his former novices described him: "Everything in his behavior gave the impression of a man who was master of himself. We venerated him as a saint...In his conferences he excelled at placing religious truths within our grasp...He frequently took us over paths already travelled in order to impress their contours and their settings more deeply on our minds...He was not gifted with facile eloquence; but his conviction, his desire to pass on the torch, produced a most lively impression".

Austere and firm, he inspired fear. Filled with the love of God, he offered the novices the example of an intense devotional life. On the whole, he was a mentor who was admired, appreciated and imitated. He exercized a direct action on the novices for nine years. And after 1884 his influence was still felt among the young Brothers, while spreading beyond them, when he was appointed Visitor of Paris and joined to that title the the functions of director-general of the young men's clubs in the capital. We part company with this indefatigable apostle only for the moment.[152]

Everywhere in France we meet with his counterparts: there was Brother Jugond who directed the novitiate in Quimper for a quarter of a century and when he withdrew from the task in 1878, he left behind him "a model of all the virtues" for the generations that had been trained by his solicitude;[153] there was Brother Jouery Hector, previously glimpsed in Toulouse, an ascetic person, extremely understanding, and Director of the Novitiate in his district from 1874 to 1904; there was Brother Venant, who, initially director of formation for his fellow-citizens in Savoy, became, in 1883, reponsible for the same kind of work in Rodez; he was a "sensitive and viril soul, a faithful character, a courageous and generous leader, a man of God and a very certain guide...," in the words of his 1911 obituary. His direction "was suffused with the supernatural". An advocate of daily Communion, he promoted the practice among his novices. He possessed to a high degree the gift of testing his novices, guiding and reforming them. He also knew how to rejoice their hearts. Under his guidance the novitiate became a providential sojourn. They used to say of Brother Venant that "he crucified nature without making it cry

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[151] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 445 and above pg. 37.

[152] Obituary, 1903. — And *Choix de notices*, Vol. I, pp. 245-271.

[153] Archives of the District of Quimper. From 1882 to 1904 Brother Constantine Joseph's directorship was a fruitful period characterized by numerous vocations

aloud." And no matter with what care he attended to spiritual perfection, he never neglected the body, which he hardened and made supple through manual labor. He supervised the garden where the young Brothers dug, hoed, and planted; he took note of their performances prepared subsequently to express his conclusions concerning their lack of enthusiasm, their sluggishness and their awkwardness, or, on the contrary, their intelligent, courageous or cheerful initiatives.[154]

In many ways he resembled Brother Navit Victor who pioneered the Junior Novitiate in Mende and who, as Novice Master in Le Puy between 1894 and 1904, had through his cleareyed attachment and his wise admonition saved many a vocation that was faltering. In Nantes during the same period the influence of Brother Didymous (Emmanuel Landais) was asserted and prevailed; he was the son of peasants, a people both vigorous and refined by the civilizing sway of Christianity. The intensity of his temperament and the resoluteness of his decision the young man had already exhibited in the respectful — but staunch — resistance he put up against his father who tried to wrest him from the Institute. In the modest habit of a Brother, he retained an aristocratic bearing. His acquiline nose, lean facial features, and extremely bright blue eyes made up a strikingly handsome, if austere, countenance. And it revealed the soul of a leader, born to lead, without raising his voice, easily and simply, but also with a burst of enthusiasm. Brother Didymus had, of course, experienced the most fruitful and the most typical years of his exemplary career at the head of the novitiate in Nantes. His daily conferences conquered his audience, while his prayer, his sacrifices and his mortification intensified the power his spoken word.[155]

And thus far we have said nothing of Brother Arnold, the ultimate master. So high did the Director of Novices in Rheims rise to the summits of prayer and penance that his holiness has been submitted to the judgment of Rome. And that is why we prefer not to consider the matter — for fear of distorting the image — until we turn our attention to some of the great spiritual men in the Congregation.[156]

For the moment we shall confine ourselves to a glimpse of the place in which Brother Arnold, between 1877 and 1885, lived in union with God and in the splendid fulfillment of his duties as educator of prospective Brothers: — Thillois, which was a real Thebaid in the plain of Champagne. In 1850 the Brothers in Rhiems had acquired this property which, situated not far from the city, had once belonged to a member of the Holy Founder's family. After the Franco-Prussian War the novitiate was transfered there from Beauregard-Thionville which had fallen under German domination. The move was made in haste, in a make-shift fashion, involving the bearest necessities. Since there was no rapid communication, the journey between Thillois and centers in the city were made on foot. There were buildings devoid of all convenience and, wall around, there were huge trees, a vegetable garden and a well. And in the neighborhood there was silence. It was certainly impossible to dream of an environment better adapted to spiritual work; once inside, one felt far indeed from both the vanity and the noise of the world.[157]

In 1885 the Brother Visitor, Bajulian, determined not to leave the novices in this precarious situation. "Sacred Heart House" had been opened on rue Courlancy in a neighborhood of

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[154] Brother Venant was the novice master of Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, the excellent archivist in Rodez, who spoke of the holy man with veneration.

[155] Brother Didymus' (1859-1931) biography was the work of I. Cicé (Brother Charles of Mary), one of his best and most brilliant disciples.

[156] See below, pp. 122-123.

[157] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for January 1912, pp. 47-65.

Rheims. And in 1892 it was to be enlarged under the leadership of Brother Amase Leon who, four years later, was placed at the head of the District. Here the Novitiate found a home of spacious proportions, carefully planned and remarkably suited, in the center of pleasant gardens, at the top of a rise that dominated the horizon in the direction of the Cathedral.[158]

The Brothers were thus brought closer to the places that saw the birth to their Society; but not only did the young Brother who had just emerged from the residence school or the other schools in Rheims or come from eastern France,[159] grow up here and develop deep committments under the spell of the Founder, but from all points of the globe, the sons of John Baptist de La Salle, received at "Sacred Heart" were assisted in the pilgrimages to the "Cloche Mansion", rue Contray, St. Maurice's church, St. James' church, and finally, Our Lady of Liesse. Nevertheless, Thillois could not be neglected. The recollection of Brother Arnold brought back the new generations; he looked down upon "retreatants", former pupils, Associations for Private Education as well as teachers who, in this hermitage, listened to the counsels of priests and to the lessons of the past.

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As we move northward, we come to Annappes where the novitiate had suffered some reverses. Initially attached to the St. John's Community in Cambrai, it had assembled sixty-six candidates. And after 1877 it occupied a new residence. From 1880 to 1894 the mean personnel did not reach thirty, and in 1888 it had dropped below ten! It was during that year that the novices in Cambrai were united to those in St. Omer. Returned to Annappes the institution was restored to life, and the figures indicate an important growth. From twenty to twenty-five at the outset, it rose in 1896 to twenty-nine and to thirty-two in 1897. An average of thirty was maintained until 1900.

The Junior Novitiate supplied nearly all the vocations. Four Postulants came from outside in 1896, two the year following, three in 1898 and in 1900, and in 1899 and 1901 only one. Perseverance was good; during this period, out of the 196 admitted 132 remained faithful.[160] For dates prior to 1894 schools operated by the Brothers fournished only about a third or — at the most — two-fifths of the vocations. But then the desired trend began to set in, and, by 1905 out of a hundred Brothers in the District born since 1878 fifty-one had been pupils in Brothers' schools.[161]

Statistics in Herouville, in Calvados were different. Between 1807 and 1904 the Novitiate there admitted 665 Postulants, or twenty for an average year. Four-hundred-and-sixty-two had spent some time in the Junior Novitiate. Of all these candidates, the Diocese of Coutances had supplied 116, the Diocese of Rouen 200 and the Diocese of Bayonne fifty-two. Normandy's contribution, therefore, was therefore a great deal less than half. The District was obliged to seek reinforcements from areas of the country which even at that time still had numerous Christian families: the Dioceses of Mende, Cahors, Le Puy, Quimper, Rodez, Tulle, St. Brieuc and Grenoble sent their contingents.[162] Even Paris is included on the list with fifteen of its

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158 Brother Amase Leon's obituary, 1895.

159 The current Brother Superior-general, Brother Athanase Emile entered the Rheims novitiate in 1896.

160 Or better than 68%; thirty-five left, twenty-six were sent away, and three died, prior to July 7, 1904. — District Archives, Historique.

161 District Archives, Historique.

162 The figures break down as follows: from fifteen for Grenoble to fifty-eight for Cahors and sixty for Mende. — District Archives, Historique.

natives.[163]

The young travelers had landed at the railroad station in Caen. Having traversed the city with its beautiful churches and its bustling industries, they saw the broad and lofty facade of the training school and the chapel spire whose outline evoked the slender basilica in Lourdes. These youngsters, come from far off places, might well have sung the psalm of pilgrims making their way up to Jerusalem: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: in domum Domini ibimus.* Their Normand Sion was promising them peaceful days, pure delights and genuine friendship.

The recently elected Brother Assistant Joseph had declared in a letter dated February 4, 1875 that he prayed that God might grant him the happiness and the honor of "opening a novitiate". The "District of Orleans", i.e., the Departments of Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, Eure-et-Loir, Sarthe, Orne, and Eure, at this time was yielding a sufficient number of vocations to justify the creation of an institution in the west, between the Loire and the Seine, distinct from the one on rue Oudinot.

In 1874 a generous Catholic layman, M. Depeudry, was disposed to give the Brothers his Rancher estate, forty acres of land and woodland twenty-four miles from Mans. After some hesitation the Regime accepted the gift. There had been some misgivings concerning physical difficulties: — distance from railroads, responsibilities for agricultural land and the considerable number of buildings. Just as he had a taste for excellent architecture, Brother Joseph loved the brilliance of nature. On both these points at Francs-Bourgeois on rue St. Antoine and later on at Athis Mons and at Mauléon he was handsomely obliged. At Rancher he found a delightful castle at the far end of a lovely park, a charming French landscape, with fish ponds, springs and green pasture land complete with flocks.

The controversy, entrusted to Providence but also argued with burning conviction, was rather promptly won. In May of 1875 Brother Assistant set up seventeen novices at "Notre Dame de Rancher" under the direction of Brother Benignus. He had imagined them, a clamor of immature voices along the walks that were in their springtime splendor. Meanwhile, he himself stepped in to "dedicate the wood" to the Most Blessed Virgin whose statue would henceforth stand in the center of the "round-about".

In this house Brother Joseph experienced a sort of paternal satisfaction. On the certificate that affiliated the donor to the Institute there are, preceding the signature of the future Superior-general, the words: "An Assistant who is bent upon expressing his very special gratitude." Rancher continued to be one of his very favorite places. As head of the Institute, he took a personal role in the building of the chapel. And while he was unable to lay the cornerstone, he was present on July 10, 1890 for the blessing of the elegant structure composed of three Gothic naves.[164]

From morning and evening prayer, services that spanned the day — the study of catechism, Bible History and Church History, meditations on the life and virtues of the Blessed John Baptist de La Salle, spiritual reading, manual labor, recreation, outings, necessary relaxation,

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[163] The figures break down as follows: from fifteen for Grenoble to fifty-eight for Cahors and sixty for Mende. — District Archives, Historique. Ibid.

[164] After a new territorial apportionment, "Notre Dame du Rancher" for more than half a century became the formation center for the District of Mans (Sarthe, Mayenne, Orne, Indre-et-Cher, Eure-et-Loir). There, in August of 1894, there arrived from Dreux a young teacher and soon-to-be -novice under the guidance of Brother Cadolian. He was the son of one of Brother Joseph's former pupils and became an object of the Superior-general's affectionate solicitude. Whether as Brother Adolph Joseph or in the secular garb assumed reluctantly during the anti-clerical persecution, the young Collier, as teacher of philosophy at St. Peter's in Dreux, Director of the residence school in Rouen, distinguished educator, a man of keen intelligence and extremely broad culture, a refined and deeply "Lasallian" soul, would become a credit to his Congregation. His biography was written by his friend, disciple and associate, Louis (Brother Albert Valentine) in 1942.

"reddition", mortification, humiliation, acts of obedience, obligatory trials, the touchstones of a serious vocation — the entire warp and woof on which the novice builds his work was spread out over twenty places in France: — in Moulins in the cloister on rue Paris, in Clermont-Ferrand in the former Dominican monestary, in Le Puy in the Carmelite monestary, in Caluire where, after the ravages and looting of 1870, the Brothers in Lyons resumed the peaceful possession of their residence.[165]

And, again, in Savoy, a District whose novices had successively dwelt in the Verney estate in Chambéry, the Boudillon mansion and cloister along Lake Annecy; and then, beginning in September of 1887, Canon Camile Costa Beauregard's property, the "Villette" house, nearly two miles from Chambéry.[166]

For half a century Rodez sent to other French cities, to the colonies, to the schools in Egypt and Turkey hundreds of novices and young Brothers trained, within the ambiance of rue Sarrus, for hardships and ready for every sacrifice.[167]

Bordeaux continued to train young Brothers on an estate planted with oaks and acacias on the road to Talence. There on January 5, 1881 a former pupil in an honors course in Bayonne and not long since a commercial worker in his native city, August Détharré, the future Brother Junien Victor, was admitted.[168]

And finally, passing from the Atlantic and the western Pyrenees to the shores of the Mediterranean we see rising above the waves the St. Louis Calade that turned the thoughts of the Brothers in Provence toward the open sea, and, in southern Languedoc, Fonseranes which spread its vines and diffused its cool waters into the regions of Béziers.

In 1877 Brother Irlide asked the Republican government for the authorization that would make the Institute the official owner of the Fonseranes farm. The General Counsel lent the proposal a deaf ear. According to some legalists the Institute had neglected a necessary formality: that of obtaining the consent of the civic powers for the creation of a novitiate! A memorandum dated February 8, 1884 and signed by the Superior-general proved that the Congregation was perfectly free to open as many houses as it thought useful for the training of its personnel. The evidence appeared irrefutable, and so the work was continued without further obstacles.

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It was crucial that, far removed from the hearth that ignited the initial spark, fervor should not grow tepid. General Chapters and Superiors had provided against these failures of ardor. We have seen that Brother Jean-Olympe had believed that such undertakings were of the essence. In 1874 he presided over a retreat for "directors of formation" that provided a model for other

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[165] The institution in Caluire was invaded on September 28, 1870 by a band of fanatics. The Brothers were expelled from the place — an eviction that lasted until May 8, 1871. The Institute then brought suit against the Commune of Caluire as well as against the Prefect of the Rhône, Challenmel Lacour, who had authorized the expulsion and covered up for Mayor Vassel's illegal activity. The civil court, in a judgment of June 19, 1872, condemned the Commune and the former Prefect to pay the Brothers an indemnity that corresponded to all damages and losses. (Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute, rue de Sèvres.

[166] Father Secret, op. cit., pp. 86 and 106. — The Junior Novitiate stayed in Annecy.

[167] Between 1851 and 1904 the District supplied the various regions of France and he world with 296 novices, 49 Scholastics and 246 professed Brothers, total of 591 Brothers. (District Archives, Monographie.)

[168] Archives of the District of Bordeaux and Historique of the District of Bayonne.

meetings of Brothers engaged in "specialized" apostolates. Directors of French and Belgian novitiates were brought together in Clamart in 1880. In 1883 the Motherhouse hosted the same sort of a gathering. And after the alterations at the Athis estate the practice became institutionalized.

Similarly, every year the Brothers Visitor — whom Passy had first welcomed in 1879 —would occupy the rooms around the chapel at "Our Lady of Retreats". And the Brothers Director of schools — numbering some fifty or sixty — also came there regularly. During these days they were given the opportunity to exchange views on the results of their experiences at the educational or administrative level. These fraternal discussions appear to have replaced, advantageously, the "Provincial Chapters" attempted before the Revolution of 1789 and thereafter fallen into disuse.

Individualized retreats were also organized for teachers in charge of associations, clubs or other social activities, for Brothers engaged in temporal occupations and, later on, for "Brother-soldiers".

The most important spiritual handbook, until something better came along, was "The Great Exercises". The General Chapter of 1875 came out in favor of this guide for "aspirants to perpetual vows": In its fourth decision it decreed that "an effort will be made to have them follow 'the Great Exercises' or Thirty-Day Retreat."

The Institute, ever faithful to the advice and tastes of the author of this text, quite deliberately adopted paths pointed out by St. Ignatius Loyola. The initial "manoeuvres" — to adopt a military term appropriate to the Spanish Captain — took place in August of 1875 in the Parisian school called "Gros Caillou" on rue St. Dominique. Long ago, in this neighborhood, Brother Gerbaud had placed his trust in the "Fathers of the Faith"...[169] Brother Irlide asked the Jesuits to divide up and direct the work of the four weeks.

Gros Caillou was opened once again to its guests in 1876 and the years that followed.[170] But soon there were various centers in the provinces: in Nantes, Avignon, Thonon and Chambon in Lozère. In May of 1877 the Superior-general published Instructions pour les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes sur les Grands Exercises. It was a vade mecum principally for the use of Brothers who presided over retreats; and it contain the essentials of the Ignatian directory.

The movement continued to thrive. And in 1879 it took root among the Directors of Communities. And then in November of 1884 and in April and November of 1895 the members of the Regime, the Provincials and the Visitors of Districts took part in this powerful current both for reasons of good example and for their personal sanctification. Beginning in 1893 several Brothers Director joined the aspirants for perpetual vows at Athis. And apart from listening to the general conferences, they were invited to take counsel on matters concerning themselves individually. The system proved effective and has been maintained from that time forth.

The Capitulants of 1882 desired for all young Brothers the benefits of similar periods of reflection. This is why the "Twenty-day Retreat" was started. In principle, it was a preparation for the pronouncement of annual vows. Its methods were inspired by the Great Exercises, but it

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[169] See Vol. III of the present work, pp. 512 et sq.

[170] Father Adigard, S.J. wrote from Zi Ka Waï in China on April 11, 1905: At the end of August 1876 I was invited for the first time to direct *the Great Exercises*. The school and grounds of Gros Caillou provided us with a suitable situation...Three people were involved with the general direction: the M.H. Brother Irlide with his powerful ideas and determination, and Brother Joseph and Brother Exupérien...Brother Exupérien had discerned the spirit and the mechanism of St. Ignatius' Exercises; he had completely grasped their importance as well as the flexibility that is prepared for any contingency...He was very strongly backed up: Brother Angelum presided over the Exercises of 1876

was, of course, adapted to the age of the prospetive audience as well as to the briefer period of time made available. It proved so profitable that it was prescribed for "Brothers beginning the apostolate" a year or two after their first arrival in Community.[171]

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Brother Exupérien had taken a preponderant part in the capitulary decisions of 1875 and 1882. He was delighted with the enthusiasm exhibited by both the Brothers who were already perpetually professed and by those of the up-coming generation. As the great spiritual mentor, he himself had presided over the "Thirty Day Retreat" conducted for the Superiors in 1884. If the religious life had ever lain dormant in some corner of the Lasallian world, its reawakening had surely shown up resplendently. Still, the heirs of a saint thought of themselves as inadequately alerted.

The great Chapter of 1725, during Brother Timothy's generalate, had received the Bull of Benedict XIII and wanted perpetual profession to be preceded by a temporary return to the novitiate. In this way a Brother who had spent several years in the schools would interrupt his contact with the external world and, regenerating his soul in preparation for the struggles of mature life, would protect it against dangerous lethargy and threatening routine.

Unfortunately, educational exegencies and travel limitations had prevented the practical application of such a "second novitiate". Immediately after the turmoil of the Revolution, the countless concerns of physical reorganization, internal discipline, and school openings stood as obstacles to a project that had been envisaged a century earlier. But the antique ideal had persisted in the hearts of Brothers who were most devoted to the thought of John Baptist de La Salle. Our educational mission, they believed, so that it continue unswervingly, must be constantly guided by the star of our Religious vocations. In some sense, we are monks. And we shall remain monks for as long as, at a fixed time in the course of a mature period in our life, we return to a profound study of the divine sciences and to contemplation.

The problem arose more urgently after the era of Brother Philippe. The Institute had spread over vast regions of the earth and it had welcomed thousands of members. A tightening of the spiritual bonds would avoid slipping — or, at any rate, negligently interpreting — the Rule, the misunderstanding of one nation by another and the risk of schism.

These ideas began to gain currency. In 1865 Brother Exupérien entered into his personal journal his burning desired to see started in his own Congregation what the Jesuits called "the third year". The saintly man made plain his petition to God and backed it up by personal acts of penance.

As an extremely influential Capitulant, his authority was embodied in the following decree of 1875: "In order the better to conform to the spirit of our Rule...steps shall be taken to have available as soon as possible sites suitably arranged and separate from Canonical novitiates for those who aspire to perpetual vows. The latter will be received in these places with special care, for three months, as circumstances will allow and the Superior-general shall decide".

He had to be satisfied with the vagueness of the statement. "The Assembly", in the words of the preamble, "is sadly aware that perhaps for a very long period of time it will be impossible for us to arrange for substitutes" for the teachers that the "Second Novitiate" would withdraw from the schools. But for the immediate future the "Great Exercises" would obtain the essentials of the sort of study that was being sought.

It belonged to Brother Joseph to consummate the project. His Circular letter dated July 16, 1887 announced that "a certain number of professed Brothers, thirty or forty, one or two for

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[171] Circular of October 22, 1899. — The M.H. Brother Irlide's obituary. — *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pg. 204. — *Vie du Frère Exupérien*, pp. 176-177.

each District" would assemble at Athis Mons from the following August 4 to November 15.

The Superior-general wrote as follows: "In the exceptional circumstances in which we find ourselves, in the midst of fears and perils, at this moment exposed to the assaults of men, in the midst of holy and fortifying hopes which reach us from Heaven, it seems to us that nothing could more draw upon us God's blessings, nothing could be more pleasing to our Venerable Father, than the decision by which we affirm the desire...that the Institute...live the life of its Founder even more perfectly."

Pope Leo XIII lauded the initiative. The accolade from the Holy See might have been more especially paid to Brother Exupérien who for twenty-two years had expended himself in effort and petition.

The "Hundred Days" — the common name which continued in use — began on the date determined upon. It was attended by forty Frenchmen, two Belgians, two Italians, an Austrian, an Irishman, three Americans from the U.S. and two Canadians. From its beginning the Second Novitiate had an international character that it has retained. As to the age and the Religious status of the participants, it is important to point out that in the last analysis, "Second Novices" were recruited not from among aspirants to perpetual vows, but rather quite wisely from among those Brothers who gave proof of maturity of mind and soul, of total dedication to the Institute and, indeed, of an apptitude for change. Since the system had only a restricted application and a limited function, a rigorous selection was necessary. But it was frequently necessary to relinquish the idea of including many a worthy Brother in the ranks of the elect who — without having gone through this "War College" — would nevertheless find their niche among the Congregation's superiors.

The selection of the Director in charge was of the highest importance. An unexpected refusal nearly threw the Superiors' plans into disarray. Brother Joseph and Brother Exupérien then turned to Brother Alban Joseph, at the time Visitor of the District of Paris. Courageously and with a superb spirit of sacrifice, the first Assistant's faithful friend set to work. He chose as his associate Brother Bernard Louis whom he had come to know as a teacher in the Junior Novitiate on rue Oudinot.

It was a spur-of-the-moment arrangement that turned out to be successful. Over the three and a half months Brother Alban used his urbane but powerful authority, his unfailing patience and his art of communicating all the warmth of his convictions without threatening his listeners. Brother Bernard Louis fulfilled his secondary role conscientiously.

Concerning the regulation to be adopted the Superior of the Institute had questioned Father Adigard, who had preached several retreats to the Brothers. A long memorandum from the distinguished Jesuit showed that the program employed during the "Third Year", with its asceticism and its intellectual work, might very well be imported for the use of the "Second Novices".

In December of 1887 a new session opened. The Brothers whom the Regime had assembled would make up the "Group of the Beatification", since John Baptist de La Salle was to receive the honors of the altar on February 19, 1888. It was a memorable period. For the Brothers' Second Novitiate, it coincided with the entry into service of the Director who would continue to be the man identified with that institution.

We have already spoken of him at length.[172]. He had returned from America where, as Visitor-general, he had tilled the land and sewn his fill. From 1887 until 1914 he directed twenty five groups of Second Novices. "To restore all things in them in Christ Jesus", that, paraphrasing St. Paul, was what Brother Réticius proposed to his second novices.

In the first place he asked them for total regularity. The Second Novitiate quickly assumed the appearance of a model Community...The tidiness of some of the Brothers, the noisy closing

[172] See above, pp. 45-47

of doors, the recitation of prayers, the execution of the chant became, after comments upon the least details of the Rule, the object of severe criticism...At the outset some of the Brothers seemed annoyed, suddenly to be brought back ten or fifteen years to the time of one's first novitiate...The Director "was not grieved to have aroused a certain fear, the beginning of wisdom".

During the course of the preparatory retreat, he received the new-comers individually. From then on "the ice was broken". Everybody realized that the harsh exterior hid a very goodhearted man. And with greater confidence people pursued "interior"...as well as exterior "reform". They allowed themselves to be won over by a man whose will was expressed sharpely, clearly, in concise sentences and sometimes without any sign of emotion.

Feeling cropped up only at odd moments, while reason prevailed. Second Novices defined their mentor when they called him "the geometrician of the spiritual life". Principles, axioms and proofs tended to impress the Brothers with the single truth: a Brother must know and love the Founder of his Institute, live Lasallian teachings and harmonize his thoughts, his behavior, the education he dispenses with the model who, himself, imitated Jesus Christ.

In the refectory Brother Réticius allowed no books except the two volumes by Canon Blain. And while he agreed to establish a "Second Novitiate Day" he visualized it as a special day of prayer before the relics of Blessed De La Salle.

n such a context professional educational training could not be permanently distinguished from spirituality. As the Rule and the writings of De La Salle — especially *The Meditations for the Time of Retreat"* — had prescribed, education — the Brother of the Christian School's vocational obligation — inspires virtue and is nurtured at the sources of religion.

Mastery and the perfection of professional qualities were effected here through the test of the catechism class — the experimental catechism as it was called. It was not just a discussion of religious education. After an exposition that demonstrated Brother's learning, his talent for presentation and his elocutionary skills, the audience became the friendly catechized; they were questioned by their confrere, and they asked him questions if they had any. None of this was intended to procure him any easy conquest —on the contrary, its purpose was to force him to be clear, precise and concise, to force him to make skillfully conducted analyses, inclusive and appealing syntheses, definitions of terms and descriptions of principles, complete enumerations. To some Experimental catechism became a sort of torture chamber. They shuddered in anticipation of it, and their throat tightened as they mounted the steps to the podium. There were occasions when they descended in embarrassment. But public humiliation was included among the effective exercises of the Second Novitiate. And furthermore, it was not a frequent occurrance. Brother Réticius' constituency, as a rule, had been enjoying a quite respectable and, indeed, in some instances, a splendid career as educatorsl.[173]

To maintain respect and respond to objections aroused their fervor for the work of preparation, their desire to conform to tradition and to the purpose of the Institute by showing themselves to be intelligent "apostles of the catechism". Fraternal charity would interdict hammering a point too nearly home, but especially "rubbing it in". On the other hand a sincere and unadulterated impartiality would often induce a charitable Brother to rejoice on the occasion of a great success. Reputations were born or grew during the "Hundred Days": this, in 1888 a thirty-three year old second novice, Brother Imier of Jesus, conducted two catechism lessons that inspired lively commendation. It was the dawning of a star which, when it had achieved its zenith, would call to mind the passage of Psalm XVII: *Exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam.*

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[173] Among them was Brother Leon of Jesus who, taking part in the first "Hundred Days" became a sort of model "Second Novice."

In 1894, since the General Chapter was being held at Athis, there was a temporary suspension of the long retreat for professed Brothers. In a subsequent Circular Brother Joseph, summarizing the work of the first ten years of his generalate, underscored the results obtained by Brother Réticius. The special novitiate, he wrote, has finally become a reality: more than three hundred Brothers have already benefitted from this important institution. The exceptional fruits of Grace and renewal that it has effected have even given rise on the part of several to the desire that its length be prolonged to six months.[174]

The "Hundred Days" kept its name until 1924. It was only then that the Second Novitiate, following a decision of the Capitulants assembled in Belgium the previous year, was prescribed to last not for six, but for nine, months.

Brother Réticius had directed it until 1914 inclusively — ever year, that is, except for two interruptions, one caused by the state of the Mentor's health in 1900 and the other by the chaos of 1904. Brother Allais Charles, Visitor of Paris and destined to become the 16th successor of St. John Baptist de La Salle, seconded the Brother Assistant in directing the groups of 1901, 1902 and 1903.

The 2,500 Brothers who, during the first half century of the project, participated in the prayers and practices of this "model Community" would not be able to disavow the judgment passed on it by one of its organizers in our time, Brother Anacletus: "The Second Novitiate has quite successfully contributed to a unity of spirit, heart and will among all members of the Institute spread all over the globe. What an increase in vitality for the Congregation when Second Novices return to their Districts, spiritually reinvigorated and full of the sap that ran through the being of the Holy Founder![175]

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The seed of holiness neither dies nor degenerates in the Father's field. Without presuming to promote infallible judgments, we can say that there were many Brothers of the Christian Schools, among those belonging to generations active after 1870, who were the equal of Brother Benilde, the Director of the school in Saugues during the days of Brother Philippe, and whose process of beatification was undertaken toward the end of 1896 under the supervision of Bishop Guillois of Le Puy,[176]

Some of the Congregation's veterans, contemporaries of the Blessed or even his elders, survived him for a number of years as though to guide the young along the ways of divine Wisdom. Such was Jean-Claude Vanantin who was born in Lorraine on September 24, 1793. His career unfolded over an entire century. It involved two stages, unequal in duration and singularly dissimilar in function. Jean-Claude, the soldier in Napoleon's army, campaigned in Germany and in France in 1813 and 1814. He fought at Waterloo in 1815, an infantryman with the Imperial Guards. He remained in the military during the reign of Louis XVIII. And when in February of 1822 he was mustered out, he became a novice in Faubourg St. Martin. The infantryman, garbed in a Religious habit, had become Brother Secondian. Professed in 1827, he taught at Nancy and at Metz. Subsequently, between 1841 and 1858 he directed the school and Community in Lunéville. Having lost his hearing, he fulfilled humbler tasks: he shopped for provisions in the marketplaces of Rheims and did duty in the kitchen. But in soul he

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[174] Circular dated November 21, 1894.

[175] Motherhouse Archives. Report on the history of the Second Novitiate, read on May 2, 1938, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the institution. — Vie du Frère Exupérien — Obituaries of Brothers Alban Joseph (1903), Réticius (1918), Imier of Jesus (1929), Allais Charles (1930).

[176] Circular of the M.H. Brother Gabriel of Mary, February 2, 1898.
and whom the Church has now placed on its altars.

remained the same; he never ceased to pray. The Rule and prayer brought him ever closer to heaven. And it was an uninterrupted ascent until his entrance into eternity on October 20, 1885 at the age of 102.[177]

Of Brother Prime who died on December 31, 1891 the Superior-general wrote in the introduction to his obituary (1910): "He went back to the springs of our life as a family and, strongly imbued with the primitive spirit, he seemed to be a member of the antique Community of Vaugirard living among us."

Indeed it was easy to imagine that Vincent Calixtus Chiron belonged to a past age. As a small boy in Bourg Saint Andéol, about 1823, he attended docilely to his lessons and to the Brothers who had returned to this corner of Vivarais, as well as to his older brother, fourteen years his senior, Marie-Joseph, who had been recently ordained a priest. Father Chiron, by his chats and his example, lead his younger brother far from the beaten track. As the founder of a Congregation of women — the Sisters of St. Mary of the Assumption — and then of an Institute of Hospital Brothers, in 1843 he relinquished the governance of both the Sisters and Brothers in order to take up a life in a hermitage. He refused to leave his solitude except to teach the people in the parishes during the autumn and winter seasons. His last years were past in the monastery of the Holy Cross in the eastern Pyrenees. He died on December 28, 1852 with a reputation for holiness.

This was the man who had laid the foundation for Brother Prime's vocation. Immediately after his novitiate Vincent Calixtus became a teacher in the school in Lyons. A succession of "Obediences" brought him to Le Puy, to Lons le Saunier, to Tarare and to Feurs. In 1859 he was called to rue Oudinot. At thirty-four years of age he lived in the Motherhouse and was made responsible for keeping up to date and preserving the confidential files of the Secretary-general. While he was performing his task precisely and with discretion, Brother Exupérien volunteered to become his spiritual director. The disciple showed that he was worthy of every confidence, marvelous in his simplicity, in his penitential life and in his love for the Eucharist. When he was seventy-four years of age, in November of 1885, he continued on to the very end of the thirty day retreat to which he had been directed simultaneously with the members of the Regime and the Brothers Visitor. Until the end he provided the edifying spectacle of his austerity and of his silent regularity.[178]

The spirit breathes where it will, and the divine invitation is made to people in every circumstance and with whatever background. In 1878, in the Department of the Vosges, there was a simple farmer and the father of six children, four of whom had entered the Brothers' Institute, while his daughter had chosen the exacting life of a Poor Claire. The head of the household, at fifty-eight years of age, was a widower with his youngest son living at home with him. His wife, a few moments before her death, told him: "I think that it is the will of God that our youngest ones do as our eldest have done and that you too should follow them." Submissive to these last words, the farmer left for Besancon accompanied by his youngest child; both asked to be admitted to the Brothers at St. Claude, one of them as a Postulant, the other as a Junior Novice. The father received the Religious habit, the name of Remy Flavian, and was employed in accordance with his professional competence. He persevered as a staunch Christian and a Religious without reproach. In 1886, his five sons, all Christian Brothers, around his death bed prayed for him who had begotten them in the flesh and who, like them, had known a rebirth of soul.[179] This modest man at least deserves a mention.

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[177] Obituary, 1908. — This paragraph completes what we have already had to say about Brother Secondian in Vol. V, of the present work, pg. 481.

[178] *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pg. 209. — Obituary (by Brother Paul Joseph), 1910.

[179] Brother Remy Flavian's Obituary, 1896.

Of course, we would not put him in the same category as a Brother Julius of Jesus. However, Jean Bouquet was himself nothing more than a humble Brother concerned with temporal affairs. He was born on January 18, 1837, the son of a mason in the hamlet of Bourgueyran, near Lesparre, in the Gironde. He had been working with his father, Francis Bouquet, on the construction of the lighthouse in Hourtin when he was welcomed into the novitiate in spite of his very brief formal education. He continued to wield the trowel and no doubt the rake as well in the garden at Talence. Nevertheless, this "hidden life" concealed its own "riches"[180]— treasures of purity, prayer and self-sacrifice. The invisible world shone through with an incomparable glow; and sometimes it appeared openly with a sudden flash.

Brother Julius of Jesus had the reputation for being a wonder-worker. A great servant of the Mother of God, it was through the intercession of "Our Lady of All Grace" that he obtained spiritual favors, physical cures, and benefits of all kinds. A small statue had been given this name, and at one time it had been venerated in Bordeaux. During the Revolution, a devout woman had given it shelter in her house where, in secret, Mass had been celebrated in the presence of two elderly Christian Brothers. Louis Lafargue, a restaurateur in a Bordelais establishment called "Frère Eloi" then became the owner of the sacred image and he left it in the protection of the Christian Brothers of the region. As the Brothers in Marmande were suffering through difficult times in 1832, Bordeaux parted with its Madonna for their benefit. Our Lady of All Grace still remained in Lot and Garonne throughout Brother Julius' life as a kitchen worker and sacristan in the Community in Marmande — from 1864 to 1904. In 1910 it was brought to the chapel in Talence where, renamed "Our Lady of Aquitaine", it dominated the thought and inspired the heroic virtue of the old man.

Pretty nearly contemporarily with the holy man of Marmande, Brother Arnold preceded him into eternity. The second of nine children of a shoe cobbler, Claude Rèche and of Anne Clausset, Nicholas Jules was born on September 2, 1838 in Landorf, a village in the region of Metz. Want dominated this home and brought on the mother's depression. The father drew his courage from a particularly lively faith. Nicolas Jules inherited this piety and reconciled himself to poverty, which he hastened to embrace in a way that was quite Franciscan. Very early in life he had to come to the assistance of his family; and even before Confirmation he worked as a domestic servant in a middle-class family. Night classes in the Communal school during the winter earned him a smattering of education. But meanwhile Father Gregoire, the pastor of the parish, discovered that the boy had a wonderful eagerness for the study of catechism.

A Christian in the full sense of the term, the young Rèche did not, however, seem to think of leaving the common run of life. Actually, he bowed before the law of necessity. In 1859 he took a job with a contractor who was building a church in Charleville. The Brothers operated a school in this city in the Ardennes, and the young man of twenty-one years asked them to teach him. The instruction, which nourished his mind, penetrated also to his heart. Although, for a while, his religious zeal had cooled a bit, Grace had quickly won out. "Jules Rèche in Charleville was already an apostle and a saint," said one of the Brothers who knew him at that time.

At the end of that stage came the novitiate in Beauregard-Thionville where Brother Arnold was put to the test between November of 1862 and the end of the following year. From 1863 to 1877 he taught class in the residence school in Rheims. As a teacher he experienced

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[180] Canon Olgiwolski, *Les Splendeurs d'une vie cachée, Frère Julius-de-Jésus, 1939*. — See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 484. .[180] Brother Julius of Jesus died on June 25, 1927 at ninety-one years of age.

disappointment, but as a catechist he earn greater success: “The faith which I very much hope to preserve”, declared one of his pupils, “after God I owe to the Credo as explained by Brother Arnold.”

Beginning in November of 1877, the ascetic, the penitent, the wise and firm guide of souls would show what he was made of. He was to become the Director of the Novitiate in Rheims until March of 1890. Extraordinary virtues were revealed, in spite of his humility which sought to keep them hidden. His life located its strength in a most intimate union with God; and it expanded out into extraordinary action. Brother Arnold saw into hearts, consoled the most intense sadness, dispelled despair, disclosed the meaning of God’s word and swept the hesitant along paths of sacrifice. At first his example frightened people, because he sought out every opportunity to suffer: fasts, flagellation, foregoing sleep, painful tasks, and the rigors of cold during the most glacial winters. But once the body had been reduced to servitude, the interior forces were liberated: — an intense love of the crucified Savior, a gentle, kindly, joyful charity, unwearied and faultless with regard to his neighbor.[181]

It is in this way that the profound and lasting influence of the Director of the Novitiate in Thillois is explained. It continued when the Novitiate was moved to Rue Courlancy and even after the edifying Brother had to abandon the duties which overwhelmed him to become involved exclusively with the “Senior Brothers”. He died with them surrounding him on October 23, 1890.

One may regard as a sort of emulator of his Brother Herman Joseph — Jean-Baptist Puechjean — a native of Cantal who had a lovable character, a sensitive soul and delicate complexion and who between 1889 and 1893 — when he died at the age of forty-four years—directed “with tact, dignity and a spirit of prayer and transcendent success” the Junior Novices in the District of Clermont, and thereby preserved his memory from neglect.“[182]

Moreover, the Brothers’ Institute has remained faithful to the memory of Christian Motsch, the Alsacian from Eyewiller and a novice in 1864 with the name of Brother Alpert, director and apostle of his young fellow-countrymen in St. Joseph’s school on Rue Lafayette in Paris.
Brother Alpert’s striking virtue was particularly exhibited in his acceptance of suffering. Constant overwork was at the source of his violent migraine headaches. In July 1884 — when he was thirty-five years old — he experienced the first symptoms of paralysis and locomotor ataxia. His legs began to give way, his hands stiffen, and he had to tie the cane with which he walked to his wrist by a cord.

Viewing the situation with serenity, he lost none of his vigor nor of his activity. The projects he had begun or promoted — school, association, Eucharistic vigils, meetings and outings for pupils and his “alumni” — nothing was interrupted. In 1889 the Superiors sent him to Rouen, to the relics of the recently Beatified Founder, in order to seek a miraculous cure. The Grace he received there was the heroic acceptance of his tormented body.

For nearly six years more he dragged his poor, increasingly broken body into classrooms, courtyards and stairways. At the sight of this martyrdom, accepted without a complaint, the Brothers at St. Joseph’s were moved and edified; the holiness of their superior, as much as his supernaturally eloquent words, strengthen their religious courage.

Nevertheless, with the progress of the intractable malady, beginning in 1895 Brother Alpert had to be put in a wheelchair. And on July 15, 1896 he finally departed his beloved school.

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[181] The informative process with a view to the Beatification of Brother Arnold. — A teacher in the scholasticate at Bettange is preparing for publication an excellent biography conceived principally as a study in religious psychology.

[182] Obituary by Brother Paul Joseph, 1913.

On Rue Oudinot he would receive the care and service that his condition required. But this painful passion brought out the superb apostle. Who better than such a victim could preach the love of the Cross, witness to the fruitfulness of suffering and demonstrate that ultimate Wisdom consists in union with the suffering Redeemer? And, in spite of his helplessness, the educator in him never relinquished its primary task: he gathered about him the Junior Novices who had come from Alsace; and in teaching them French, he made his influence felt among them. At dawn on Holy Thursday, April 6, 1898, he could utter his *in manus tuas* and his *consummatum est.*[183]

With men like Brother Alpert, Brother Prime and Brother Exupérien the Motherhouse continued to be a school of asceticism and self-denial. There were also the disciples of the revered Assistant like Brother Altigian Louis, the Director of the Scholasticate in Paris, patiently, gently guiding the young Brothers to the idea of sacrifice and to the practice of self-denial;[184] and Brother Aidan, treasurer in the General Procure at Rue de Sèvres, who died on June 9, 1909 after a teaching career among the Junior Novices in Paris and Buzenval.

The second of these was a skillful teacher, and his pupils made rapid progress under the stimulus he provided. The will-power he cultivated in others he himself had practiced in a paricularly powerful way within the forum of his own conscience. In the words of his biographer,[185] "he was not one of those ideal natures, perfect from the very outset, in whom the shrewdness or complacance of friends find no faults." Having to overcome self, "he met with serious difficulties, many of which derived from his sickly disposition". He felt naturally inclined to sadness; in both the moral and physical order he experienced severe anxiety, disconcerting anguish. But through his association with Brother Exupérien he made a leap in the direction of total detachment. He fed off the teaching of his model and he so completely transported it into his life that there came to be a striking resemblance between the two men.

The restless spirit of Brother Aidan, however, pushed humility to the point of convincing himself of his own inadequacy. "A sower of ideas and an awakener of minds", he should have been able to broaden the circle of his intellectual and religious influence. On the contrary, he turned in upon himself and dropped out of sight. To him nothing seemed so good as obscurity, neglect. Delightedly he hit upon as motto the *ama nesciri* of the author of the Imitation. The Superiors respected wishes that were devoid of all human motives; they assumed that the life of this mortified, hidden and prayerful man had gained in depth what it had renounced of surface values.

And it is frequently in this guise that saints have worked within the Institute, as well as within the Church. Such as we have just seen in France were a few of the Brothers who were closest to the Gospel ideal, and such we shall find their emulators in the other countries in which the Congregation had installed its schools and its Rule.

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[183] Le Frère Alpert, biography written by Brother Casimir Vincent. Every year for half a century the alumni of the school and of the association of St. Joseph's Mission, on April 6, meet at Brother Alpert's tomb in Bagneaux cemetery.

[184] Obituary, 1912, and Choix de notices, Vol. III.

[185] Brother Paul Joseph, 1916.

CHAPTER THREE

Professional Training and Equipment

If there is no interior life there is no Religious. But if there is no intellectual life there is no teacher. There has always been a certain minimum of knowledge required for the humblest of elementary school education; and requirements grow with the development of instruction in civilized countries. In 1875 people were no longer satisfied with the extremely slender stock of knowledge that passed muster in 1830. The Brothers were not the last in France to broaden their educational programs. We have described the results of their educational philosophy during Brother Philippe's generalate.[186]

In spite of calumny and prejudice, the nation did not look upon them as backward. One of the best proofs of general esteem resides in the fact that the Brothers trained a certain number of lay teachers in the Normal Schools in Rouen, Aurillac and Quimper and in the "Normal Program" in Beauvais. It is not foreign to our subject to recall how, having identified within the Founders heritage a number of efforts to establish "seminaries for country schoolteachers", the Brothers, paralleling the formation of their own candidates, bestowed their attentions on the "student-teachers" whom the civil authorities entrusted to them. These "Normal" students received and propagated the principles of Lasallian pedagogy. Many of them consciously preserved the characteristic marks of the Institute. And we have observed a man like Louis Renaux, for example, a former student of Brother Cecilian, abandon his teaching position in the Lower Seine and assume the habit of the Brothers.[187]

When the French State planned its debarment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the latter were obliged to relinquish, regretfully, their role as teachers of public school teachers; although they were always prepared to resume a task that they have exercised uninterruptedly in other lands.

In their own Scholasticates, with greater freedom and more conclusive results, they discharged an analogous mission. But personal study, which is preliminary to all teaching, did not stop there: the Superiors encouraged studies among young teachers, sought to place them in a position to secure their diplomas and appointed experienced veterans and distinguished specialists to advise the eager and direct their efforts.

At the same time the Motherhouse brought together groups of authors; and it did not shrink from seeking out the cooperation of a university professor or a theologian. An entire library of textbooks was systematically assembled. Individual talents were put to work. Along with mathematicians, grammarians and geographers as well as philosophers, we meet with artists in the Congregation: draftsmen, painters, sculptors, musicians and architects. There were circumstances and particular situations that allowed some of the Brothers to penetrate deeply into scientific research and to achieve a reputation whether local or world-wide. Of course, botanists, geologists and linguists of this stamp were the exceptions. The Brother's primordial task is Christian education, where he does not fail. And, over and above the Founder's prescriptions, he found useful information in books by his confreres and the journals published with him in mind. The beginning of the 20th century, at any rate, found him rather abundantly equipped.

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[186] Vol. V of the present work, pp. 486-531, "Principles and Results of Lasallian Pedagogy."

[187] See above, pg. 36.

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The normal school in the Lower Loire had earned its reputation during the time of Brothers Calixtus and Cecilian.[188] Brother Lucard had sustained that success. With his keen mind, his curiosity about the past, his love of tradition, uniting a taste for the actual and for what can be learned from experience, a man of action quick to undertake projects, a great deal could be expected of this Director; and he had promised himself to restore the framework at St. Yon to the Brothers. In concert with the General Counsel of the Department he had sketch the plans for new buildings, in which he included a vast covered gallery and a conference hall for the eventual meetings of the Brothers. The chapel, whose basement had once held De La Salle's mortal remains, was to become one of the religious centers of the Congregation. This magnificent dream vanished with a stroke of Brother Irlide's pen. The Department, which had lost the cooperation of these highly valued teachers, did not want their departure to occur in an ungrateful silence. A majority vote of its representatives declared that, for half a century, the teachers in the normal school had given proof that they were worthy of the highest praise.[189]

The decision taken by the Superior-general in March of 1880 was not only aimed at the withdrawal of the Brothers from Rouen. It also affected, as Brother Irlide informed the Minister of Public Education, the schools in Aurillac and Quimper.

In Cantal Brother Surin's work and that of his successors had lasted for nearly forty years. Much briefer was the Institute's labor in the normal school in Finistère. We have not yet spoken of that project.

Until 1873 Quimper had been sending its candidates for the teaching profession to Rennes. Concerned to overcome the evident backwardness of education in southern Brittany, the General Counsel — presided over at the time by a M. Carné, a member of the French Academy — planned to open an educational center. And "considering that for a conspicuously religious people" teachers were necessary who were "able to inspire families with absolute confidence", it resolved to appeal to the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Furthermore, an inquiry to this end was set afoot among the departmental administrations that employed the services of this Congregation.

Once the favorable reports had been read, a plan was drawn up and, toward the end of January, 1873, was presented to Brother Philippe's delegates, who were Brothers Assistant Calixtus and Firmilian and Brother Agbert who at the time was Director of the residence school in Dreux.

The responsibility for the new institution was to fall to the third of these Brothers. He was equipped with the best references and all the necessary papers: — graduate diploma, bachelor of science and certificate of competence to function as an inspector of elementary education. He had taught normal courses in Beauvais between 1857 and 1865, directed the Scholasticate on Rue Oudinot between 1865 and 1870 before assuming the leadership of the school of established reputation in the Eure-and-Loire. Both energetic and prudent, his dignified posture, noble features and extremely courteous manner made a deep impression.

The details of the contract were drawn up in April between the Institute and the Department. The Finistère normal school, in the language settled on by the General Counsellors, "would train lay teachers and would be in all points similar to other university institutions of the same category." It would be set up in those of the buildings of the city college that had once been occupied by the "Likès" school. The city agreed to the rental for a fee of 2,000 francs annually.

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188 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 145-150, 387, 508-512.

189 Archives of the District of Rouen, *Historique des Maisons de Normandie*, Vol. II.

On July 25 the Minister accepted Brother Agbert's appointment to the post of Director.[190] The management of the thirty eight students did not promise to be easy. With two exceptions, they were all scholarship-students, and they had previously attended either the normal school in Rennes or some other lay institution. With respect to their new mentors they entertained a number of preconceptions. Brother Agbert, however, would emerge triumphant.

He was strongly supported by his Religious associates: Brother Philippe of Jesus, who had come from the residence school in Clermont-Ferrand where he was remembered for his outstanding teaching; [191] Brother Leopold Arsenius, a former teacher in Bayonne and Toulouse; as well as by a civilian personnel responsible for supplementary instruction in English, drawing, music and gymnastics. A justice of the peace, M. Alexandre, supplied the normal students with some insights into civil and administrative law. The theory and practice of agriculture, each Thursday, fell to the responsibility of a professor from the Department. The chaplain was in charge of religious education; his name was Father Kérbiriou who had previously taught rhetoric in the college of St. Pol in Leon.[192]

The project had taken on coherence when, on April 15, 1877, Brother Agbert, stricken by a fast moving illness, died. After an interval, which was not satisfactory, Brother Agbert was given a successor who was worthy of him. Like Brother Philippe of Jesus, Brother Gustave had made a long and influential contribution to the prosperity of the residence school in Clermont. Originally, he had intended to become a public school teacher. Once become a Brother, he had not abandoned the idea of obtain university diplomas. And, among others, he possessed the diploma required to direct normal schools. He was an excellent mathematician and botanist, and a book written in collaboration with Brother Héribaud, *La Flore d'Auvergne* as well as *Élements d'algèbre*, the authorship of which was his alone, firmly established his competence.

In point of fact, the people in Quimper recognized him as an exceptional teacher and a personality of the first importance. The man was as kind and modest as he was consummately endowed. An unequivocal discipline prevailed among the students; and he inspired them with the spirit of religion at the same time as a zeal for study. The results obtain by the school in July of 1878 earned its leader a congratulatory letter from the Minister.

Starting about this time, however, secularization began to become rife throughout Finistère. The Prefect, Dumarest, distinguished himself among the Republic's bureaucrats as the most zealous against the education provided by religious orders. His attitude and his initiatives made Brother Gustave's situation rather touchy. And it thus became understandable why Brother Irlide resolved to be beforehand and to rescue his subordinates, the directors and teachers in the normal schools, from the hostility of the State.

In April 1880 Brother Gustave left Quimper. During the eighteen years he had left to live, the Superiors were able to employ him in accordance with his merits. We have seen him,[193] and we shall see him again in the Motherhouse on Rue Oudinot.[194] The "normal program" in

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[190] The Director's salary was set at 2,700 francs, that of the teachers at 1,400 each.

[191] A lay teacher until he was thirty-five years of age, Brother Philippe of Jesus had entered the novitiate in Caluire in 1850. He remained for only a brief period of time in Quimper. Transferred to the semi-residence school Franc-Bourgeois, he died on January 24, 1876, leaving a number of unpublished manuscripts covering historical, geographical, physical and chemical subjects as well as a series of lectures on literature that the Institute published.

[192] At the end of the year, on a suggestion from the Brother Director, the science courses were entrusted to a teacher in the College, M. Fournery.

[193] See above, pg. 60.

[194] Archives of the District of Quimper. — Brother Gustave's obituary, 1898.

Beauvais, situated in particularly favorable conditions, was to endure until further notice. Since 1869 Brother Albert Eugene had directed it with understanding and authority and handled instruction in pedagogy, chemistry and hygiene himself.

"We have a normal school", said a member of the General Counsel of Oise in 1877, "that has produced the most successful results. Two years later, in the same Assembly the promoter of a particular project involving aspiring teachers declared that the course might very well be the best organized in France and that it turned out excellent teachers.

It was producing at once the best quality and the largest number of candidates. The average attendance held at about 130. Elementary education in the region had achieved a very high level: this is what an inspector from the Academy recognized later on when he was paying tribute to Brother Albert Eugene's former students and bemoaning the fact that their generation was on the point of disappearing.

But by 1884 the institution had been suppressed as had happened to its counterpart for young women. The elected representatives of the Department, following the example of their colleagues in Rouen, did not part company with the members of Religious Orders without regret. Their words are found in the minutes for a meeting that was held on August 23: "The two normal programs in the Oise", it was recorded in the registers of the Assembly, "had, for thirty four years, been supplied incontestable service...In these two training schools future teachers of both sexes received an flawless education, a reliable and sound instruction."[195]

Would the task which the civil authorities had closed off to the Institute be continued under private auspices? In his circular dated January 3, 1882 the Superior-general clearly stated his position on this issue: "A large number of schools are going to call for Christian education for their own people...But Religious Orders of man by themselves are powerless to supply such a personnel. It is therefore indispensable that we, especially, in imitation of our Founder, procure the recruitment of an army of good teachers."

But every effort of French Catholics and clergy was bent upon the immediate task: to build or furnish school buildings. Furthermore, people relied almost exclusively upon Religious teachers to staff the teaching posts. For the want of financial resources and for the want of a sufficiently clear vision the future had been compromised.

However, with the disappearance of courses in Beauvais a plan for a private normal school was drawn up by Fenelon Gibon:[196] the Brothers of the Christian Schools were to be invited to lend their cooperation. Too many obstacles, of course, blocked the way. Nor does it appear that, in spite of Brother Irlide's wishes,[197] did the Institute's upper-level schools train many student-teachers by using them as monitors in the classrooms, nor did they create "special sections" to be reserved for teaching-candidates.

What we meet with is a hardly absorbing — and incomplete — realization: — "the normal course at Lille". The magnificent examples found in near-by Belgium and the presence in the North of the former Director of the Rouen normal school, Brother Lucard, who had become Visitor of the District, inspired this attempt in 1891. It began on December 15 with four students in a hall in "La Monnaie". For the second year twenty-nine students were in attendance. Several special subjects —literature, science and modern languages — were entrusted to teachers in the residence school.

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[195] Brother Albert Eugene's obituary, 1923.

[196] Taken from *Bulletin de la Societé générale d'Éducation et d'Enseignement*, Paris, 1884.

[197] Expressed in the Circular dated January 3, 1882.

When the Brothers of the jurisdiction came under the guidance of Brother Maurice Lucian, hope arose for the success of the enterprise. And a Diocesan committee for schools agreed to sponsor it and assure it of financial assistance.

It was the latter, unfortunately, that proved inadequate. The budget for scholarship and half-scholarship was gradually reduced. On the other hand, the beneficiaries of the scholarships, looking at the uncertainties of the future, were reluctant to undertake the ten-year commitment that had been quite properly demanded of them. The program ceased to operate in 1901. It had awarded about fifty diplomas at its graduations and, for the Institute, had occasioned a superb vocation in the person of Charles Prat who became a novice in 1892 and died a holy death in 1895.[198]

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Like St. John Baptist de La Salle after the disappointments suffered in the Faubourg St. Marcel with Nicholas Vuyart and at St. Denis with Father Clement, the Brothers were obliged to abandon their advanced positions. But this coerced manoeuvre enabled them to regroup and to undertake new activities. Scholasticates were to be revived.

They had flourished in the 18th century. Obliterated by the French Revolution, they were a mere memory in the days of Brother Gerbaud and Brother Guillaume de Jésus of Jesus. The Committee assembled by Brother Anacletus in the Faubourg St. Martin in 1834 had asked for their reestablishment. And dating from that time Toulouse had realized a sort of normal school reserved at the outset for professed Brothers who were actively engaged in teaching.[199]

The Motherhouse was home to another such school beginning in 1838. In this instance, the Scholasticate was opened to young Brothers who, in principle, were required to study there for ten or twelve months.

Because new schools were being constantly opened, available personnel was increasingly in rare supply. As a consequence, the recruitment of Scholastics posed a scarcely manageable problem. Nevertheless, the project was continued, after a fashion, until the break up occasioned by the Franco-Prussian War. It was in this way that Brother Agbert[200] had for five years fulfilled the rôle of Director for two classes at Rue Oudinot.

The need for a restoration was obvious. Without a deeply serious pedagogical study and without a broadly based acquisition of diplomas there was very little to hope for from the future. Brother Irlide spelled it out unambiguously to his French confreres in an 1880 statement announcing the upcoming inauguration of the Parisian Scholasticate in its definitive form; he exhorted his Religious teachers to aim — beyond the simple diploma — at higher degrees. “Follow”, he told them, “the example of St. Paul demanding, against the whip and chains, his rights as a Roman citizen. Guarantee, by means of university degrees, the freedom of Christian education!”

The call was heard and heeded. Courses began in November on the first floor of the building that ran along Invalides Boulevard. Brother Gustave, recalled from Quimper, resumed, for the benefit of the young Brothers, the fruitful apostolate that he had conducted among the teachers in Brittany. Judiciously the Superior-general employed the skills caste aside by sectarian politics; to Brother Gustave he was quick to add Brother Narcellian who only recently had been

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198 Archives of the District of Cambrai.

199 See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 153.

200 See above, pp. 129-130.

at the head of the normal school in Aurillac.[201]

A Circular dated January 6, 1881 explained the reasons for the institution: "It has been, at least in part, in order to assist in the preparation for the various higher diplomas that we have opened the house of studies or Scholasticate in our Motherhouse. Forty Brothers from various Districts are there following courses connected with their fields of specialization or with examinations that they are going to have to take."

But it must never be forgotten that these students belonged to a Religious Order. It was not merely a question of arranging for their success before examining boards provided by the State. Beyond the simple earthly goal, their superiors intended to enable them to advance along God's paths. Their previously received spiritual formation was to be "strengthened" and "completed". To Brother Irlide's way of thinking, the Scholasticate "would correspond in a certain sense to what many Religious Orders called the third probationary year". As a consequence, it was to be an anticipation of the "Second Novitiate". Thus, according to the regulations laid down by the Superior-general it was always to close with a "Thirty Day Retreat".

In 1882 there were more than fifty Scholastics at the Motherhouse. And in 1884 there were seventy supplied by Districts from Paris to Le Puy. With the growing influx it became necessary to house an increasing number of teachers and students; beginning in October of 1886 the buildings adjacent to the annexes of Rue Oudinot and having an entrance at 78 Rue de Sèvres were joined to the Congregation's headquarters in order to admit annually—until 1904—from 100 to 150 young Brothers.

Brother Altigian Louis, appointed Director in November of 1891 presided for seven years over the successful fortunes of the institution. We have described[202] the influence of his spirituality — massively modelled on Brother Exupérien's — and of his "ingratiating, persistent and affectionate determination which, without being abrupt, lead hearts to God."[203] He also knew how to guide minds, inspire them with confidence and equip them with a sensible vade mecum. Besides the French, he received Brothers who had come from Ireland to learn the language and assimilate the culture of the Holy Founder's native land. The attentions with which he surrounded these men from an ardently Catholic nation earned Brother Louis their liveliest gratitude.

In the beginning the program of studies was nearly entirely inscribed within the limits of elementary education. Brother Irlide's expressed purpose, stated in the 1881 Circular, was "to improve and gradually complete" the subject-matter of the lessons studied in the primary schools. And, actually, the Scholasticate year ended with examinations for the elementary diploma. An initiative on the part of Brother Alban Joseph in 1892 facilitated progress along lines that had been opened up eleven years earlier. Between July and October the Brother Visitor gathered together in Buzenval the Scholastics who had recently received their diplomas. Not satisfied with providing them with instruction in education, philosophy, science and literature, he familiarized them with habits of personal study so that they might be able to continue on their own once they had become teachers. Thus he sent them, soundly provide for, into the grade and residence schools.

The attempt appeared so conclusive that, on several occasions in the course of other summers, Brothers who were already teaching classes joined the students in Buzenval and studied for a higher diploma. In this way the Brothers were lead to found a definitive and

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[201] *Essai historique sur la Maison Mère*, pp. 217-218.

[202] See above, pg. 124.

[203] Obituary, pg. 220 and *Choix de notices*, Vol. III, pp. 428-433.

permanent institution. In 1900 the Superiors who were answerable in these matters were enthusiastic about the principle of the establishment. And in September of the following year a handful of young teachers were temporarily detached from their teaching tasks to constitute the nucleus of a "Higher Scholasticate". In all, in 1901 there were fourteen such Brothers, thirteen in 1902 and eleven in 1903.[204]

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Brother Irlide had hoped that "most Districts" would follow the Motherhouse's example. In Franche-Comté and Bourgogne there were precursors that had anticipated the Parisian experiments.

As early as 1872 Brother Jean-Olympe, Assistant at the time, desiring to determine the level of education existing among his subordinates, prescribed that the Brothers teaching in the schools in Côte d'Or, Doubs, Jura, and Haute Saône assemble in Dijon and obliged them to write compositions. This became the point of departure for all further studies. Brother Réticius, Director of Novices, established a commission of nine members who, with the active cooperation of the Director of the residence school in Dole, Brother Neopolus, specified the rules and the program for these competitions. The results of these contests, preliminary to the university examinations, translated into an immediate increase in the number of diplomas.

And, in 1879 the inevitable decision was reached. Seventeen Brothers who had just finished the novitiate became the District's first Scholastics. On November 2, Brother Réticius was appointed their Director. But he soon left Besancon-Sainte Claude to take on an extremely important mission. Brother Ostinian, from Pontarlier, replaced him at the head of the Scholasticate. The students were nineteen in number in 1881, and this figure would be subsequently maintained under Brothers Raymondus, Regis Francis and Raphael Victor. But the number of diplomas by far outstripped that figure, since during the years 1881, 1882 and 1883 alone the District totaled fifty four elementary and higher diplomas and certificates of educational aptitude.[205]

Once the mind of the Superior was known, the movement set in motion by Franche-Comté was propagated throughout France. There was the founding of a Scholasticate in Annappes, in a section of the quarters previously reserved for the novices of Cambrai-Lille.[206] During the same year, 1881, Toulouse invited not only the Brothers from Languedoc within its jurisdiction but those from Rouergue (sent by Brother Apronian of Mary) as well as those from Bordeaux and Béarne to follow the courses given by Brothers Ibrace and Irlide Joseph. Sub-Director at the outset, Brother Irlide Joseph for thirteen years — from 1885 to 1898 — filled the post of Director with a deftness that guaranteed professional education of his students.[207]

A course organized at Effiat readied the Brothers in the District of Clermont Ferrand for examinations aimed at diplomas. It was stabilized and completed in 1883 when Brother Nil of Mary was placed charge of it. In May of 1884 the Scholasticate functioned in a Dominican house near the novitiate and the residence school in the capital of Auvergne. In October of 1885 it was relocated to the Recollects in Montferrand. Brother Nil of Mary, the heroic

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[204] Archives of Buzenval, Souvenirs du petit noviciat. — Brother Alban Joseph's Obituary, 1903.

[205] Archives of the District of Besancon, District Register; Historique manuscript.

[206] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique.

[207] Archives of the District of Toulouse and Brother Irlide Joseph's obituary.

infirmarian of the days of 1870,[208] needed his full reserve of courage, patience, abnegation and humility in order, with insufficiently defined powers, to survive a difficult beginning and to preserve peace in an uncertain situation. He spent himself without counting the cost, and he managed the scholastics resourcefully. Success crowned his efforts. During the first eight years of the work at Montferrand about twenty diplomas were earned each session.[209]

Brother Nil was replaced in 1897 by Brother Herman of Mary, an enthusiastic Director and scholar. And then, in October of 1899, there arrived a masterful man, more learned than any of his predecessors, a singularly sharp mind, an open, vibrant and extremely noble character — Gabriel Cohade, alumnus and brilliant pupil of the residence school in Clarmont, who had entered the Institute as Brother Antonine Gabriel. Before he had gained a remarkable reputation for himself as an author, he had been a distinguished teacher; he tended decidedly to develop in his pupils intellectual initiative, taste, reflection, a healthy curiosity and the quest for overall views. His influence was exercised at a very profound level; and his system, important for intellectual and moral growth, in no way obstructed professional development: in four years — and in spite of difficulties and delays, and a migration occasioned by a serious fire — Brother Antonine Gabriel was able to inscribe upon his list of distinctions the name of eighty-eight Brothers who had become equipped with official certificates.[210]

Nor did the adjoining District hesitate before the urgent task. Although less dazzling, the product did not fail to correspond with the effort.

While entrusting a few gifted Brothers to his neighbors in the South of France, the Visitor of Rodez was solicitous to provide at home the means whereby his Brothers might obtain the diploma demanded by the law. First of all, he added a few preparatory courses to the novitiate program. There uncertified teachers and youths after their probationary year were furnished with basic studies. Finally, on November 12, 1884 the Scholasticate ceased being little more than a harmless annex; a special Director took responsibility for it. This was Brother Indalerius who, in 1888, was succeeded by Brother Idaine.

The latter, a former instructor in St. Joseph's residence school and a former teacher in the elementary schools in Gua and Aubin, was a Brother with a very strong character, a sure judgment and an energetic disposition. He touched with his generous ardor a whole legion of teacher who were to set out to propagate Christian education in the Districts fifty schools, and later on, far beyond the French frontiers. In 1904, he embraced exile on the island of Rhodes where the normal school in Acandia became his fiefdom.

Beginning in 1889 and for a good number of school terms thereafter he found a first class assistant in the person of Brother Isidorus of Mary. Teacher and then Sub-director, Brother Isidorus taught grammar, French composition, history, and calligraphy; he emphasized etymology, the central ideas expressed by words, and hence Latin and Greek, as parent languages, were accorded a certain right of admission to his courses. He also required the assistance of philosophy; through simple and exact notions, through series of questions that the pupil had to deal with attentively, leisurely and in writing, this superb teacher opened the understanding to new perspectives.[211]

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[208] For Brother Nil of Mary's rôle in the Parisian ambulance corps during the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, see Vol. V of the present work, pp. 534-535 and 545.

[209] Archives of the District of Clermont Ferrand. — Brother Nil of Mary's obituary, 1898, and Choix de notices, Vol. III, pg. 267.

[210] Archives of the District of Clermont. — Brother Antonine Gabriel (died in 1940).

[211] Archives of the District of Rodez, Monographie du district. — Obituary of Brother Idain (Pierre Moninier, 1846-1928.)

In Herouville the Scholasticate of the District of Caen had as its first Director Brother Adelphin. At Notre Dame du Rancher the pioneer was Brother Annet Henry who was a rather exceptional personality. Born in Clermont Ferrand in 1847, he was the son of a physician, belonging to a distinguished family, of Swiss origins and Protestant in religion. Expelled from his high school because of his unruliness, he was admitted to the Brothers' residence school. He became attached to the Brothers and at the age of twenty one he embraced Catholicism. An interior voice — the Most Blessed Virgin's, he asserted — had clearly commanded him: "Henry, be a Brother!" He went to Rue Oudinot where he completed his novitiate. His career was a lively one, because the man himself was rather troublesome and thin-skinned. But he was acknowledged for his lofty conscience, his fidelity and zeal. His remarkable talents were employed to the utmost at Moulins, Franc-Bourgeois, Rodez, Dreux and Lille. In between changes he devoted his attention to the Scholastics on the Channel.[212]

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A statistic dated December 31, 1886[213] supplies the figure of 571 Scholastics for all the French Districts. The average personnel in the novitiates for the years close to that time was about 700 individuals. We see that, taking into account assignments to temporal work, provisional employments, illnesses and withdrawals, the education and professional guidance of the great majority of young candidates was given serious attention before being assigned to the teaching body.

This study was not limited to the brief period of the Scholasticate. It had been initiated in various places as a prelude to the creation, or regeneration, of Normal Schools intended for the youngest of the Brothers. In this connection we underscored Brother Réticius' activities in the District of Besancon.[214] It exactly corresponded to the recommendations of the General Chapter of 1873, to the urgent exhortations of Brother Irlide in his Circular of August 1, 1875. On that occasion the Superior had complained "that (Brothers) generally had not sufficiently profited from the opportunities provided" for educational conferences in the Communities. He recalled that the Assembly before the last one had specified that, in all Districts, teaching Brothers were to be divided into four categories according to the level of their education: guidelines, supported by strict supervision, would then be imposed in order to raise the level of studies. Teaching Brothers would pronounce their vows only if they proved that they possessed a level of knowledge in proportion to their age, their time in Community and their work.

It goes without saying that the stimulus exercised by the Superiors was particularly powerful in the immediate environs of the Motherhouse. The Visitors of the District of Paris seconded Brother Exupérien's purposes with all their power. As a former teacher in a Normal School, Brother Anthymius drew up the program of studies and wrote the texts, and, in complete agreement with Brother Angelum, provided the mass of the Brothers in the capital every means of confronting the tests for the teacher's certificate.[215]

The St. Nicholas School on Rue Vaugirar became an intellectual center for the Brothers teaching in parochial schools. Every Thursday, from the day school opening in October until

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[212] Brother Annet Henry died in 1929 at the retirement home in Moulins. — The remarks concerning him are taken from notes gathered by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, Archivist of the District of Rodez.

[213] In a volume of Circulars by the Superior-generals.

[214] See also Brother Réticius' obituary, 1918, pp. 30-32.

[215] Brother Anthymius' obituary, 1904.

Easter, courses in French literature, foreign languages, mathematics, physics, and drawing were held for the young Brothers. Brother Angelum, and after him Brother Alban Joseph presided frequently presided over these strenuous sessions.

They discovered rare skills among their subordinates. Brother Amérius, the Director of St. Nicholas, personally possessed only a modest erudition; but he had succeeded in surrounding himself by highly talented students. He stimulated their enthusiasm, and gave them an opportunity to enrich their minds. Specialists, university professors as well as members of their own Congregation, were invited to instruct the young teachers. Furthermore, close by stood the Catholic Institute, directed by Bishop Hulst; young Brothers were encouraged to go there where they might draw on the sources of doctrine and knowledge. And, of course, they shared with others what they had learned.

Thus, Brother Allais Charles, a future Superior-general, taught his confreres what he had learned from Edward Branly. He also frequented the Sorbonne to take notes at chemistry courses. Without neglecting any of his teaching or supervisorial tasks, he tackled all the subjects in the upper elementary and secondary programs: history, geography, English, as well the sciences. In 1882 he obtained the highest diploma; and, in 1888, the educational enabling certificate; and, during the interval, having, with the permission of the Assistant, learned Latin, he successfully passed his examinations for the bachelor's degree.[216] His younger brother, Brother Adrian, like the elder Petiot, was an excellent Religious and had a wide-awake, well-endowed mind; he mastered a large number of literary texts whose style he succeeded in imitating. He was particularly struck by the authors of the 17th century such as Pascal, La Bruyère and especially Bossuet, whom he called "one of his most significant mentors."[217]

Doubtless this level of culture was still exceptional among the Brothers of the period. Many of them feared that by becoming that involved they would endanger their vocation; and in novitiates, and indeed in Communities, there were Directors who reined in not only aimless curiosity and arrogant enthusiasm but even the desire to know more in order to teach better. As for the pursuit of diplomas, even Brother Irlide agreed that it did not appear to be "in the spirit of the Institute".[218] He promoted it, nevertheless, among all his subordinates, because he considered it quite correctly to be a professional obligation. Prejudice and mistrust had no place in this far-seeing Superior; indeed, they had ceased to retain their hold on the higher levels of the administration: "Look", wrote Brother Junian, "at the teaching personnel in the residence school in Toulouse; the most learned teachers are the most regular, the most devout and the most faithfully attached to the traditions of the Institute. A thorough-going knowledge of the human sciences cannot disturb a well-balanced mind."[219]

This conviction gradually penetrated the minds of all concerned. It had been quickly agreed upon that an educational philosophy is not something made up on the spur of the moment; that, in particular, in order to teach children between the ages of six and eight years in the "lowest grades" something more is required than the good will of a beginner fresh out of the novitiate: what is needed is method, tact, "know-how", an acquaintance — or at least the start of it — with psychology and as a consequence art combined with science in a creative way. Eugene Rendu, an authority doubly qualified through his educational background and friendship with

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216 Biography of M.H. Brother Allais Charles (by Brother Adolph Joseph), pp. 48-52. — Motherhouse Archives, File BE f, Brother Ascepisme's notes.

217 Biography of M.H. Brother Adrian (by Brother Fredebert of Mary), pp. 24-25.

218 Circular, cited, dated January 6, 1881.

219 Brother Assistant Junian's obituary, 1919, pg. 48.

the Brothers remarked in 1885:[220] "There is occurring among the young Brothers a growth in the understanding of the technical difficulties (and, as a consequence, of the importance) facing the task of the teacher in the preparatory classes. It is a step forward on the educational road."

In the provinces we can include among the precursors — and nearly at the same level as a Brother Réticius — the Visitor of Cambrai-Lille in 1880, Brother Eleutherius. At that time he began "summer schools" and periodical examinations. He put his Brothers on the way to obtaining the enabling diploma before it had been legally required. Once this stage had been gotten through, he aimed at a goal more difficult of achievement: the higher diploma. Brother Eleutherius entrusted Brother Maurice Lucian with the task of drawing up the program of studies. Once again, after the school year was over, groups of up to sixty or eighty students were formed. And then during the course of the year when the Brothers had returned to their teaching assignments compositions and examinations kept them busy.

Unfortunately, the Brother Visitor's death in 1888 brought about a change in directions. His policies were not resumed until Brother Maurice Lucian took his turn at the leadership in the Northern District: beginning in 1896 it became apparent what could be accomplished by the combination of determination and intelligence. During the six or seven weeks of summer the residence school of St. Peter in Lille, emptied of its usual inhabitants, housed the "Student-Brothers' Community" — a genuine hive at work. They broke up only for their annual vacation. Intervals were filled with educational lectures and practice-classes. In 1902 the District list contained fifty Brothers who had earned their higher certificates.[221]

Contemporaries and worthy emulators of Brother Maurice Lucian were Brothers Imier of Jesus, Altigian Louis and Namacius who exerted their efforts in Moulins, Le Puy and Rodez. Brother Imier of Jesus, whom the General Chapter of 1913 was to choose to succeed Brother Gabriel of Mary had, in 1896, received an "Obedience" as Visitor of Allier and the neighboring Departments. In the lives of his Brothers he refused to tolerate pointless occupations or marginal activities which, however innocent, ran the risk of absorbing their powers of attention and zeal. For the young Brothers he organized a four year program; and for the courses in the cycle there were examinations every Holy Thursday to check the quality of studies. In 1898 sixty three candidates had won a place on the lists.[222] Brother Altigian Louis prepared a program of studies that included several levels. Tests were realized through monthly compositions, the results of which were published in the District bulletin.[223]

Before Brother Namasius' arrival in 1900, the person who stimulated the intellectual life among the Brothers in Rouergue was Brother Isme Anacletus. Simply secretary to the Visitor, Brother Isme, who could never control a class, had shown, on the other hand, that he was a matchless tutor and examiner. Apart from Latin and Greek he knew six modern languages. His memory came bountifully to the aid of his learning. "You are my walking library," the Brother Visitor Gelosius told him. When the Visitor had not given him permission to scour through the Archives in Aveyron or Tarn, he appointed him to sit in on the interrogations of the teaching Brothers.[224]

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[220] Report to the Education and Instructional Association

[221] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique. — Brother Maurice Lucian's obituary, 1920, pp. 71, 84, 92-94.

[222] M.H. Brother Imier of Jesus' obituary, pp. 73-74.

[223] Brother Altigian Louis' obituary, 1912.

[224] Archives of the District of Rodez, note on Brother Isme Anacletus.

Brother Gelosius would have liked to have opened a higher Schoasticate. But available personnel was wanting, since his District, although numerous in vocations, had to cede many candidates to less Christian regions. Brother Namasius, who had known about his predecessor's project, decided to establish at least a "course of studies" that would lead to the higher certificate. He arranged the schedule in such a way as to enable the Communities situated close at hand to send a group of auditors. About fifteen Brothers took up the invitation. In 1902 and 1903 ten of these successfully passed the tests either for the certificate aimed at or the modern baccalaureate.[225]

There was a change taking place among the Brothers in the direction of secondary education and toward university degrees. Certainly not, whether in thought or in practice, away from their fundamental commitment which continued to be popular education. Whatever the level of acquired knowledge, a follower of John Baptist de La Salle bears constant witness to his readiness to teach small children patiently, conscientiously and tuition-free. There was a question, however, of not hiding one's candle under a bushel and of securing for the Congregation the best efforts of its educational luminaries. Further, extensive knowledge is never lost even when it is only used to maneuver small boys through the pages of a grammar book.

A distinguished teacher in St. Omer, Brother Evariste Abel spoke bluntly along these lines. Brother Amé Léonce, Director of the residence school in Longuyon, shared his colleague's ideas and presented them to the General Chapter of 1894. And when the university reopened that year five Brothers registered in the Faculty of Science at Nancy.[226]

The Institute was able and wanted to contribute to the advanced education of its members. It possessed a selection of remarkable teachers, good minds and well equipped, some of them marvelously endowed, if not geniuses, habituated to public utterance, and, on a podium, skillful enough to retain the attention of other educators. One of these gifted personalities was Brother Paul Joseph. We shall meet with him at work in a number of different places. In Beauvais in 1896 courses in French literature, history and geography was begun for teachers in residence schools and scholasticates: Brother Paul Joseph was in charge of the program, to which he brought the energy of his talents, the prominence of his character and the refined accuracy of his speech.[227].The "model lessons" that he presented to his audience created a genuine enthusiasm and generated a renewal in the methods of many teachers.

"While it turned out to be nothing more than auspicious experiment", it gave sanction to some wide-ranging reflections.] A former Director of the residence school in Dreaux, Brother Adolphe of Mary, become Visitor of the District of Mans, contemplated the idea of helping some young Brothers gain access to the Masters Degree in literature or in the sciences and even to the writing of doctorate dissertations. For this purpose he wanted to open a center for advanced studies. He ran up against a number of objections. However, he had close at hand just the man for the job, a solid Religious soundly educated, exceptionally intelligent and dedicated, soul and body, to his Congregation: — Brother Adolph Joseph. The time for important decisions was drawing close; the laws of 1904 were about to be promulgated. Brother Adolph of Mary fixed his choice on a building situation in Mourscron in Belgium, where he planned to set up his handpicked team directed by his revered disciple. The project had collected all the necessary permissions and was about to be put into effect when a different

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225 Ibid., Monographie du district.

226 Brother Evariste Abel's biography, 1942, pp. 75-76.

227 These courses were repeated annually for four years. Two hundred Brothers profited from them. (Choix de notices), Vol. III, pp. 284 et sq. On the subject of "human geography" — the science associated with the name of John Brunhes — Brother Paul Joseph, in the opinion of his former students, was a sort of pioneer

plan prevailed in the counsels of the Regime. The idea of the Visitor of Mans would remain that of an enlightened mind, in advance of his generation and time, a forerunner of things to come.[228] *

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The altogether legitimate desire to increase the reputation of Christian education could not obscure in the Brothers' consciousness the notion of their primordial rôle. Obviously, religion remained at the heart of all their teaching and of all their disciplines; otherwise, the Brothers' teaching, mandated by the Church, would have lost its purpose; the failure of the teachers would have turned into a tragedy.

"Our Institute", declared Brother Joseph, "thinks of its elite, not those who are conspicuous in the human sciences but those who best handle the art of the catechism."[229] Every Superior insisted on this point: a Brother of the Christian Schools must renew and continually deepen his religious instruction. He was not asked to be a theologian, but to teach the truths of faith, to train his pupils in piety, and show them how to live according to the Gospel, a rapid apprenticeship was not enough.

The Rule required that the Brothers, once they had gotten out of the novitiate and for several years after they pronounced the final vows, to recite daily a number of pages of the catechism. And when they were no longer obliged by this recitation, a daily study of the catechism was still demanded of them.

Further, from the very beginnings of the Lasallian Society the practice of the "Catechism of formation" had been established. The "test" that we spoke of in connection with the Second Novitiate[230] was just a more perfect model of this exercise, in which teaching Brothers, as well as novices and scholastics participate. They all take their turns with their confreres as teachers and as pupils. They explain the diocesan catechism, or some larger text that deals with the principle mysteries, or they offer an explanation of a doctrine. A discussion bearing on the form and content of the lesson follows. This part of the session is a analysis useful for any one who appreciates the importance of clarity, precision, subtlety and sympathetic conviction in such subjects; and it is a particularly profitable lesson for beginners who are made aware of the resources of traditional methods and the use to be made of a number of educational procedures.[231]

The Circular of October 30, 1885 had displayed a lively concern for everywhere preserving top importance to religious instruction. Not only in France, but in other countries with a Christian civilization, public educational programs sought to ignore matters pertaining to the faith. Brother Joseph was unwilling to agree that his confreres might court academic titles without demonstrating their capacities as catechists. He determined that no one would be allowed to take examinations for diplomas who had not first passed an examination before a board of the Institute, testifying to a complete *satisfecit* for his grasp of Dogma, Moral and Worship. There were other tests that followed: these were held each trimester in the Communities and included questions on Bible History and the History of the Church.

In order to expedite the effort what was needed was a good working tool. Until then, the Brothers had nothing suitable. The venerable treatise, *Devoirs du chrétien* was an inheritance from the Founder and inappropriate for the circumstances, no matter how lavish and judicious

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228 Biographie du Frère adolphe-Joseph, 1942 (by Brother Albert Valentine), pg. 118.

229 Circular dated October 18, 1895.

230 See above, pp. 116-117.

231 Cf. the Circular of M.H. Brother Junien Victor, February 19, 1938.

it may have been. The book contemplated was defined by the Superior in the following terms: "A systematic course, neither too concise nor too elaborate, in harmony with educational developments...and in no way inferior to the progressive courses in use among educational specializations."[232].

But Brother Véran Michael, the Director of Chambéry had been concerned with the problem. He had struck up an acquaintanceship with a learned priest, Canon Moulin, and from their discussions there arose a definite proposal which, once it had been drawn up, gained Brother Joseph's assent. The Superior-general, in his Circular of January 1, 1893 announced the imminent debut of a significant work. Without revealing any names, he praised the priest, the zealous scholar, completely dedicated to the Institute who was good enough to assume the initiative. The Course would be divided into three parts: "The Elementary Course or Exposition of Christian Doctrine; the Intermediate Course, or Explanation of Christian Doctrine; and the Advanced Course, or Apologetics."

Circulars in 1894 and 1895 drew attention to the publication of the initial volumes. A Brief of Leo XIII at that time provided the undertaking with Rome's approval. The final pages issued from the press in 1904. Brother Véran Michael had died four years before. Until the end of his life he had contributed his very active cooperation to the principal author and the Bishops of Savoy as interested in its success.[233]

The Superior of the Congregation did not confine himself to recommending to the Brothers the assiduous and attentive reading of the new course. With characteristic eagerness and after having informed the General Chapter of 1894, he decided to confer the title of "Master of Catechism" upon those Brothers who could prove that they had meticulously studied the Exposition of Christian Doctrine. The Regime itself was to draw up the subjects that were to be discussed in writing. In order to oversee the results he would himself inspect the corrected essays along with the grades granted by the examiners and the minutes of the oral examinations. "Masters of Catechism" would be dispensed from the daily recitation prescribed by the Rule. With the help of the Apologetics Course and under analogous circumstances they would then be able to obtain the diploma of "Catechist, Advanced Degree."[234]

The series of examinations began in 1896. The candidates were numerous. One hundred and twenty two out of 167 were passed during the first term, and after the second 281 out of 360.[235] The ardor for religious studies did not wane during the Generalate of Brother Gabriel of Mary. And Pope Pius X conveyed to him a marvelous stimulus: In an audience on October 11, 1903, he told the Superior of the Brothers Institute: "You, the Brothers of the Christian Schools, are the Apostles of the Catechism.

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The Pope who had restored the Church's authentic chant might also have applauded patient and fruitful efforts in the domain of sacred music.

Without pretending to original ideas and stunning achievements in the arts, La Salle's

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[232] Circular dated January 1, 1893

[233] Brother Véran Michael's obituary, 1900. — Father Secret, op. cit., pg. 112. — Circular dated February 19, 1938. — For fifteen years Brother Assistant Louis of Poissy himself very carefully supervised the publication of the Course and its "Abridgements." He unfailingly reported lengthy criticisms and judicious counsels to the author.

[234] Circular dated November 21, 1894.

[235] Circular dated February 19, 1938. The General Chapter of 1897 replaced the term "Master" for the more modest one of "Catechist, intermediate level."

disciples exerted an influence that has been widely misunderstood. Some of them have been painters and some sculptors and others among them have been excellent architects. Actually, the foundation of these talents has been a training in drawing. The art of drawing in the Brothers' Congregation has occupied a privileged place: we have observed it during Brother Philippe's time in France in connection with Brother Pierre Celestine and Brother Victoris, and in Belgium which gave birth to the St. Luke schools. Other examples would make a long list indeed.

Getting back to the musicians and apart from such composers as Brother Léonce, Brother Albert,[236] and Brother Felix Louis, here we must emphasize the liturgists. Having something of a right to the title was Brother Pierre Celestine, who drilled his Junior Novices in the meticulous execution and understanding of religious ceremonies.[237] The saintly Brother Arnold was, of course, no great artist, but through his piety and Roman fidelity, he loved Gregorian chant and demanded a respect for its tonal qualities and rhythms. In his mind music could not be separated from the beautiful prayers of the Missal that he explained to his novices at Thillois and that he urged them to inject into the structure of their prayer: "That", he used to say "is what is important, sound and unassailable."[238]

At the Motherhouse, after the persuasive promotion of the Solesmes Benedictines, Gregorian melodies spread their serenity.[239] At Buzenval, Brother Aidan, under the inspiration of Dom Pothier's directives, obtained superb results. In 1895 he wrote the following guidelines for his successors:

"The entire house must play an important rôle in the execution of the Chapel chant. That is the spirit of the Church. To attend office, in fact, is not to play a passive rôle or the rôle of an indifferent spectator; on the contrary, the more the faithful participate in the acts of worship the more they tend to achieve the purpose of their institution.

...As for the piece to be sung, the constant use of four-part music is unacceptable. [Here Brother Aidan lists his reasons: the difficulty of bringing together all of the necessary parts, the time demanded for practice, and, finally, the stony silence of the majority of the boys during the office.]

What, then, is there to sing? — Above all, Plain Chant, good Plain Chant. Is not the Chant liturgical by its very nature, the Church's own, and for Catholics a family treasure? And where, indeed, must this precious inheritance to be harvested most joyfully than in Religious houses and, of these, in houses of formation to the Religious life.[240]

Here were evidences of good taste, wisdom, informed piety and a return to a sound tradition. But in this area the Brothers had only to exercise the docility of thoughtful disciples. Their mastery had to be asserted elsewhere, in the their tasks as cooperators with and successors to Brother Victoris, in his *Course of Imitative Drawing* published in 1870 and in his *Elementary Treatise on Perspective published* in 1876. The method advocated in these two books was highlighted and honored at Expositions in London in 1884, Chicago in 1893 and in Paris in 1900. Textbooks for a Course on geometrical drawing and a Course of drawing for the

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[236] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 505 and 520.

[237] Ibid., pg. 540.

[238] Informative process.

[239] Essai historique sur la Maison Mère, pg. 214.

[240] Biography cited, pp. 16-17. Brother Felix Louis was also an apostle and promoter of Gregorian Chant. As early as 1878, well before Pius X's motu proprio and even before the Vatican edition officially determining the form of Gregorian Chant, he taught the Solesmes method to the novices in Annappes. (*Bulletin de l'Insitut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes* for July 1947, pp. 174-176.

certificate of elementary studies had, during the same quarter of a century, added to the reputation of Lasallian teachers.

The most distinguished was Brother Bernard Louis who seemed a throwback to Brother Victoris who had died prematurely. Brother Louis' exemplary successor was Brother Charles Albert, a native of Nantes and a nephew of Brother John of Matha,[241] who, as a youth, was a pupil of Brother Calesian whose very exceptional and appealing drawing classes brought together pupils from the city's parochial schools. In Alexis Béranger the old teacher trained a Religious educator and artist who was to bring out the full density of the methods envisaged by Brother Calesian. Interminable labor was to be revealed in a monumental work, the ultimate term of Brother Bernard Louis' undertakings. Death put an end to it in 1923.[242]

The talent which acceded to grind of teaching was able, at other moments, to release itself and blossom. Brother Samuel, acclaimed as early as 1860, was not the only one to adorn chapels and oratories with a resourceful brush and to serve up on canvas skillfully drawn portraits.[243] A native of Rouergue who had become a Roman in 1856 and died in 1902, Brother Labérius, had taught the sons of Italian and French families at St. Joseph's College and worked as a painter to embellish the walls, arches, and ceilings both of the institution on the Spanish Square, the bas-relief of the Pincio, of the college in Turin and of the novitiate in Albano, as wells as the residence school in Béziers, the novitiate in Fonseranes, the famous school at Passy, the house at Athis Mons and the Motherhouse.[244]

It should be noted that the District of Averyron had a number of people who were artists: Brother Ignatius of Jesus, who had done a portrait of Cardinal Giraud, Brother Ingaud Ernest who did pen-and-ink drawings and castings, Brother Ithéric Louis, and Brother Idinaël among others. The two best known were Brother Isaac of Spoleto — Charles Rigaud—and Brother Isadore of Peluse — Joseph Ratié.

Brother Isaac of Spoleto, born in 1846 in the Diocese of Albi, after finishing the novitiate became a teacher in the residence school in Rodez where he had begun his studies. To his skillful pen were due some very beautiful engravings: in the Rodez Cathedral, the church in Conques, the mansion in Bournazel. "Brother Charlou" — as he was called familiarly—directed most of the restoration and ornamentation in the residence school and the novitiate, the drawings for the stalls and the choir, and the plan for an exquisite chapel. Outside of his own region, he had cooperated in the pictorial decoration of the schools in Rheims, Dijon and Bayonne; he also worked on Rue Oudinot.[245]

His contemporary, Brother Isadore of Peluse, had the reputation for being a strong personality, energetic, with a majestic beard, a contemplative, questioning air, and a spirit whose stubborness never stood in the way of his genuine kindness and tact. A native of Espalion where he made his novitiate, in 1853 at the age of fifteen and already a teacher in the Institute, he was able to receive instruction from a pupil of Paul Delaroche, Charles Valette, and later on in Rodez from the painter Castanié.

He taught drawing in the residence school of St. Joseph where, at the end of each school year,

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241 Missionary in Reunion. See Index of Vols. V and VI of the present work.

242 I. de Cicé, note no. 16 in the biography of Brother Camillus of Jesus.

243 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 390-391 and above, pg. 4.

244 Obituary, pg. 1902. — The district of Rheims had also given artists to the Institute: Brother Arille, a painter of numerous works and Brother Boniface, a water colorist of high color.

245 Brother Isaac of Spoleto was sent to Cairo in 1904 where he died on April 27, 1908.

he held brilliant expositions. In 1866 he was sent as a teacher to Passy where he remained for ten years with Brother Libanos. But stricken with the early loss of hearing, he experienced such painful embarrassment and he fell into such a depression that in 1876 the Superiors thought it only proper to return him to his native region. His ever increasing deafness pushed him more deeply into an isolation of ideas and technique. Nevertheless, the painter in him remained sufficiently accomplished, sufficiently skillful to merit timely employment. And like Brother Isaac of Spoleto, for the glory of God, he was invited to practice his art at the Motherhouse, at St. Bernard's in Bayonne and in the residence school on Rue Venice in Rheims. In 1892 he was called to Egypt where he remained for three years. And after decorating the chapel of the college of St. Catherine in Alexandria, he began a huge work conceived after the manner of the Debate Over the Blessed Sacrament, which he called *Génies du Christianisme* — patriarchs and prophets in Heaven and illustrations of personalities drawn from the Church and Christian nations rising over events occurring in this world. "More a product of his faith than of his talent", the painting was completed in Rodez in 1895.

A series of portraits also commend the memory of Joseph Ratié to fanciers of psychological documentation: — the portrait, in triplicate, of Cardinal Bourret in the Bishop's office in Rodez and in the major and minor seminaries of that city; an expressive portrait of Brother Libanos on Rue Peyrollerie in Millau;[246] several other evocations of Brothers: — Brother Zoélus, Director of St. Affrique; Brother John Berchmans, Director of Béziers; Brother Gervais of Mary, Director of St. Joseph of Khoronfish in Cairo.[247]

Sculptors were supplied by the District of Clermont. During the Second Empire Brother Cantalian, under the name of Gamaliel, directed a school of sculpture and architecture in Volvic; on the side of a nearby hill he erected one of his works: — Notre-Dame de la Garde, hewed out of solid lava. One of his contemporaries, Jean Bessaire — Brother Hariolf — born in Vieille-Brioude in 1823 and died, at nearly ninety, in Moulins in 1910, threw himself into even bolder activities. At Châteauneuf-sur-Cher there rises a vaulted sanctuary with three naves and surmounted by a tower: Brother Hariolf had drawn up the plans for it and directed its construction; he and a local group he had formed assembled the materials and sculpted the capitals and cornices. It was the seat of the Archconfraternity of "Our Lady of Children". In the tower there is an ingenious system, invented by the Brother, that sets in motion a beautiful combination of chimes.[248]

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For the French government to have invited Brother Joseph in 1873 and Brother Exupérien in 1897 to the State Counsel on Public Education it was necessary that there could have been no doubt about the Brothers' authority in matters of teaching and education and that their Congregation hold a very high place among educators.

Textbooks written under the authority of Brother Philippe had generally contributed to that reputation. Brother Jean-Olympe had taken the same precautions as his predecessor to surround himself with experts in each of the special fields. The "Committees" in which Brothers Angelum, Anthymius, Paphnucius and Alexis still participated, continued to review and reedit texts as well as to publish new books as required. In the beginning of Brother Irlide's

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[246] This portrait may be found on page 518 of Vol. V of the present work.

[247] Archives of the District of Rodez, Brother Ildefonse Gabriel and Brother Irlide Bernard. — Obituary of Brother Isidore of Peluse, 1906. — We shall deal later (Chap. III of Part III) with Brother Fidelus Gabri

[248] Archives of the District of Clermont-Ferrand, Historique.

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generalate, Brother Agapet[249] presided over discussions and decisions which involved instruction in the French language and arithmetic for the elementary grades, as well as instruction in mathematics, bookkeeping, cosmography and physics for the professional and residence schools. For a longer period of time, Brother Calimer of Jesus, with whose friendship with Brother Irlide we are familiar,[250] brought the benefits of his experience to various meetings, especially when there was question of the teaching of history.

Geography could not have had a better advocate than Brother Alexis.[251] But this great pioneer was not alone. His work was understood, promoted and commented upon through out the Congregation. During the Easter vacation of 1875 thirty Brothers assembled in a sort of convention in Bordeaux. Most of them had previously contributed papers or reports intended to function as bases for discussion: thus, Brother Nicholas of Mary, at the time Director in Paris, Brother Albert of Mary, Sub-director at Passy, Brother Abondis of Mary, Sub-director in Dreux, Brother Evaristus Abel, teacher at St. Omer, Brother Benedict Constant from Rheims, Brother Raphael, from Lyons,... etc. Brother Calimer and Brother Alexis, of course, were among them. Representatives of many regions were present; those from Pas-de-Calais, Nord, Oise, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Côte-d'Or and Loire. Brother Adorateur presided, assisted by Brothers Angelum and Anthymius.

Eight sessions were set aside for the examination of books, atlases, maps and cartographic texts published by the Procurator-general. The participants at the convention pronounced in favor of the excellence of the method that had been brought up to date by their illustrious Belgian confrere and which had become the official method of the Institute.

In order to manage and edit future works a Committee was to be set up at Rue Oudinot. It was to follow up on the creation of wall maps; adding to the maps of "Hypsometric France" and "Administrative France" there was to be published a "Hypsometric Europe", a "Political Europe" and a world-map with a planisphere; a "commercial character" was to be given to this world-map on which were to be indicated the ports of major traffic, the principal navigational lines and colonial products.

The group in Bordeaux expressed an interest in "local geography". It asked that maps of the Commune, Canton, and Department be given a place in every school. And if schools in the same jurisdiction asked for it, these maps, varying according to the region, would be inserted into textbooks as "supplements". This special task, intended to keep children informed about their immediate environment, was to be entrusted to "corresponding members": a plan or outline, sketched by the Central Commission, would serve as a model to maintain the unity of style.[252] Many other educational disciplines were to benefit from similar efforts: — personal observations dictated by experience, exchange of views, conclusions drawn up after agreement among experts, division of work, reports written by individuals or by closely collaborating teams, review by competent committees, and approval by higher authority. Brother Louis of Poissy presided over the Committee on textbooks after 1882.[253] Brother Louis was a philosopher and with him there served scientists, literary men, poets, grammarians and even musicians: there was Brother Armin Victor, Brother Vigbert Louis, Brother Idelphus, Brother

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[249] Died in 1880. — Obituary dated the same year.

[250] See above, pg. 61.

[251] For Brother Alexis see Indices to Vols. V and VI.

[252] We stated above (pg. 32) that Brother Gabriel of Mary was also called to perform this function.

[253] Archives of the District of Bordeaux, report of the geography commission.

Paphnucius, Brother Albert-des-Anges...etc. — good minds, possessed of a broad culture, scrupulous inquirers who were anxious to remain in contact with the problems of the times and the solutions that were being suggested, powerful educators who continued by means of the written word the influence they had been exerting through counsel and example.

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The Procurator-general, or the affiliated book outlet shipped out thousands of Brothers' textbooks. Until 1904 they bore the initials of the officiating Superior-general: after F.P.B. there was F.I.C., F.J.J., and F.G.M.[254] By the end of the century, these books represented the work of several hundreds of Brothers, occasionally assisted by a friend outside the Institute.[255]. They were circulated throughout the world and contributed to the spread of Christian thought and to the prominence of the French language. Brothers of other nationalities used them in the original text or translated them into Spanish, Italian, German and English, or adapted them to local needs without modifying the thought behind their original inspiration.

It is not impossible to pierce the veil of their traditional anonymity. Their authors were known at the Motherhouse. And if, while they lived, their names were uttered only among the initiated, death raised the curtain of secrecy, and obituaries applied the *suum cuique*.

Thus, we possess the list of Brother Louis of Poissy's writings, all the way from his manuals of piety for young people and his "lectures on lexicology and style" — originally composed for pupils in the residence school in Béziers — to his introduction to philosophy "according to the best Scholastic authors". The first edition of this remarkable book appeared in 1875 with a foreword by Bishop Cabrières of Montpellier. It was distinguished the following year by Pius IX's Brief; and a Roman Bishop translated the Brother's text into Latin for senior seminarians. Written in an energetic style and following a rigorous logic, the *Cours élémentaire de philosophie chrétienne* was especially drawn to the attention of the clergy at a time when Leo XIII launched his *Encyclical Aeterni Patris* on August 4, 1879. But young minds — including those of the Institute's Scholastics — were scarcely ready to appreciate — in that abstract, concise and austere form — the principles of St. Thomas Aquinas.

In any case Brother Louis of Poissy gave impetus to a movement of thought, and philosophy became enfranchised among De La Salle's sons. At the time, in the public schools, the highest level of secondary studies that involved neither Latin nor Greek included only a tedious smattering of logic and ethics. Brother Gabriel of the Cross, a teacher in the residence school in Clermont, was able to illumine the sacred fire in the souls of his pupils. One of the latter who was to become the Dominican philosopher, Father Mandonnet, said that "his classes could have no lofty pretenses, but Brother Gabriel inserted into it an energy that touched our inner-most being." He represented the power of the teacher who is overwhelmed by a sense of the divine and who, in all his intellectual undertakings proceeds to the very articles of the Credo.[256]

It was important to extend the benefits of this Christian culture. And this is why as early as 1882 Brother Irlide called to Paris Brother Vigbert Louis, a native of Savoy, whom he believed

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[254] Brother Philip Bransiet, Brother Irlide Casaneuve, Brother Joseph Josserand, Brother Gabriel of Mary. — After 1904, anonymity was secured by the words "By a group of teachers."

[255] The Brothers had absolutely no policy of systematically rejecting books written by people outside their Institute. Brother Irlide, writing to Eugene Rendu to congratulate him on his Manuel de l'Enseignement primaire said that he was pleased with the profit the Brothers could draw from the book and the way in which the author stressed the methods of the Brother of the Christian Schools. (Information supplied by Brother Adrain Charles). Gustave Hubault's *Causeries sur notre Histoire* was warmly received and promoted by the Congregation

[256] Biographie du Frère Gabriel-de-la-Croix, pp. 60 and 101.

was able to initiate adolescents into the inquiries and hypotheses typical of philosophy. He authorized Brother Louis to study for university degrees both at the Sorbonne and at the Catholic Institute. A splendid mission as teacher in Bordeaux interrupted the publication of his *Cours de philosophie*. A "trial" edition of the book appeared in 1893 at Saint Etienne, and the definitive edition was published by Mame in 1896. It was not intended to be an original synthesis. The 900 page volume provided nothing more than a meticulous compilation: psychology and ethics made up its two main parts, while standing in between them were nine lectures on logic and seven on metaphysics.

From one end of the book to the other there were careful definitions, useful memory aides and a great number of quotations. Overall, Brother Louis, obedient to his Superiors and sustained by a burning conviction, had courageously embarked upon a journey traversed by hazards. He did not fail of his goal: he conveyed his youthful readers to the baccalaureate while awakening them to reflection and informing their conscience.

At the end of 1904 he completed and commented upon his textbook in *Méthodologie de l'enseignement de la philosophie* which is certainly the best instructional book that he wrote. Into it he poured the experience of a half-century of teaching. And protesting against skepticism and declaring that every science requires the participation of mind and will, he shows that philosophy possesses the key to the intellectual and moral treasury.

Later on, together with his friend Brother Israel, he published collections of essays and finally a curious and suggestive pamphlet entitled *Les Humanités pour tous, par les sciences morales and religieuses*, an argument in favor of Christian humanism as distinguished from classical humanism.[257]

Mathematics barely entered into his considerations. However people were not unaware that the Institute promoted mathematics with the most outstanding success. Authors of books in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry and mechanics made up a splendid cluster of writers, which included Brother Gustave, the former Director of the normal school in Quimper, Brother Narcellian, a future Assistant, Brothers Jumenis, Albertis and Aventine of Mary — the three of them from the residence school at Passy — Brother Armine Victor, who died as Visitor in America and Brother Regis Louis, Regis Pialat, who had been a Major at the School of Mines in St. Etienne, then a humble novice in Besancon, after which, for ten years, he was a teacher in a residence school whose pride he became until he slowly succumbed to tuberculosis and died an edifying death in Mauléon.[258]

Brother Gabriel-Marie — Edmond Brunhes — Assistant to Brothers Irlide and Joseph and one day Superior-general of the Institute himself was also a great mathematician. His *'Elements de géometrie, d'arpentage et de géometrie descriptive* with its accompanying workbook revealed much more than a "skilled textbook". It disclosed a teacher who understood students and appealed in the most direct way to young people who wanted to broaden their minds, stay the course and master the material.

Later on he re-edited his work on geometry in a text that was both inventive and learned, rich in insights, brilliantly combining theory and practice. He was also the author of book on mechanics that showed his constant concern for a sort of scientific "elegance" in the selection of theorems and problems.[259]

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[257] We recall here that we have done a study of "Brother Louis," his life as a Religious educator...and his poetry, in a book published in 1929 by the Procurator-general.

[258] Essai historique sur la Maison Mère, pg. 206. — Choix de notices, Vol. II, pp. 483-507.

[259] Obituary of M.H. Brother Gabriel-Marie, pp. 171-176. — Books of accounting published by the Institute for instruction in Commercial Courses were the work of Brother Bernard of Mary especially. He was a native of Lyons and a former pupil of the Brothers at the residence school called "Lazaristes" who had entered the Institute

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A periodical publication was added to the volumes that had been produced by groups at the Motherhouse and their auxiliaries in the provinces. It contributed a great deal to the support of professional activities.

It was called *L'Éducation chrétienne*, "a weekly educational review published every Saturday", as it proclaimed on its first page. It assumed life "under the auspices of the "General Association for Education and Teaching"; the editorial board and management took up offices at 78 Saints-Pères Street. In fact, the principal source of inspiration and the main cog in the operation, from its founding in October of 1891 and throughout the nineteen years of its fruitful existence, was Brother Justinus. He was the Head of the Institute's Secretariat and he gathered materials, recruited writers, prepared the issues and assured that copies of the Review received a wide circulation.

Brother Joseph's Circular Letter on November 21, 1894 stated that *L'Éducation chrétienne* intended to "direct the Brothers in the practice of teaching". And it succeeded in that task by means of a wide variety of articles dealing with general and special problems in education that turned the readers' attention to France and to foreign lands.[260]

"Through the contests that the Review sponsored in its columns", the Superior continued, "a center for competition was created for our principal schools." These contests were the consequence of the "Questions" posed at the end of informative articles and theoretical explanations and occupied an important place in the weekly: religion, first of all, and then grammar, spelling, French composition, reading commentary, arithmetic, history, geography, commercial law and industrial legislation and domestic economy suggested commentary and examples. Useful information was terminated by listing the subjects covered in the sessions for the certificate of studies, the elementary and advanced diplomas.

On the whole what was covered was elementary education. But Brother Justinus' ambitions went beyond that. He visualized a "special" form of instruction — one that would eventually be called "modern secondary education". Its programs resembled those found at the "Junior high school" level; and in the Institute's residence schools there was a slow movement from the simple diploma to the baccalaureate. It was essential to provide the directors and teachers in these schools with suggestions and working materials. It was to serve this purpose that the bi-monthly "Supplement" to *L'Éducation chrétienne* was published. A "summary" of its first number read as follows: psychological and literary development of the "education of taste" by Pélissier-Séguier, a former student in Upper Normal School and doctor in philosophy; an English composition (accompanied by the author's initials); a German composition by V. Mohler, teacher in St. Barbara's college and in the advanced commercial school the Brothers opened in Paris; a "history lecture" by Gustave Hubault, teacher in St. Louis th high school; a "note on the handling of chemicals" written by a civil engineer with whose career we are familiar: — Regis Pialat. Finally, advise on educational hygiene by Father Fonssagrives.

There were sections that dealt with questions in mathematics and physics that examiners in the special baccalaureate program had recently raised; together with an analysis of the fable *Le Viellard et les trois jouvenceaux,* the subject of a French composition given to candidates

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in 1856 at the age of twenty-six after having been head bookkeeper with an important corporation. He had taught at Passy until 1871. His experience in business had moved the Superiors to entrust him with the Institute's financial interest, which were necessarily numerous and complex in a Society of Religious teachers. He performed both his teaching responsibilities and his management of investments conscientiously and honorably, as might have been expected. (Obituary, 1905.)

[260] The Weekly Chronicle in fact presented a summary of political news.

soliciting the same diploma.

The issue closed out with a list of tests relating to the contest of the National Agricultural Institute and by "an exchange of opinions" concerning "the artificial production of rain".

There was intelligent eclecticism manifested not only in the presentation of the articles but also in the selection of writers.[261] At no time in his life was Brother Justinus ever a man of exclusive preferences or of narrow horizons. He sought, of course — it was his right and duty —writers among the experts in his Institute; we have just referred to Brother Regis; another, more durable because death had spared him, brought to light a magnificent talent.[262]

Brother Paul Joseph (Paul Hanrot) belonged to a quite respectable Rheims family. As a pupil in the city's residence school, his scholarly successes were countless. He was intelligent, impulsive and idealistic. But physically he was infirm and unable to walk without a cane. Religious vocations, however, surmount obstacles. And so, at eighteen years of age, the young man was admitted to the novitiate at Thillois in September of 1875. He returned as a teacher to his beloved residence school and surprised his colleagues with the vigor of his work, the charm of his eloquence and dazzled them with his exuberance. He was gifted and adapted well to a variety of situations: a careful treasurer, as well as a choir master, organist and composer of music. But he was in a very special way an incomparable teacher of literature: as instructor in the upper classes after 1884, he fascinated his pupils; and it was not only the orators and the poets, the moralists, philosophers and the theologians, but the heros, the men of action and the saints whose story marvelously assisted his apostolate as teacher.

He sent articles to the Review in Paris. His style and ideas caught the attention of the Superior-general who called him to Rue Oudinot in October of 1895. Brother Paul Joseph remained there permanently in the service of the Regime, the Procurator and Brother Justinus.

He studied at the same time that he was writing; and he became a student once again before returning to the post of teacher and lecturer. He received honors and diplomas at the Sorbonne and gained distinction at the Catholic Institute. Shortly thereafter he began to give his "literary and historical courses" in Beauvais.[263] And later on at Passy and at Francs-Bourgeois, teachers, Junior Novices and Scholastics, the Brothers in the commercial courses along with the personnel in both schools, benefitted from similar instruction.

Until he died in 1923, and in spite of the precarious state of his health, his painfully high-strung condition and the discomfort of his disability, Brother Paul Joseph would have to be ready to face the many tasks of a writer, an author of educational books, Director of the *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* and the biographer of a remarkable and venerated man, the discrete and esteemed auxiliary of the Superior-general, Brother Imier of Jesus.[264]

We have long been in his debt for the wealth of learning that he had accumulated concerning his Institute. There is no possibility of being able to itemize it here in detail. On the other hands, one of the works he published prior to 1904 falls into line with our current concerns. The World Exposition of 1900 called forth the *Élements de pédagogie pratique.* At the behest of Brother Gabriel of Mary, Brother Paul Joseph took a very active part in promoting his Institute's

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[261] Lay participation, however, vanished.

[262] It is also appropriate to mention, among the "Supplement's" best writers, Brother Celsus of Jesus, a specialist in the teaching of French.

[263] See above, pp. 144-145.

[264] On Brother Paul Joseph see *Choix de notices*, Vol. II, pp. 274 et sq. — A definitive biography of the distinguished Brother is being written.

participation in the huge enterprise; and after having supervised the selection of texts, books, drawings, maps, instruments and all sorts of classroom work contributed by the schools, he remained at the stall answering visitors' questions. From the notes that, as a skilled observer, he was able to jot down, the examination of the jury's decisions and the study of the educational displays and projects from all over the world, Brother Paul Joseph was able to put together a magnificent report. This text, revised, augmented and transformed, went to compose the two volumes he published in 1902.

The volumes had a quite laudable precedent in a book on education written with a great deal of wisdom and discernment by a former Visitor of Savoy, Brother Calix.[265] In the book by the more recent of the two authors the principles of education were harmonized into a vigorous synthesis.

The work was heralded in a Circular Letter dated April 7, 1901 along with its four subdivisions: "Education"; "Teaching in General, its Methods and Procedures"; "Various Specializations within the School Program"; and "Continuing Tasks". The Institute's archives had been explored and traditional texts carefully and respectfully checked. And the personal experience of the author/educator had been added to his knowledge and love of the Lasallian past.

One hundred and eighty pages of the work were published first in September of 1901. Separated from "Special Methodology" which was to compose the second volume, the first volume dealt with the teaching of catechism by recalling general rules and by showing their various applications; commentaries and analyses of Holy Scripture, explanations of the meaning of a mystery of faith, information concerning the liturgy, insights into Church history and advice concerning "exhortations" substantially fleshed out definitions and principles.[266] Brother Paul Joseph had so completely answered to what the Superiors had been looking for that they were looking forward to more books from his expert hand. A revision of the *Conduct,* whose most recent edition dated from 1877, had long been sought. But the task of bringing that book up to date appeared an extremely sensitive one: its venerable text could only be changed with great circumspection. In order to take the time for reflection and initiate serious discussion, it was determined to publish first an "essay" written quite independently by one of the most competent Catholic educators.

This was *Directoire pédagogique* that appeared in 1903. The author did not pretend to provide an exhaustive treatment. He left aside child psychology; and for many important problems he referred his readers to *Élements de pédagogie pratique* that had been published the year before. The new study was directed toward teachers in elementary education and aimed to be no more than a guide to certain essential goals, which it dealt with successively: "the initiation of the pupil into the Christian life", the "educational organization and the principles of teaching", "specialization in the program", and "discipline".

The Directory was inspired by a very wise cast of mind, a concern for precision, simplicity and practical results. The development of methods and the appeal for creativity seem to be no less necessary than the preservation of tested rules — something that the anxieties of religiously minded persons had been constantly asserting, as the following lines testify.

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[265] Died in 1882. — Father Secret, op. cit., pg. 105.

[266] The Circular of September 22, 1901, presented this overall picture to the Brothers. The question came up again in the Circular Letter of February 19, 1938 which tied the name of Brother Paul Joseph to Brother Bernard Louis, the author of *Manuel du catéhiste* in 1907. The books of both men, according to the M.H. Brother Junien Victor, were the "*vade mecum* of the pre-war generation." Pius X, in a Brief, praised the *Manuel du catéhiste*; and in a bibliography put together by the Jesuits, Brother Bernard-Louis work was described as a "perfect" explanation of the technique of a catechism lesson.

Brother Paul Joseph wrote:

"The preparation of the child for First Communion must begin with his entrance into the school. Even at the age of six or eight years he must be involved in this great event and spoken to about it so that he can form a lofty idea of it, which gradually will penetrate to his very soul. And it is at this time that talks on the Eucharist, the Mass and Holy Communion are proposed. The teacher is cautioned to draw the attention of school children while they are present in church to the tabernacle, to the living Reality, the divine Guest who dwells with us. The teacher is urged to recommend and promote daily visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and to explain the meaning of a "spiritual communion".[267] Prior to Pius X's decree it was impossible with greater zeal to emphasize the importance of the Eucharistic life.

Once these preliminaries were heeded and approved, Brother Gabriel-Marie gave the order to circulate the new *Conduct* in the Communities. In his Circular of December 3, 1903 he suggested how new edition was assembled. Regarding some points it had been decided to stick to partial changes, indeed, to restorations; and not without conclusive arguments, the editors turned out to be clearly conservative in matters having to do with catechetical methodology and on the question of the virtues and qualities of a teacher. Cautiously and only in details did they modify prescriptions having to do with supervision, competition, and discipline. Similarly it didn't appear to serve any good purpose to change radically what had been said about the writing classes.

Where then did the revisionist hand operate boldly with the Regime's approval? Brother Paul Joseph had introduced at the beginning of the 1903 edition a "summary of the general principles of education" — "the rational basis of all pedagogical science". At this point the philosopher in him took flight, without, however, stepping beyond the appropriate limits. Nowhere did he define himself over against Brothers who were faithful to the traditions of the Founder; once again he emerged as the apostle of Marian devotions, especially in the section on counsels concerning Congregations of the Blessed Virgin. The educator and the teacher had set himself the task of explaining the modern methodology of the sciences taught in schools of the twentieth century.[268]

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Alongside groups brought together by the Motherhouse and writers who might be described as "official", there existed in the Institute a certain number of scholars whose research was ordinarily undertaken on an individual basis with nothing more than the permission of the Superiors. It turned out that their efforts attracted favor and, as a normal consequence, they were considered not only as classroom teachers or Directors of Communities in a District but also as specialists in a science at the service of the entire Institute.

Included in this category was a man like Brother Lucard who had become the chronicler approved in high places;[269] or a man like Brother Asclepiades who having enlarged his teaching influence by a variety of writings — chronology, grammar, geography and catechism — between 1876 and 1886 occupied the position of archivist at Rue Oudinot.[270]

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[267] Directoire pédagogique, pg. 51.

[268] Finally Brother Paul Joseph wrote his *manuel de pédagogie* published in 1909 under the penname of "Edmund Gabriel" (= Edmund Brunhes, Brother Gabriel-Marie.)

[269] In a notice attached to the Circular of April 27, 1881 Brother Irlide declared his intention of "publishing the documentation and *acta* which would perpetuate the Annals. He invited the Brothers to search the Communal and Departmental Archives and send their findings to him.

[270] Born in Prauthoy (Upper Marne) in 1821; son of a physician; entered the Institute at fourteen years of age; taught at Passy (1829-1864); Director and then Visitor in Moulins (1864-1876). — Obituary, 1886.

The reputation of both men did not extend beyond the Institute. The same thing was not true for the very original researchers, those who had gained distinction in the natural sciences. During an earlier period, Jean-August Étienne, the son of a wealthy landowner in the Dauphiné had won fame under the name of Brother Ogérian in the Jura, Bourgogne and in far off America for his work not only as a naturalist but as a geologist.[271]

Jean-Baptist Caumel, Brother Héribaud Joseph presents the most authentic figure of a scientist. His fondness for botany became clear as a youth when, after his novitiate in 1858 in Clermont, he came back to the headquarters in Puy-de-Dôme as a teacher of mathematics. An incurable deafness obliged him to give us that work, and he settled down to a life of botanical research.

Flore d'Auvergne had appeared in 1883.[272]. *Élements de botanique* dated from 1890. Brother Joseph's principal work deals with microscopic algae; he called it Diatomées, and it was published in 1893. Six years later he produced another publication called *Muscinées d'Auvergne.* His complete bibliography occupies a distinguished place in the scientific catalogue with twenty five books and pamphlets.

A Laureate and corresponding member of the French Institute, Brother Joseph was elected in 1898 as a Director of the International Academy of Botanical Geography. On the occasion of the 1900 Exposition his herbarium filled an entire section of the Science exhibit.

The Brother continued to be fervent and modest, kindly and obliging in all circumstances. Nothing upset his serenity. Although deprived of hearing and walled in by a cruel silence, he was constantly high-spirited and jovial. It would have been difficult to find a happier personality, a spirit more open or more steadfastly virtuous. Even during a time when bigotry hounded the Brothers' steps, he evoked goodwill and found himself surrounded by the respect of all. A credit to his Congregation, he deserved to no less a degree to be the pride of his fellow-citizens.[273]

A native of Aveyron, Étienne Granié, Brother Sennen, was also dedicated to the study of plants. Having been sent to Montpellier, he made contact with Loret and Barrandon, the authors of *Flore de l'érault* and thereafter with Jules Daveau, the keeper of the University botanical gardens. His competence became obvious. An indefatigable hiker, he combined with Canon Coste to collect samples of vegetative species the descriptions and drawings of which were published in *Flore illustrée de la France*. From the city of La Nouvelle in Aude, where the Superiors finally assigned him a residence, he explored the region, Corbières, Canigou and pushed on into the western Pyrenees.[274] In this way Brother Sennen carried on, in St. John Baptist de La Salle's Institute, a tradition that refuted, if there was still need to do so, the oft discredited myth promoted by misleading adversaries and approved by persons who were well intentioned but too careless about the truth, concerning the limited science of Religious

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[271] Archives of the District of Besancon, ms. information concerning Brother Ogérian. See also Index to Vol. V of the present work.

[272] Recall that in the writingof this book Brother Joseph was assisted by Brother Gustave, a teacher in the residence school in Clermont for nineteen years (1858-1877) before he became Director of the Normal School in Quimper

[273] Born, April 4, 1841, in Padayrolles, Boisset (Cantal); he died December 22, 1917. He was the uncle of Cardinal Verdier. His Nouvelle Flore d'Auvergne appeared in 1915. The city of Clermont-Ferrand named one of its thoroughfares "Brother Héribaud Street." — Archives of the District of Clermont, Historique ms. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for July 1921, pp. 257-265.

[274] *Rivista lasalliana for June 1937, pg. 372.*

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French, the mother-tongue of these men, was also the official language of their Congregation. The Founder's writings as well as his Rule provided a model of style that was employed in the 17th century. It was crucial, in order to understand De La Salle's thought, to understand the language he used. The Superiors were therefore concerned with a question which, in their eyes, could have nothing to do with nationalism, but which they believed involved the most important interests of their Religious family. "We desire", wrote Brother Gabriel-Marie in his Circular of July 7, 1897, "that every young Brother of the Christian Schools, correctly regarding the French as the language of the Institute, try to acquire a sufficient knowledge of it so that he might share to the highest degree possible in everything that is done, said or written in our revered Congregation."

The growth of Communities situated outside of France and the international recruitment that was being effected lent meaning and force to this appeal. Language is the vehicle of unity. Since the Institute's legislation from the beginning had excluded both the teaching and the use of Latin in Brothers' schools, communication had to be realized in some other way.

Prior to 1905, the Institute's center had been in Paris, and French Brothers made up the largest single group. It was by no means a critical problem, but nevertheless a persistent one. The Superior-general raise it once again on October 22, 1899:
"No one," (in order to take part in an annual retreat) "should be prevented out of ignorance of French..., the language of the Institute, of the Blessed Founder and of more than 12,000 Brothers...the language used in our General Chapters...the one to which the Pope himself has recourse in matters concerning our Institute." This situation and the principle that brought it about were, thank God, not misunderstood by the beneficiaries of the Founder's inheritance, no matter to what nationality they belonged. Congratulates were extended to the institutions in Italy, Spain, Ireland, and Austria for the results they had obtained. And in 1898 and in 1899 Brother Gabriel of Mary had the keen satisfaction of witnessing the Visitors of France, Belgium, Algeria, the Near East, Austria, Italy, Spain and England gathered together with the members of the Regime listening to the same sermons and the same conferences.

These clear guidelines were reinforced by a decree of the General Chapter of 1901 that prescribed the study of French in all countries to which the Institute had spread. The position was not to alter: filial piety, respect for tradition, fraternal understanding, and obedience were to be exhibited through the knowledge and use of the language of St. John Baptist de La Salle. In some sense it was a sacred language. But it was also a working-tool. While learning to use it, the Brothers were never to forget that they must communicate the knowledge of it to their pupils. At this level, they continued to be teachers. Through French, both within and beyond the frontiers of the native land of the Congregation, the Brothers pressed forward in the work of forming minds and the flowering of a particular culture, the Roman, Catholic and Mediterranean civilization.

But there should be no misunderstanding. Neither the Superior nor the Chapter meant to create a monopoly. Their intentions become clear when we read further into the texts: while the Institute, overall, must speak French, members confined to the homeland were called upon to learn foreign languages.

In promoting this policy Brother Gabriel-Marie placed as much emphasis as on maintaining the linguistic unity of the Congregation. "Young French Brothers" were to be ready to study a modern language in order to be better prepared for any assignment and increase their effectiveness, while they broadened their horizons.

And, on a related theme, the Circular of February 11, 1903 spelled out the policy expressed in July of 1897: "The General Chapter", it declared, "was eager to espouse — and to accentuate

by its vote — the proposition regarding the study of a language in the Junior Novitiates and Scholasticates." The Brothers Visitor were to supervise the faithful execution of capitulary decisions. Outside of France, French was to be learned, while within France, depending upon the region, one of the principal European languages was to be studied.

And it was not just a law observed in the breach. There spread a zeal for study that sustained itself by the desire to understand one's brothers in religion but even more so by missionary dreams. It sprung up everywhere when, in order to continue to wear their holy habit, the Brothers — in Toulouse, Clermont, Nantes, Quimper, Besancon and by the hundreds in every District — preferred to go into exile.

The movement was not without its precursors. It would be repetitious to rehearse here names of the gallant men who in the course of the 19th century went off to teach in Asia, Africa and America. A fresher approach will be to underscore the language programs in two French provinces that met "regionalist" concerns.

The heart of Brittany had preserved its language, and it was anxious to transmit its literary achievements to its own people. And, in the west and the south, unassuming teachers wished to undertake a task that was valuable for their native region.

One of the juries at the World's Fair of 1878 bestowed an honorable mention on M. Gallou — Brother Colomban of Mary, Director of the school in Plouguerneau — for a report on teaching French through Breton. The idea advanced at that time was realized twenty one years later in a book by Brother Constantius, Director of the school in Landivisiau: Kenteliou Bresounek du drei e Gallek. It included two hundred themes to be translated into French, a classification of the most ordinary words, a lexicon of the most difficult terms and exercises in gender, number, adjectives, pronouns and verbs. The pupils' text appeared in 1899 and the teacher' manual in 1900.[275]

This educational procedure was practiced on a larger scale and more successfully by a native of Provence, Brother Savinian. When people in Provence talk about regionalism in relation to the school, they refer to "Savinianism".

Brother Savinian, who was a teacher in a public school on Rue Ortolans in Avignon between 1872 and 1882 and successively Director of a Brothers' school in Arles between 1882 and 1895 and inspector of private education, showed remarkable qualities as a teacher and a vast understanding. His mother-tongue was Provencal, besides which he knew Latin and five modern languages.

With a sound judgment in matters of language, he did not think very highly of the method which consisted of learning French through French when one was facing youngsters who had been raised to speak another idiom. Since his own system had worked very well with his pupils, to explain its principles he wrote a complete series of books; and in 1882 he wrote a Provencal grammar, followed by several versions; the book concluded with a poem entitled *La Lionide*.[276].

The grammar included a particularly innovative study of the parts of the sentence. The versions — developmental, from the elementary level to exercises for the higher level — employed at first a child's vocabulary, followed by that of the community and the family with its customs, sayings and proverbs, and finally southern history and literature, in such a way as to make up a very substantial anthology. The child soaked in not only the atmosphere of his region; the translation demanded of him forced him both to understand better the wisdom of his own language and to make every effort of reflection necessary to discover the best equivalents in the purest French vocabulary and syntax. In this way, beginning with the primary classes, the "Savinian" method obtained for the child advantages that a pupil at the secondary school level

[275] Archives of the District of Quimper.

[276] A story for young people, called *Firmin et Téte d'or* has remained unpublished

ought normally to gain from the study of languages.

As for *La Lionide*, it was a sort of epic which, rousing the reader's feelings of patriotism and an admiration for heros, told the story of the Saracen invasion of the 8th century.

A Congress of Learned Societies at the Sorbonne in 1896 acknowledged the educational value of so extensive a work. Frederick Mistral — not surprisingly — paid tribute to the books, as did Michael Bréal, who could not be suspected of partiality.[277]

With his notes and reports to the Motherhouse, Brother Savinian obtained a favorable hearing within the Institute. As an archeologist as well as a grammarian, philologist and poet, he left behind him disciples with specialized skills,[278] all of whom proclaimed the merits of the pioneer.

[277] In 1907 Father Aurouze, chaplain of the high school in Avignon, defended a thesis on the regionalism and methods of Brother Savinian, for a doctorate in literature.

[278] To one of these, M.J. Flamme (Brother Sarasin Vincent) we owe the substance of these last few pages.

PART TWO

THE INSTITUTE AND THE THIRD REPUBLIC

CHAPTER ONE

Preliminary Struggles

At this point we enter into the political and religious history of the French people. Until the eve of the bloody drama of 1914, it is a history filled with quarrels and events painful to acknowledge. The Brothers would have gratefully stood aside from the struggles that divided citizens. They only wanted to pursue their task as teachers quietly, in concord with Catholic families, in union with the clergy and in honest competition — although not in bitter rivalry, nor in undeclared or open warfare — with the teachers in State schools.

On October 1, 1875, immediately after a visit MacMahon made to the Normal School in Rouen, Brother Irlide wrote to the Marshall, the President of the Republic: "Our Venerable Father was the first to confer upon France this sort of institution. To his mind, Religious teachers should be the models, sometimes the mentors, but always the friends of lay teachers, since both are intended to work together in the great work of the Christian education of the people."[279]

In these terms the Superior-general was expressing one of his most profound convictions. He himself had once taught in the mantle of the lay teacher. As Superior of the Institute he was only asking that the Brothers, involved in the State system by the decree of 1808 and employed by every government, royal, imperial and republican, be left in the service of public education. Like his predecessors, Brothers Anacletus and Philippe, he had no intention of paying allegiance to any political party. His Circular Letter in 1878, appearing at a time when "anticlericalism" had become a threat, repeat the statements that were made by the Superior-general in 1844:[280] "As strangers to politics, we must reserve our zeal and husband our legitimate influence for the lofty purposes entrusted to us. Our Congregation has been established in many countries whose public institutions differ; and it must therefore show no preference in this domain. It respects the form of government adopted by each nation."

In spite of certain personal biases, disquieting tendencies or imperialist ambitions, a man like Decazes during the Restoration, or Guizot, Minister in the July Monarchy, or Duruy who was in favor with Napoleon III had a proper understanding of the Brothers' rôle. They recognized that, following De La Salle's example, and without a second thought for money, ambition, or power, the teachers in the black habits worked to teach, to spread morality, to civilize children and to enable the youth of the masses to control the means to live honorably while realizing a prosperous and peaceful progress socially. Pupils in the Brothers' schools generally could not be included among the "adherents of the ancien régime" or the enemies of the democracy, nor could they be counted among the anarchists.

How did it happen that the Third Republic followed other counsels? We cannot deny that the reason for the quick victory of their adversaries lie in the inadequacies and clumsiness of French Catholics themselves. Political controversies had for too long dominated the attention of too many of the faithful: considerable efforts were expended with the view of restoring the "king". Problems posed by industrial and capitalist innovations, and which preoccupied a man like Ketteler in Germany, had scarcely occasioned a persistent inquiry since De Coux's articles in the far off days of newspaper *L'Avenir* and since Frederick Ozanam's *Ère nouvelle*. Count Albert de Mun's "social vocation", after meditations during a captivity and faced with a

[279] Brother Irlide's obituary, pg. 65.

[280] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 229.

Parisian revolution, was merely talked about. The workers had been complaining — and justly so. They felt the full force of the injustice of their lot; while the orthodox did not lend an ear to listen to these complaints, or, if they did catch an echo, they took alarm or became indignant. People wanted their money! The world was threatened by a dreadful upheaval! Proudhon recruited partisans of the view that "property is theft"! The clergy, itself disturbed, perplexed and quite vaguely submissive, confined itself to recommending alms to the rich and resignation to the poor. In some dioceses the catechism "had not so much as a word to assert the rights of workers and the obligations of managers."[281]

A gulf was being dug between pastors of parishes and many of their flock. Between them a common language had been lost; when they encountered one another their eyes no longer met, and their expectations no longer converged. For people in the thousands heavenly hopes were stifled by daily cares; and as for earthly hopes there were many churchmen who entrusted them to the restoration of the monarchy or the reestablishment of the temporal power of the Pope. Such problems, crucial for informed minds, did not touch the masses or seemed to them to be mere obstacles along the way to anticipated solutions.

Misunderstanding, however, indifference and contempt, on the one hand, and envy and revolt, on the other, are not enough to explain everything. A psychological climate had fostered the development of forces hostile to the Church. It was not, however, a growth without seed. Tares had been strewn across the fields of the Lord, spread by some demonic sower from one century to the next. And, sooner or later, in the form of heresy, negativism, moral corruption, hatred and calumny, they took root. Their growth, particularly vigorous, became evident in "libertine" circles during the reign of Louis XIV; the incursion spread over vast spaces with the Encyclopedists and the "Philosophers" of the following period. Since 1789 antireligion had been translated into deeds: — the schism connected with the "Civil Constitution of the Clergy", "the September massacre", the exiles, the imprisonments, the deportations and the executions. Henceforth, there could be no genuine peace for the Catholic Church in France; while the Concordat of 1801, the period between 1815 and 1830, the brief years of the Second Republic, and the early years (filled with false promises) of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte were only official truces.

The enemy watched while the servants relaxed, deluded themselves or slept. He didn't even disguise his hand, indeed, he redoubled his activities during periods in which Church and State concluded alliances or in which Catholics counted on the goodwill of the civil power. Propaganda, by way of books, newspapers, public speeches or private discussions, paved the way; and accomplices found their way into the Counsels of government. Human passions surfaced. And finally the occasion arose which partisans could not resist.

In its origins, leadership, and programs the Third Republic had been tied to the Masonic Order. It strove to build up a society that was "emancipated" from a religious faith. Politics, morality, the State, the school and the family were to be "laicized", in other words, based exclusively upon the foundations of Positivism. Every principle of action follows upon the observation of facts; science supplants metaphysics; and experience claims to be unaware of God. It was the time when "the Great Architect of the universe" disappeared from the Masonic Credo, according to the "covenant" of 1878.

It was in fact a "counter-religion", with its priests, its rituals, its excommunications and its intolerance. And while it thought of itself as exempt from all faiths, it was a faith — a faith in a good and infallible nature and in living matter which evolved in the direction of an inevitable and boundless progress.

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[281] Father Brugerette, *Le Prêtre francais et la societé contemporaine*, Vol. II, "*Vers la séparation de l'Église et de l'État,* Paris, 1935, pg. 56.

Men like Gambetta and Ferry — "the republican elite" — embraced this doctrine enthusiastically. Their plans and their activities bore its markings. Gabriel Hanotaux, who was their disciple, wrote about it as a clear-headed historian: "The measures undertaken with regard to the Congregations were mere incidents in the struggle entered into ever since the 18th century against the religion of Christ."[282] Ferry never doubted the approaching death struggle of the ancient faiths. And while, for tactical reasons, he defended duties toward God as part of an educational program, he declined to allow Jules Simon to mention such duties in a legislative text.[283]

In his "Roman speech" on September 18, 1878, Gambetta specified the objectives that first needed to be targeted: Religious Congregations, "the multicolored militia whose native land no longer exists anywhere but on the last of the Roman hills"; Christian education, guilty, according to the orator, "of mutilating history and of warping the French mind"; the Church, which is still the beneficiary of a privileged position and needs to be brought under the "common law."[284]

This strategy was reinforced by a deft tactic. It manipulated armies of people empowered by universal suffrage. In this arena were people who had been baptized and catechized, people who knew the Commandments even if they didn't observe all of them, people who had been faithful to religious observances, perhaps not very regularly, but at least in the important moments of life and at the hour of death. Summoned to the voting polls the majority of Frenchmen voted in favor of anticlerical, positivist republicans, proved docile to their directives and approved their legislation.

Perhaps for many this was a case of ignorance or seduction or trickery. But enduring opposition would have been roused if the faith had in a variety of ways captivated the people. But, too often it drifted on the surface without any other attachment than custom and routine. The generation, come to maturity in the turmoil of the Revolution, lacked religious and moral education; the soldiers of the First Empire and the masses of city-dwellers, ever ready to riot, between 1815 and 1848, gave evidence of a pathetic ignorance and burning prejudices. Their sons and grandsons had not all been to Catholic schools — far from it! How many were the teachers during the July Monarchy who were only mildly favorable or positively hostile to the Church! For the children taught by the Brothers the influence of the environment, the workplace, the factory, and even the family frequently undermined the instruction they had received; and at such an early age — between eleven and twelve years — that it quickly nullified the effects of their education.

Young workers, simple craftsmen, sales clerks and low-level employees listened to and then became the followers of lawyers, journalists, professors, and dogmatists of "left-wing political parties". The 19th century middle class attached itself to Voltaire or enjoyed extolling Jean Jacques Rousseau. The "freethinker" in a county seat was usually the physician or the notary who sent his wife and daughter to church and permitted an elementary religious education for his son, even if he himself destroyed in the adolescent's presence the work that a priest had hardly begun. An intently courteous adversary of the clergy, he impressed the population with his culture, his social rank and his professional services. He took his seat on the town Council, girded himself in the mayor's sash and eventually would become a Deputy, Senator or Minister.

His concerns for the lower classes, indisputable in many instances, rarely extended to

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[282] *Histoire politique de la nation francaise,* (1800-1914), pg. 612.

[283] George Goyau, *Histoire religieuse de la nation francaise*, pp. 599-600.

[284] Fernand Mourret, *Histoire générale de l'Église*, Vol. IX, pg. 59.

anything like daring demands. He continued to be a man of his rank, like his neighbor and competitor, the aristocratic landowner, or like his relative, the industrialist. But his kindness, like his medical office and his studies, created a political following for him. He showed people that clericalism was the enemy of the Republic and therefore of liberty and of equality; that if the priests conducted a campaign in favor of Henry V, it was because they wanted to restore tithes and feudal rights; and that by damning the "despoilers of the Papacy", Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel, they were running the risk of unleashing another war, this time in the Alps as well as along the fragmented frontier in the Northeast.

People like this won over the masses by representing themselves as champions of the rights of man, emancipators of conscience and guarantors of the good life enjoyed in peace. When the government they attacked showed that it was uncertain about the future, more "conservative" than determined to build in accordance with some new plan, the opposition enjoyed an open season and it ended up by grabbing power. In 1875, swept along by an irresistible movement, assisted by disappointments, splinter-groups and the resignation of a bone-weary National Assembly, the opposition found itself on the road to glory.

From that point on the wonder was that Catholics had escaped annihilation. And while they did retain, intact and sound, the unity of the faith, they continued to be individualistic in their opinions and in their action. Their political representatives — the Legitimists, the Orleanists, the Bonapartists — damaged one another mutually in the most serious way. Their religious leaders, the Bishops, had, at the time, little opportunity to reach anything like a consensus. Proposed to the Holy See by the civil power, according to the rules of the Concordat, they differed from one another not only by reason of their personal temperaments, their ecclesiastical and administrative education but besides, and especially, because of their affinity to the party or regime that had underwritten their nomination. The "Organic articles" forbad them from meeting in counsel; and hence the recurrence of the difficulty of obtaining the reconciliation of points of view, of inquiring into pending problems, and deciding on a line of conduct. They were limited to ceremonial meetings and an exchange of letters among a handful of colleagues.

This episcopal isolation was no less painful and unfortunate within each diocese. Bishops appointed under the Concordat, for the most part, preserved the seigniorial perspectives and minute protocol inherited from the higher clergy of the days of the *ancien régime*: they issued from their palaces in their carriages, blessing the heads inclined in their direction with a paternal but aloof gesture. They exercised a quasi-dictatorial authority over their priests; and this very absolutism further increased the danger of immuring them in their solitude. Surrounded by a few advisers, they lost direct contact with pastors whose frank conversation would have informed them of the state of the popular mind and, more securely, concerning the segments of the population that had remained Christian. The Bishop, as once the last Bourbon kings, lived in an atmosphere that was as a rule artificial and in which reports, however exact, reached him in padded and optimistic rhetoric. Decisions emanating from His Omnipotence had a way of anticipating the chill light of the real world.[285]

That in spite of so many obstacles, so many lapses, pastors and faithful were able to achieve the enormous task we shall speak of later on is a proof both of the amazing capacity for reform and of the Divine assistance that is always available to the Church.

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After military defeat, the somber days of the siege of Paris, and the civil war following upon foreign invasion, Religious teachers were able to live again. They had no nostalgia for the

[285] Brugerette, op. cit., pp. 41-42

National Defense government, which had proved incapable of preventing the laicization of the schools in Paris and in the provinces. It had even mapped out a law that would have excluded the teaching of catechism from the elementary schools. We have dealt elsewhere with the closing of the Brothers schools in Algeria and the looting of the school in Caluire in the Department of the Rhône. In Lyons, Challemel-Lacour's representatives, ordering the Brothers at Guillotière to clear out, countered their victim's appeal to legality with: "We who make the laws are the law."[286]

For a period of several years laws ceased to be the work of the enemies of religion. The first stones of the Basilica at Montmartre and the Basilica at Fourvière seemed to have been the foundations of a France which was being rebuilt according to plans of Christian architects. And while the future seemed baffling, the present produced signs that believers seized upon joyfully. The euphoria, although not justified, was thoroughly understandable.

It was during this period that an aging Veuillot met Brother Vigbert Louis at the Thonon residence school and congratulated him on his literary work, and ceremoniously received by a crowd of distinguished people at Chablais, addressed a group of enthusiastic pupils. Brother Jean-Olympe's generalate had experienced such radiant moments.

They passed and disappeared like meteors, although the skies continued to reflect their splendor. The law concerning freedom of higher education, "Bishop Dupanloup's final benefaction,"[287]was approved on July 12, 1875, ten days after Brother Irlide's election by the General Chapter. It would permit the opening of genuinely free universities — the Catholic Institutes in Paris, Lille, Lyons, Angers and Toulouse. And it would open up to the French clergy an era of intellectual renewal with Bishop d'Hulst, Bishop Baunard and their contemporaries in the west and the south, with professors of theology, canon law, Holy Scripture and Church history. In this domain in spite of adverse events, a steadfast fortress would rise: it would be necessary to fend off furious attacks and work constantly to raise the walls. And the courageous handful of builders would receive only a lackluster support from a fundamentally irresolute and skeptical populace.

The law of 1875, however, completed that of 1850. Christian education, at its three levels, must be represented as a whole, in which the elementary grades made up the foundation, the university Faculties the summit, while the colleges and residence schools of secondary education constituted the intermediate section.

The Brothers' Institute recognized its place at the base and at the center, and, perhaps one day — for its Student-Brothers — toward the top of this edifice. It couldn't imagine itself totally merged into it at this period of its history when it was still bound by so many ties to public education.[288] And the system did not repudiate its humble colleagues. The Minister of public

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[286] Ibid., Vol. I, pg. 271.

[287] Rigault, Le Frère Louis, pp. 151 et sq.

[288] We know of the concern which Ambrose Rendu, one of the pioneers of Napoleonic education, had surrounded the Brothers' Congregation. We have dealt extensively with his rôle in the fourth and fifth volumes of the present work. (See the Indices to these two volumes). But quite involuntarily we omitted to cite at the appropriate moment a passage from Brother Philippe's Circular of May 25, 1860, in which he recommends the decease to the prayers of his Brothers: This good and zealous Christian has a very special right (to our prayers) first of all as an affiliated member, and then because he has been [sin 1808 and] especially since 1830, not only the protector of our Institute but indeed its savior in a variety of difficult circumstances...One of the sons of this worthy benefactor told us that his father, before he died, had bequeathed to his children his attachment to our work. In order to acknowledge, at least in so far as it depends upon us, such outstanding and permanent benefits, we proclaim that a special service for his intentions be celebrated in all the chapels of our Communities where daily mass is said. Eugene Rendu's active and persevering zeal proved that the inheritance had fallen into good hands.

education in that same year (1875) ordered that a medal bearing the image of Brother Philippe be struck "in order to preserve for posterity the memory of a man who had rendered such singular service to his country". The engraver Maurice Valentine Borrel executed the work, which was a reproduction of the facial features that had been sculpted by Doublemard.[289]

While this posthumous tribute was being paid to the Superior, the Christian Brothers as well as other members of Religious Congregations continued to earn the esteem and praise of the administration. From 1873 to 1875 municipal Councils, responsible for selecting public school teachers, had granted the Brothers the preference thirty eight times out of a hundred. It was a proportion genuinely creditable and significant in view of the fact that the campaign in favor of laicization had already begun.

As objectively as possible we must formally record the results obtained by Christian education. Enrolment in the upper elementary grades in Paris may function as a decisive indicator. It was effected through a competitive examination under the supervision of the City's representatives. Success meant the right to a scholarship. From the beginnings of the institution under the reign of Louis Philippe until 1878 inclusively Brothers' pupils were allowed to compete with pupils from other schools. Ferdinand Buisson supplies the following figures in his *Dictionnaire de la Pédagogie*: for the thirty years between 1848 and 1878, out of 1445 scholarships, 1148 (about 80%) were earned by candidates from Brothers' schools. In 1878, the last time pupils from schools operated by the Brothers were permitted to present candidates, 280 of the latter were included among the 334 eligible competitors. Of the first fifty places, pupils from Brothers' schools took thirty four of them.

For the duration of the National Assembly and even when Republican institutions were attempting to function normally, relations between the civil authorities and the Institute continued satisfactorily.

In St.Brieuc, for example, an agreement was reached concerning an ancient building called the "Cordon bleu", the ownership to which the Brothers had claimed once they had been invited back to *Côtes du Nord* after the Revolution. The decree of December 3, 1878 entitled the Superior-general to cede his Congregation's rights to the Commune, which, by way of compensation, would have to pay the Brothers the sum of 20,000 francs if it should stop employing them as teachers.[290]

The Prefects and Sub-prefects of "Moral Order" were especially considerate. At the end of his visit to the Communal schools, the Sub-prefect of Thiers, on May 12, 1874, wrote to the mayor of the small town in Auvergne: "I have been delighted to observe the good order of the schools directed by the Brothers of Christian Doctrine as much from the educational point of view as what regards the fact that the education is given to such a large number of children...The poverty of the teachers' residence is extreme; it would be appropriate, for humanitarian reasons, to put new ceilings in each cell. The fine old man who operates this school receives a very meager salary: the same thing is true of his associates, 600 francs a year..."[291].

Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, together with the Mayor, Vicount Pelleport Burète, were favorable to the Institute. His Eminence gave the Brothers a fifteen acre estate, Fontainieu, in the Mérignac region — a handsome gesture which, it is true, involved some

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289 .[289]And to Sisters sixty-nine times. A Des Cilleuls, *Histoire de d'Enseignement libre dans l'ordere primaire en France, pg. 675.*

290 Archives of the District of Quimper, Le Méhauté Ms.

291 Archives of the District of Clermont Ferrand, Historique de l'école de Thiers

educational pledges and certain obligations dictated by gratitude[292] M. Pelleport, for his part, decided to raise the salary of each Brother to 800 francs. It was a vote in favor of hard work and a firmly established reputation — in particular, the reputation of the school's Director, Brother Justinus.

The City Counsel, dissolved in June of 1874 and re-elected in October, was inclined to the contrary. But Pelleport and his associates, appointed by the MacMahon government, remained in office. In July of 1875 they proclaimed St. Vincent's school a public school.[293]

It was the period during which sixty three Brothers in ten schools were teaching 4650 boys.[294]

Brother Alphonsus was going out in glory. On August 4 he asked that Brother Liacim who, for fourteen years had been his Sub-director, be officially appointed as his assistant. Brother Liacim was given the title of "Inspector-general" of the public schools.

When the procession for the Feast of Corpus Christi defiled through the city, the thousands of children, conducted in orderly ranks by their teachers, attracted the attention of the people in Bordeaux. An unsentimental journalist describes these schoolboys as "dressed in a comic-opera costume, a belt of black leather over red shirts, and immaculately white trousers; for headgear they wore straw hats, the same style and color for all." Standards and banners floated overhead. There was a sparkle and a dazzling harmony of tints. "A colorful spectacle", comments the observer, who did not intend to go beyond surface impressions. And then somewhat tartly he adds: "The huge displays influence parental choices. Mothers are flattered to see their sons in all this finery."[295]

The explanation seems rather rude to us and of questionable validity. For educators to gain the confidence of parents it is not enough to "catch the eye". And, of course, a favorable presumption is created, and rightly so, when a person in a magisterial way directs choruses of young musicians or the movements of a group. But in Bordeaux, as elsewhere, the reason for the Brothers' popularity was much more profound.

Education in Savoy had made measurable progress. At the point of departure of this crusade was Cardinal Alexis Billiet, Archbishop of Chambéry who, in 1844, sounded the alarm: since the French Revolution had destroyed the educational institutions of the ancient duchy, illiteracy had become extremely common — nearly half the citizenry. And while the situation in about 1874 had given rise to legitimate satisfaction, it was due less to changes in political and national administration since 1860 than to the considerable efforts of teachers, and especially of the Christian Brothers, with their extremely successful schools and their residence schools at La Mott-Servolex and Thonon.[296].

The whole of France acknowledged and rewarded the successors of Brother Philippe at the World's Fair in 1878 where the Institute won five gold medals, seven silver, two bronze and two honorable mentions.

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[292] A decree of November 20, 1872 authorized its acceptance. Archives of the District of Bordeaux and Archives of the Secretary-general, 78 Rue de Sèvres.

[293] Archives of the District of Bordeaux, *Historique de l'école Saint-Vincent*.

[294] Donis, *Historique de l'Enseignement primaire à Bordeaux*, 1913.

[295] Donis, op. cit.

[296] Secret, op. cit., pp. 74-76. — The public school authorities prior to 1879 did not spare their praise for the Brothers. The Inspector for the school district of Lot said in 1876 that the school in Cajarc, entrusted to the Institute by the city two years earlier and directed by Brother Irlide Joseph was "a model of order, progress and good education." (Archives of the District of Rodez, Historique de Cajarc

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We have already emerged from the untroubled times. The winds had begun to stir and was about to turn into a storm. On May 4, 1877 Gambetta had uttered the famous expression: "Clericalism is the enemy". The Deputies elected by the nation on February 21 and March 5 1876 bore the same misgivings or the same grievances against Catholics. The religious question had succeeded in occupying the spotlight and more than ever divided Frenchmen after the crisis of the Sixteenth of May. The Chamber, which had been dissolved by Duke de Broglie and M. Fourtou, was returned, practically identical, as the result of the election of October 14, 1877. The parties of the Left were not yet masters of the Senate; but all they would need was a little patience. Marshal MacMahon left the presidency, and almost immediately Jules Grévy was chosen to replace him.

Such was the entire personnel of the Third Republic in positions of power. Among the new statesmen the features of Jules Ferry stand out in bold relief. This distinguished representative of the middle class from the Vosges was possessed of remarkable energy, boldness and perseverance; he was intelligent and incorruptible. In the service of France he was devoted, he suffered and he wore himself out. And in his opposition to the Church he adopted a stance that was absolutely unambiguous.

As Minister of Public Education, Ferry could and did decide the direction that youth would take. And what that direction was no one had any doubt. Since the period of the Second Empire he had struck up a relationship with Jean Macé, the founder of the Education League, who, under a mild appearance, sought to uproot Christianity. He was surrounded by a lot of Free Masons as well as Protestants who were more relentless in their opposition to Catholicism than they were sensitive to the slow eradication of the faith. Jules Ferry had adopted the complete program of the League; although he planned to enact it only gradually in order to reduce opposition.[297]

"Compulsory, tuition-free and secular education" was the slogan that was current as early as 1849 in militant circles and that Macé intended to impose upon the nation. In December of 1871, Jules Simon, submitting an education bill to the sovereign Assembly, did not go beyond the principle of compulsory attendance. He established the basis of his proposal by means of a distressing statistic: 600,000 French youths did not attend any school.

Catholics were suspicious of the Minister's intentions; they saw his bill as an effort on the part of the State to get its hands on the children. A parliamentary Committee, presided over by the Bishop of Orleans, thwarted Jules Simon.[298]

It was a miscalculation that had immediate effects totally contrary to the wishes of its authors. Petition campaigns were organized: in 1872 the Education League gathered 850,000 signatures in favor of secularized schools; while the Catholic Committee headquartered in Paris, supporting the confessional schools, obtained only 500,000 adherents.[299] Jean Macé, therefore, met with the most significant reassurance. A bill sponsored in 1877 by Deputies of the extreme Left served as the basis — in 1879 — new petition, cast in the following terms:

1. The undersigned demand compulsory, tuition-free and secular primary education for both sexes in all schools subsidized by Communes, Departments and the State.
2. Compulsory, in the twofold interest of the individual and of society, in the name of their mutual solidarity.
3. Tuition-free, in the name of equality and in order to remove whatever pretext there may

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[297] Lavisse, Histoire de France contemporaine, Vol. VIII, pg. 74. — Cf. Goyau, l'École d'aujourd'hui, 1st series, pp. 189-190.

[298] Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 73-74.

[299] Ibid., pg. 41.

be for disaffection.

4. Secular, because the principle of 'science at school and religious education in church' is the only one which efficaciously protects the freedom of conscience.[300]

Unfortunately, the three qualifiers became indivisible. Compulsory and tuition-free education, in itself so defensible, was transformed into a useful tool with which to achieve the end that was almost exclusively sought: — under the pretext of preserving the rights of conscience, to deny to the Church its educative mission, to wrest from her future generations, to replace religion by a pseudo-scientific positivism and to banish from education every metaphysical notion, any reference to the supernatural.

The Minister's decisions were the initial applications of this doctrine. In March of 1879, the Chamber was informed of two bills promoted by the government: one reorganized the Higher Counsel of Public Education and the counsels in school districts; abrogating in this connection the law of 1850, it took away from the clergy the seats that Falloux had set aside for them. The other restored to the State Faculties the exclusive right of conferring university degrees; this measure repressed the "mixed committees" that had been devised in 1875.

This second measure however, in its article seven, had a much more general and a much more frightening reach. Education conducted by Religious Congregations, at every level, was the direct target: "No one will be admitted to participate in education, public or private, if he belongs to a Religious Congregation that is not authorized."[301]

In Parliament as well as in public discussions were animated. On July 9 the vote in the Chamber of Deputies approved the government's proposals in general. On August 2 a majority arose in the Senate to reject article seven.

Even if that article didn't hold up, the judicial arsenal presented the executive authority arms with which to crush associations that had no legal status. The decrees of March 29 1890 were promulgated "as applications of existing laws". They threatened not only a few teaching Congregations but even Religious Orders dedicated to intellectual or manual work, to preaching and to prayer.

Following a tradition more than a century old, the Jesuits in their colleges or in their residences were selected as the first victims. Their expulsion took place in June. More round-about ways were pursued regarding the other Societies under discussion; during the next three months they were invited to draw up a request for authorization.

Charles Freycinet, the new head of the government, wanted to negotiate with Rome. While he was a Protestant, he was neither rigid nor bigoted. His flexibility presented a striking contrast with Ferry's crudeness. While the latter loved the struggle, the former delighted in persuasion.[302]

He wrote to the Pope whose wisdom always tended toward pacification and reconciliation. Leo XIII had succeeded Pius IX on February 20, 1878. France seemed to him to be one of the essential parts of Christianity, and he showed a very obvious fondness for her. To assist in healing the wounds among Frenchmen seemed him to be worth the effort. Both the common good and the profound personal feelings of the Pontiff also had their role to play.

The Superiors of the Congregations involved signed out of obedience to the wishes of the Holy See a declaration expressing "their respect and submission" regarding the nation's institutions and rejecting any form of complicity with political parties. Pacification seemed to

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[300] Léau and Glay*, L'École primaire en France*, 1934, Vol. II, pg. 98.

[301] Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 163-164.

[302] Hanotaux, op. cit., pg. 617.

have been well on the way when an indiscretion broke the delicate diplomatic thread. Someone transmitted a note that was supposed to be confidential to the Legitimatist newspaper *La Guyenne*. It was a manoeuvre on the part of uncompromising opponents to create difficulties for the people in government. The statement published on August 31 raised a tempest in Parliament and Freycinet resigned.[303]

Believers experienced the bitterness of defeat. In the presence of hostile ministers and legislators, writers, agnostic philosophers and in the midst of the indifferent masses, they realized that they constituted no more than a minority. The conferences at Notre Dame, which once had rallied the intellectual and social elite to listen to Lacordaire or Ravignan, in 1880 scarcely attracted any audience except some elderly gentlemen and a few punctilious parishioners, the Brothers from the Parisian schools and some pious youths.[304]

The faith continued to live. But in order that it might radiate once again, more flame and more air had become necessary. Courageous people were preparing to relight the fire under the ashes. It was a long and exacting task; and while it lasted, there was a great deal of suffering to endure. Cardinal Pie had appeared to have foreseen it clearly in a sermon — a noble and melancholy farewell — that he had given at Angoulème on May 16, 1880, two days before his death.

"All of you, my Brothers, if you are destined to witness evil, do not welcome it. Never say to evil: you are good; to decadence, you are progress; to the night, you are day; to death, you are life! Sanctify yourself in the times in which God has placed you; bewail the evils and the disorders that God tolerates; oppose it with the energy of your action and your efforts; keep your entire life free of error, free of evil involvement."[305]

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The final sermon of the Bishop of Poitiers served as a prologue to the drama, before Article Seven, before the monks were expelled and before the secularization of the schools had begun. The law of 1850 recognized that when a teaching post had become vacant through death, resignation or dismissal, the cities had a right to choose a lay teacher or a member of a Religious Congregation. Bardoux, the Minister of Public Education in 1878, interpreted the law in the broadest and most tendentious way. From his point of view, his Circular of October 14 was confined to outlining a number of general rules in the case in which Communale Assemblies were called upon to indicate their preferences. Actually, it exhorted Prefects to aid, and indeed to encourage, creativity in these matters.

The document enjoined "the greatest consideration" for the preferences expressed in favor of secularization — preferences asserted regardless of the circumstances specified by the Falloux Law. If, however, a municipality voiced its concern for retaining or acquiring Religious teachers, the sympathies of the Prefectural administration would be transformed into a posture of suspicion and hostility. Since the expressed concern did "not bind" the government's representative, an "inquiry" would be necessary in order to know the genuine "feelings of the population". And it would be crucial to "discover what influence the selection of teachers can have on the progress of elementary education."[306]

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303 Goyau, Histoire religieuse de la nation francaise, 1926, pg. 166.

304 P. Lecanuet, L'Église de France sous the Troisième République, Vo. IV, pg. 174.

305 Baunard, Vie du cardinal Pie, II, pg. 741.

306 Essai historique sur la Maison Mère, pg. 236.

As a consequence, there should be no instances of lay teachers replaced by Brothers; while at the request of local authorities and even in the absence of any vacancies, Christian schools might be secularized as administrative measures.

Such was the procedure routinely employed in the years following upon the "Conservatives'" decisive defeat. And thus vainly did Brother Irlide protest the arbitrary firing of teachers whose behavior had been beyond reproach. His pamphlet dated December 1878, entitled *Simple Report on the Legal Situation of Public School Teachers*, was an argument of a sort to win the endorsement of impartial minds. He was defending the position, not only of members of Religious Congregations but everyone teaching in public education, all eventual victims of "discretionary power."[307]

Nothing halted the march of bigotry in full triumph. The City Council in Paris, at its meetings on December 4 and 14, demanded the substitution of Religious teachers by lay persons. But it was facing a Prefect who was not inspired by the same passions: — Ferdinand Duval appealed to justice, to financial interests and to the wishes and the rights of families.

The new Minister replaced him with Hérold who, on May 17, 1879, proclaimed to the Paris Assembly the suppression of the Brothers' school on Rue Montgolfier.[308] That was merely the beginning. The expulsion of teaching Communities was effected on a vast scale —and not without violence. In December of 1880 Hérold's agents entered classrooms, and, in the presence of scandalized and dismayed pupils, removed crucifixes and religious emblems. In many places the gesture assumed the proportions of sacrilege: images of Christ were thrown to the ground, broken and carried off in garbage carts.[309] Hérold's successor, Floquet, finished the work of secularization.[310]

A Commune in Brittony had outstripped Paris — and in such great haste and in circumstances that lent themselves so poorly to such ventures that the "business in Lambézellec" contributed neither to the prestige nor to the advantage of its promoters.

Lamb'ezellec, a suburb of Brest,[311] had, since 1865, in its neighborhood called Pilier-Rouge a school operated by the Christian Brothers. For years earlier with the tacit consent of the administration, the Brother Director Camérin altered the unpretentious structure; and an industrial school was built on the site, equipped with all the necessary buildings. The undertaking had succeeded, and beginning in 1872 both in the elementary classes and in the supplementary technical courses Brother Camérin presided over 600 pupils, including tuition-free and paying day-students as well as boarders and those who were only "housed."[312]

It was this prosperity that attracted the Republican party's initial blows on the school in Pilier-Rouge. As early as May 12, 1878 the city counselors demanded secularization. The Prefect of Finistère, who had seen the way the wind was blowing, informed the members of the Congregation of his decree dated August 23; they were immediately to abandon the Communal property as well as the buildings on the site.

Brother Irlide ordered the Brother Director to ask for a hearing in chambers before the

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307 Brother Irlide's Obituary, pp. 89-93.

308 Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes for January 1922, pp. 23-25.

309 Lacanuet, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 137.

310 On December 31, 1880 the Brothers operated no more than six public schools in the Department of the Seine, with 1,550 pupils. (Eugene Rendu, op. cit., pg. 9.)

311 And a suburban Commune.

312 According to a custom in the region a "housed" pupil paid only a minimal sum for living quarters and his family assumed the responsibility for feeding him.

presiding judge of the civil court. The summons was set for Tuesday, August 29.

But on the morning of that day the Mayor of Lambézellec, flanked by the Commissioner of Police and several agents called upon the Brothers to vacate before noon. The Brother Director refused and awaited the hearing in chambers.

At that point the Sub-prefect of Brest arrived with police reinforcements. This zealous bureaucrat, prior to the judicial decision, scurried to affix official seals to the buildings.

Meanwhile the presiding judge of the court maintained the Brothers provisionally in possession of the property. The civil administration, in contempt of their rights, at first quartered its victims for the night in a dining room, and then, on the following day, set to work again to expel them completely. The Community, forced to disperse, parcelled out its members in the chaplain's residence, the Pastor's house as wells as other homes in the vicinity.

However, since the separation of powers had been arrogantly violated, the government was forced to prescribe a retreat for the Prefecture. Brother Camérin and his associates, reinstated, proceeded to resume their quarters. Lay teachers had already taken over the classes, and, for a time, they resettled elsewhere. But public education continued to be prohibited to the former team of Religious teachers.

Ultimately, the latter left the school. The courts, initially and on appeal, awarded an indemnity for the abrupt withholding of salaries and a capital sum of 28,000 francs for the buildings which had fallen to the Commune. In the eyes of public opinion the suit was even a greater success: the press in Brittony together with its readership denounced the behavior of the Sub-prefect, the Mayor and their acolytes.[313]

It was a moral victory that was heartily accepted. But it did not prevent events from following their course. In a letter written during this period, Brother Joseph, Assistant to Brother Irlide, fashioned no illusions; he foresaw the difficulties facing the Institute; and, as a disciple of the Gospel and of De La Salle, the future Superior was banking on the spiritual advantages that his Institute would gain from the persecution.[314]

He already knew about, or he could anticipate for the near future, the closing of schools. In Brittony, after Lambézellec, it was Quimper's turn — the Palais school in Belle-Ile and Kérentrech in Lorient.[315] In the South also secularization began in earnest in 1879; the Brothers in Auch had to leave their classes at St. Orens and St. Paul.[316] In Montpellier the City Counsel, at its meeting on April 12, issued an order that the school on Rue Basse be taken away from the Institute. The "Whereases" present nothing new; we cite them because they betray a state of mind that is met with in numerous Republican Assemblies and summarize the grievances that constituted anti-clericalism:

"The Brothers' Institute leaves none of its members free to change its teaching methods...In this way the schools that it directs escapes every influence save its own; this very education stands in opposition to the principles of a secular society; it tends to train sectarian partisans rather than free citizens...With lay teachers the children will discover models of the family life for which they are destined... "

Like their counterparts everywhere, the politicians in Languedoc wielded revolutionary and Masonic rhetoric; and it had the success they expected of it. On July 7 the Prefect of Hérault championed their cause.[317]

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313 Archives of the District of Quimper.

314 Rigault, op. cit., pp. 203-204.

315 Archives of the District of Quimper.

316 Archives of the District of Toulouse.

317 *Le Frère Anatole ou quarante ans de vie religieuse à Montpellier* [by his brother, the Pastor of Fontès], 1932,

In October there was a great deal of commotion in Gard. The Brothers in Alès, expelled from the school buildings, withdrew to a house which they quite correctly believed belonged to them, since it was left to them by a priest, Father Taisson. Nevertheless, an effort was made to drive them out of it. The city, fearing riots, called in armed force: — five hundred infantrymen and several brigades of police occupied the neighboring streets. The Brothers were obliged to yield to force. They retired to their residence school until a claim, drawn up in a court of law by the priest's heir, succeeded in restoring them to the property that had been taken from them.[318]

A similar confiscation was carried out in Dole-du-Jura. The city seized a house from the Brothers that they had received in 1746 from Claude Charles Broch, the Lord of Hotelans and that it was able to recover after the Revolution. An additional building that had come by way of a gift from Father Noel in 1841, suffered the same fate as the more ancient structure.[319]

Savoy was not spared. A protest meeting organized in Nézin on October 14, 1879 by Marquis Albert Costa de Beauregard presented the Count Albert de Mun with a resounding pulpit.[320] Speech was unfettered, and the affair collided with the power of the State.

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The year 1880 marked new losses. During the first three months the secularization demanded by the City Counsel in Rheims was realized. In Rethel a school at the peak of its success was closed down and a chapel was devastated to make way for a music hall.[321] The Mayor of Sedan, Philippoteaux, on May 14, desiring to pay public tribute to the Brothers, declared in the presence of city's elected representatives: "Whatever the future may hold, I would like to make a statement that will absolve from responsibility and redound to the credit of those who, in the past, had their share in influencing the organization, the direction and the growth of elementary education in Sedan. Not a person in Sedan will contest this declaration: our working population has always been remarkably hardworking and loyal; it has been educated, enlightened, liberal and patriotic; and that is the best proof that it has been well instructed and properly educated. The members of the counsel had other views, and the Mayor's was a minority opinion. The Brothers would no longer be the public school teachers."[322]

Shrewd manoeuvering ousted them from St. John's school in Cambrai. The Mayor wanted to set up a college for young girls in the school building; and he began by obtaining from the Welfare Bureau, the owner of the building, a conveyance in favor of the city. He then suggested that the Brothers confine themselves to a tiny space in the building and to admit no pupils other than the children of families officially on welfare. Brother Flour, who had been directing the institution for six years, rejected these demands; but actually he had no other alternative than to clear out.[323]

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pp. 14-15.

[318] Brother Théodat Germain, *Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Alais*, 1908, pp. 55-56, and 61.

[319] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique de Dole.

[320] Secret, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

[321] M. Lanfrancq's Notes.

[322] Henry Rouy, *Histoire des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Sedan*, 1892, pp. 114-116.

[323] District Archives, Historique de Cambrai. — Et. Daillier, *Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Cambrai*, 1923, pg. 12.

Returning to Brittany, the two public schools, St. Corentine and St. Matthew, were secularized on August 7, 1890 in accordance with a decree of the City Counsel of Quimper. In the Brest suburb of *Recouvrance* the ancient project of teachers of the 18th century, revived in 1850 and in 1867 entrusted to an autonomous Community, collapsed as in the days of the French Revolution.

Hennebont, in Morbihan, had a school to which were attached classes in the St. Caradec neighborhood. In this branch school two teachers, in spite of legal prohibitions and the orders of their Superiors, presided rather severely over their pupils. They were prosecuted before the Departmental Counsel and suspended from their jobs for three months. This was the prelude to the complete and final dismissal of the Community that resided in the small town.[324]

"The use of proscribed means of discipline" and analogous complaints suddenly became louder and, for the sake of "the cause", were transformed into accusations and charges that would allow the secularizers to assume the stance of knights in shining armor. It must be admitted that some of the Brothers were wrong in striking children with the hand or ruler for the want of the traditional rod. It was an ancient custom from which teachers, lay as well as Religious, found difficulty in emancipating themselves, and a system to which some youthful offenders submitted without revulsion, because it was quick, even if it did not spare "personal dignity". England had not abandoned it. And while France did not search the Bible for texts justifying the whip and the cane, sometimes the gesture intended to punish escaped moderation.

Blows delivered by the teacher in the frock-coat were surrounded by silence. But there were cries of shame if a teacher in a Religious habit lost his composure. It was a question of looking for opportunities to denounce Christian education.

Without waiting for them to occur the Prefect of the Gironde, endorsing a decision of the Counsel of Bordeaux, in September of 1879, secularized two schools — the ones on Rue Mulet and on Rue Tresorerie — in the provincial capital. About a half of the boys who were of an age and circumstances to attend elementary school continued to be taught by the Brothers. The city had a financial interest in the arrangement;[325]up to that point the city had not complained about scholastic results or about moral education.

On November 11, 1879, on information concerning "serious charges", the city undertook an investigation into the school on Rue St. Bruno. On the 14th, at a Council meeting, it was asserted that a child had been subjected to "brutal" punishment. On the 18th the school was secularized. In the interval, the Prefect dismissed Brother Liacim, charged with being responsible for his subordinates.

The adversaries of religious education believed that they had drawn up a sufficient number of charges against the Brothers in Bordeaux. Henceforth, the case was closed. It remained only to draw up the indictment, and deliver the final sentence. Liard, Associate Representative for Public Education, filed his report on July 31, 1880; he concluded that the members of the Religious Congregation, because of their "cruelty," had demonstrated that they were bad teachers; and that, in any case, the population had shown its preference for lay teachers, as recent statistics proved.

After this clamorous denunciation, the execution occurred. The forty-five Brothers the Commune had employed were once again obliged to leave their classrooms. All boys' schools

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[324] Archives of the District of Quimper.

[325] According to a letter (cited by Donis) from Brother Liacim to Mr. Faget, Associate Representative for Public Education, overall salaries for lay teachers in August 1877 teaching 3,425 pupils was 73,300 francs; salaries for Brothers teaching 4,727 pupils was 43,300 francs. The total sum spent on secularized schools in Bordeaux came to 107,950 francs; for Christian schools 59,700 francs.

were transferred to the guidance of teachers who were agreeable to the Republic.[326]

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Numerous incidents of the same sort took place in other regions. The ones that we have recounted will suffice, of course, as examples. Departments and Communes listened to the arguments and obeyed the promptings that reached them from Paris.

At this center a general plan had been devised the main lines of which had become rather quickly unveiled. A government, hostile to the Church and inspired by totalitarian doctrines, pondered how to restrict, if not to strangle, the freedom of education which at the cost of such long conflicts Catholics, led by Montalembert, Dupanloup and Falloux, had achieved. Its activity, obstinate and systematic, was carried out at various levels.

In 1873 and 1874 the Counsel of State had identified in the Bishops' offices, the Charities and the parishes — deaneries or missions — the function of administering confessional schools.[327] This authorized a great number of gifts, voluntarily bestowed by the faithful into the hands of the clergy; and it facilitated the Hierarchy's control over the Catholic schools. Neither the July Monarchy nor the Second Empire had allowed of such a liberal position.[328] Beginning in 1879 the Republic zealously reviewed the lapses of previous governments. The make-up of the highest level of the administrative assembly was then changed; and the new Counsellors of State drew up positions contrary to their predecessors'. Basing themselves of the "Organic articles" of 1802 and taking advantage of the old jurisprudence, they denied to corporations established for religious purposes any possibility of intervening in educational matters.[329]

They interpreted passages in the texts that were either obscure or completely silent. Deferential with regard to the executive authority, their objectivity, however, could not be suspected. Jules Ferry encouraged them to investigate whether, actually, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools was legal and had a corporate existence that empowered it receive legacies and gifts. The Minister would have been delighted to dry up a source of income that was capable of funding every Christian Brother school and available to be immediately expended upon private education. But the question, frequently raised since the First Empire, had always been resolved in the affirmative. And Brother Irlide did not fail to recall it in the "Notes" he submitted in 1881 and 1882 for the judges' reflection. The Counsel of State, meeting in a general assembly on March 15, 1883, declared unanimously the merits of the Superior's remarks

Henceforth, serious objections were never raised on this question. Several Presidential decrees having to do both with the Minister Portalis' report of Frimaire 10 in the Year XII (December 2, 1803) and the First Counsel's endorsement on Frimaire 11, (December 3) as well as Article 109 of the well-known Napoleonic law of 1808, enabling the Brothers' Congregation to undertake the recovery of legacies, residuary or private.[330] The Masonic sect would have to

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[326] Donis, op. cit.,

[327] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pg. 450.

[328] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 362.

[329] Decisions of the Counsel of State, April 13, 1881, in Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pg 453.

[330] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pt 452. — Brother Irlide's obituary, pp. 122-123. — *Essai sur la Maison Mère,* pg. 230. On February 8, 1886, the Institute was authorized to accept the residuary legacy of a M. Gillard for the establishment of a tuition-free school in Caunes (Aude). — On March 6, 1899, there was an authorization of the same sort granted to the Institute "legally recognized" for a Robert legacy with the view of opening a school

have recourse to the legislature in order to destroy the structure that had been restored on solid foundations a century earlier.

The foe was obliged to sow turmoil in a realm it did not succeed in dismantling. Incapable of reaching people, it turned to seizing property. A vast legal case was looming, which would last for a quarter of century and would end only in the devastation of 1904.

On Rue Oudinot the Institute enjoyed the right of habitation, a sort of usufruct, but not the complete and outright ownership. Recall[331] that in 1819 the General Council of the Seine, "affixing a high cost" to the setting up of a Brothers' novitiate in Paris, asked the King's government to authorize the Prefect, in the name of the City of Paris, to make himself the purchaser of a building situated on Faubourg Rue St. Martin and to yield it to the Brothers as the headquarters of their Society, with the following stipulations: the occupants would pay no rent; they would retain, along with all taxes, full freedom of appointments, alterations and rebuilding. The city could not give them notice as long as they continued on site their collective and legal existence; on the other hand it would recover the disposal of its property in the case in which occupation ceased "for whatever cause".

The royal edict of May 30, 1821 approved the assembly's decision to the full extent of their stipulations. When the plans of the Eastern Railroad Company involved the expropriation of the Holy Child Jesus school, the city counsel, which during the period of Louis XVIII replaced the General Counsel, decided at its meeting of February 26, 1847 to empower the transfer of its guests, the Brothers. A new decree of Louis Philippe on April 17 authorized the city to conclude the purchase of the old Montmorin house, which answered to the needs of the Superiors of the Institute. The use of this building was vested in the Brothers of the Christian Schools "as a replacement" of the house in the Faubourg, "and with the same conditions".

Practically, therefore, Rue Oudinot was the Congregation's home. With its financial cooperation, the Prefectural administration put up the buildings bordering on the public thoroughfares. The expenses undertaken by Brother Philippe, installation and maintenance costs remained very significant indeed. The future had appeared so secure that there was no hesitation about drawing up vast plans. Their realization was still being pursued, as we have said,[332] in 1876 at the beginning of Brother Irlide's generalate.

But the policies of the Left triumphed. Paris selected its representatives from among the most "progressive", the most stormy and the most sectarian candidates. They represented a clear threat to the Motherhouse; it became necessary to slow down the work on the buildings, undertake nothing but what was urgent and at the least cost.

In 1879, 1880 and 1881 there was question of the Institute in the General Council. Would the city continue to lodge the Congregation? Would the Republic set itself up as the reverent heir of the fallen royalty? The Bourbons and the House of Orleans sought to reward the services of the "Ignorantines" The man of the Second of December thought it was a good policy to keep religion in the schools. But that belonged to a forgotten past. Henceforth, education would be secular; it already had this structure in the entire Department of the Seine, or nearly so. Since the Brothers had ceased to fulfill the rôle of public school teachers, their maintenance on Rue Oudinot no longer made sense.

On April 30, 1881 in an "Advisory Report" the Superior-general responded to this specious argument. An indefatigable polemicist and well prepared, he faced both his adversaries and their attorneys. A second report completed the initial explanation, after the Paris Counsel had

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operated by the Brothers in La Rochelle. (Archives of the Secretary-general, Rue de Sèvres.

[331] See Vol. IV of the present work, pp. 401 and 405, and Vol. V, pg. 275.

[332] Cf. above, pp. 3-4.

repeated in February and March of 1882 its intention of putting the Motherhouse to another purpose. A year later the Superior handed over to the Counsel of State the relevant file.

He needed only to refer to the documents in order to make his case. The 1821 grant, which changed the object but not the motives in 1847, did not require that the Brothers operate public schools: the building in the Faubourg St. Martin — and, as a consequence, the one on Rue Oudinot— was to house a novitiate. This seemed to be the decisive reason for the generosity of the public authority. But the novitiate continued to function. On the other hand, the Congregation — whose essential purpose remained the education of the people — could still be looked upon as a national endowment; since it had been that, legally, since the decree of March 17, 1808. This legal existence that required decrees for the maintenance of the Brothers in an estate in the city, the Institute possessed, and he had just supplied the evidence. All conditions were therefore fulfilled for the continuation of a peaceful occupation.

On March 2, 1883 Brother Irlide, addressing his "final remarks" to the judges of administrative order, wrote in the following terms: "Relying upon authentic claims, the Institute maintains that the government cannot, without overstepping its powers, infringe upon the civil rights created to the Brothers' advantage over the buildings on Rue Oudinot. The Counsel of State has been informed by the Minister of the Interior of a bill which authorizes the City of Paris to repossess these buildings; he will not fail to investigate and note the consequences of such a measure.

Balancing between the political expediency and justice, the Counsel took refuge in evasiveness: on April 16 it approved the municipal decrees, but left standing the following question: Is the City of Paris bound by contract with the Brothers of the Christian Schools?
It was up to the civil jurisdiction to reply. Controversies were going to come to life again. And their echoes would continue long after Brother Irlide's death, during the generalate of Brother Joseph.

CHAPTER TWO

The "Secularization Laws"

To name the major figures behind the French Republic's official educational policy in the "1880s" is to unveil the real faces behind the masks of parlimentary strategies and oratorical promises. Felix Pécaut, Ferdinand Buisson and Jules Steeg were at the forefront of those philosophers whose ideas were translated into law. They were Protestants or, more exactly, Calvinists who had openly quarreled with their denomination and who had retained only the traditional language, the tendencies, the thought patterns and the lofty moral concepts of their faith.

Under the astonished gaze of a segment of the French Evangelical Church George Goyau writes:[333] "a sort of Liberal Protestantism...wrested an influence over the national schools that it had never gained even in the pulpits of the Reformation. The school which was described as "neutral" resorted to theologians to define its morals and to fill its void."

"The Swiss," adds the author, "provided France with a trio of missionaries who presided over the specification and the execution" of educational programs.[334]

Pécaut and Buisson were French, while Steeg was of German extraction. Welcomed by the Swiss Canton of Neuchâtel, it was there during the Second Empire that they discussed their views, drew up their doctrine of religion without dogma, of humanitarianism and pacifism.

Felix Pécaut, who was born in 1828 in Salies-de-Béarn,[335] studied in the Protestant Faculty of Theology at Montauban and thereafter enrolled at the University of Bonn. Because of his radical views he forsook the active ministry and set himself up as a private teacher in Paris. In 1857 he sent his *Lettres de province* to the newspaper *Le Temps*: there he called for primary education divested of all religious dogma.[336] All his life long Pécaut was dedicated to a sort of dogma-free morality. In Switzerland he whipped up feelings and, among believing Calvinists, he aroused scandal. And when he was in a position to determine the future of an entire generation, people might have found these lines in his *Études au jour le jour sur l'éducation nationale*: "The task of the secularizing morality that Catholic societies did not achieve in the 16th century through church and religious reform they are attempting to accomplish now through educational reform."[337] Thus, quite candidly, the emancipated Protestant was demonstrating the bond that existed between the revolution of Luther, Zwingle and Calvin and the educational system of which he had become one of the principle artisans.

This was the man who was to become Inspector-general of elementary education and, for sixteen years, was responsible for forming the minds of the young people who attended the Normal School at Fontenay-aux-Roses. He worked at this institution together with his colleague Jules Steeg who had been appointed earlier to bring the Educational Museum up to date.

Because of the quality of his mind and his many writings no less than because of his political rôle and his long life, Ferdinand Buisson occupies a position that makes his presence unforgettable.

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333 *L'École d'aujourd'hui*, First Series, 1899, pg. 67.

334 Ibid., pg. 71.

335 Where he also died in 1899.

336 Léaud and Glay, op. cit., Ii, pg. 222.

337 Quoted by Des Cilleuls, pg. 617.

He was a Parisian by birth, the son of a judge, who studied at the Advanced Normal School. Completing his examination with honors, he was thought to have been in too frail health to handle the interne program on Rue Ulm. Nevertheless, he had enough strength and perseverance to succeed in the studies that led to "tenure" (agregé) in the Faculty of Philosophy. It was at this time that his mentor, Secrétan, advised him to go to Neuchâtel.

The Franco-Prussian War brought him back to France. During the siege of Paris, the philosopher joined the army; and in 1871 he turned his attention to philanthropic work, setting up a municipal shelter for orphans and young waifs in the 17th Ward.

Jules Simon paid him the tribute of making him the Inspector of elementary education for the Paris schools. However, Bishop Dupanloup in the National Assembly condemned Buisson's commentaries on the Bible. The agnostic bureaucrat had to be the founder of other work. He was made the President of Official Commissions on International Expositions. And in this capacity he wrote excellent reports between the years 1873 and 1878. In Vienna, Philadelphia and Paris he was successively supplied with opportunities to study educational methods practiced in Europe and America, to mark their evolution and to urge appropriate recommendations.

With the advent of Jules Ferry, his prospects opened up in a remarkable way. Ferdinand Buisson, named Director of Elementary Education, henceforth became a political power. He selected, indoctrinated and controlled teachers. He collaborated with Ministers. His talents as an educator were unanimously recognized. And he employed the ways and means of politics to further his ideas. He was to be met with at every juncture in the internal history of France from 1879 until the first decade of the 20th century. Understanding and generous in human relations, an inflexible partisan in the pursuit of his educational plans, his social ideal and officially venerated Patriarch, he did not die until 1932 at the age of 90 years.[338]

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Under the influence of its technical advisers, the Republican Party first of all staked out its turf, cleared away a number of obstacles and established certain positions. It was in this way that the Law of February 27, 1880, to which we have already alluded, changed the face and the soul of the Higher Council of Public Education. "The mission of this Assembly," it was asserted in "a statement of purposes", "is above all education; it is the most important Committee having to do with the advancement of national education. The primary condition for having a rôle in it is to have a competence to share in education." As a consequence of these principles "the Bishop's seat" disappeared. A minor place continued to be granted to private education — the poor relative which included in the Higher Counsel four of its own people, appointed by decree and surrouded by fifty-three other members representing the State and Public Education.[339]

In order to assure the recruitment of lay teachers, the Law of August 9, 1879 obliged every Department to create and support a normal school for teachers of both sexes. The Advance Normal Schools for elementary education, at Fontenay-aux-Roses and at St. Cloud, established by Jules Ferry's decrees, were to be the crowning of these accomplishments. They trained Principals and teachers of both sexes appointed for the studies of either normal students or students in advanced primary schools.[340]

One of the major goals of Free-Masonry — and of its offspring, the Education League — was

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338 Léaud and Glay, op. cit., II, pp. 216-220.

339 Idem. Ibid., pg. 91.

340 Idem. Ibid., pp. 87 and 88.

to withdraw women from the Church's influence. Normal schools for women teachers were meant to assist in this effort. Substantial results were also expected from the "Camille Sée Law" that dealt with high schools for girls. Voted in by the Chamber of Deputies on June 20, 1880, the Senate accepted it on December 10.[341]

There was then proposed a project that had a much broader scope — the drawing up of a "code" for "national" elementary education. Barodet and his colleagues, the principal advocates of "radicalism", introduced the outline of this plan to the Chamber of Deputies in 1877, both before and after "the Sixteenth of May". Once the Republican majority had been consolidated, Paul Bert took up the definitive task. A scientist, a man of burning and acute convictions, a relentless worker, Bert's efforts were concluded on December 6, 1879 with a far-ranging bill consisting of six chapters and 109 articles. It was an integral and closely reasoned application of the principles of compulsory, tuition-free and secularized education.[342] Ferry approved the draft and adopted Bert's principles, theses and conclusions. Nevertheless, he believed it "wise" to "take up the problems one at a time". After all, a masterpiece is not built at a single stroke. From the planner's voluminous documentation portions were exerpted that sketched the main lines of the foundations.

Gratuity was realized by the law of June 16, 1881. It called for absolute tuition-free education. There was to be no tuition in public institutions which provided introductory instruction to children whether rich or poor. Communal budgets were to support the anticipated expenses; and the National budget would make up whatever deficit. The legislation ignored the inequality henceforth created between school-children in public education and their counterparts in private education, between families discharged from all educational costs and families who had to pay the teachers of their choice without remitting any portion of their taxes. The injustice was not generally felt; and if it were, it was felt only by those who were very well off; the subsidy established in favor of the Communal school inclined the poor to desert Christian education.[343]

Another law, which also bore the date of June 16, 1881, required the entire teaching personnel to possess a credential that would establish proof of a minimum teaching capacity. Any equivalent admitted by the law of March 15, 1880 — "Obedience", ecclesiastical titles, special diplomas, preliminary certificates — were rendered invalid. Active teachers, whether in the public or the private school sectors, would have to appear before an examining board within a year of the promulgation of the law. Any of them who might fail could try again until school resumed in October of 1884.

Temporary arrangements reduced the rigors of these rules: principals of public or private schools who had been occupying their posts prior to January 1881 by virtue of the equivalent diplomas permitted in 1850 were dispensed from obtaining the certificate. The same latitude was accorded their assistants who were at least thirty-three years of age and performing their duties since January 1, 1876 or during the whole of the five year period prior to 1881. But these assistants were never to become principals of their schools without the certificate.[344] In

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[341] Brugereete, op. cit., II, pp. 206-208.

[342] Duvergier, *Collection des lois et decréts*, Vol. LXXXVI, pg. 380; Léaud and Glay, op. cit., pp. 83 and 84.

[343] Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 212. The Brothers, of course, maintained the principle of tuition-free education in their popular schools. But Rouland's injunction, dating from the Second Empire, had lead them to deviate from ancient customs. (See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 376 et sq.

[344] Duvergier, op. cit., Vol. LXXXI. — *Essai sur la Maison Mère, pg. 198*. — Léaud and Glay, Vol. II, pg. 94.

themselves these new requirements were neither exorbitant nor unusual. Except for countries that abandoned themselves to unrestricted liberty, the modern world recognizes the State's right to supervise the professional competence as well as the moral integrity of teachers. The Falloux Law, seeking to favor the clergy and Congregations, had accorded them preferments which, at the time, may not have seemed improper but which perpetuated aspects of privilege. Such a situation in an egalitarian, "common-law", dispensation became awkward and treacherous.

There is little doubt but what the law-maker in 1881 was hoping to incite embarrassment and anxiety among Religious educators. We know that he had failed to surprise the Brothers who, under the urgent entreaties of their Superior-general,[345] secured more than four hundred diplomas during the first year of the new system. We might add here that for many this was an achievment of considerable merit: over-worked and living at great distances from urban centers, they lacked time and books; they burnt the midnight oil and they gained access to courses of study at the at the price of a variety of stratagems; and in their success they sought not personal reward but a better way of serving, under the circumstances, the reputation of their Institute. Beyond the certificate, some of the Brothers went on to study for the higher "educational diploma"; in creating this degree on January 4, 1881 the law had made it available to teachers in private education. The examination consisted substantially in writing on some educational theme and conducting experimental classes to an audience of pupils.[346]

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It was with the second stage that they entered the danger zone. The essential objective drew near and became visible, tangible. The promoters of the project had declared that the principle of obligatory schooling was indissolubly bound up with the principle of secularization. Because the children of unbelievers were to be seated side-by-side with the children of believers, religion was to be banished from education — and not just revealed religion, the Christianity which had shaped France, but faith in God the Creator, master and judge of the universe. In his report, Paul Bert had stated explicitly: "Every moral truth can be taught without having recourse to metaphysical ambiguities or flashes from Sinai."[347] From the outset it was declared that there was no way of proving the principles of morality; it was enough to instill from infancy "the good old morality of our fathers" and make its practice a matter of obligation; access to its sources was prohibited. Later on he would talk about the "autonomy" of human beings, who needed only to find the rule of conduct within themselves. Later still, official sociologists would pronounce that morality had its source in immemorial customs and rituals; and that in the last analysis it was founded upon the demands made by the life of the collectivity. Stript of its divine qualities and then of its "categorical imperative" and its rule over the secret movements of the heart, it would be reduced to definitions involving "solidarity" and "altruism".

It was in this way, gradually, that the spiritual framework of a nation was broken. The doctrine was to set in motion its ineluctable consequences which, in the apparently serene accents of the sceptic, Renan had predicted. In Catholic circles the alarm which had been sounded from the outset had not as yet traveled very far in spite of the language in which the more zealous and far-seeing controversialists expressed their views. The Paul Bert bill was already being debated at the end of 1880 and in the Assembly (empowered by universal

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345 See above, Part I, chap. iii.

346 Léaud and Glay, Vol. II, pg. 96.

347 Rapport, pg. 24. Quoted by Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 212.

suffrage) a favorable vote was obtained on December 24: "During the present Vigil of Christmas when Christians gather around the manger of the Christ Child" — commented one of the journalists belonging to the Veuillot group — "the French Assembly, more cruel than Herod of old, has consumated its attack upon the faith of our children."[348]

But, in order to soothe the optimists, the legislative procedure was slowed down. And then the Senate got behind an amendement by Jules Simon which introduced into the first article the phrase "duties to God" along with duties to country. It looked as though "metaphysics" was about to make a come-back. But it was a come-back that had no future. The Deputies restored the language of their bill. The most absolute "confessional neutrality" demanded that, in the elementary schools, civic and moral instruction should replace in its entirety religious education. Catechism was excluded from educational programs into which priests had no right to penetrate. When the bill returned to the Senate on March 11, 1882 Jules Ferry this time secured the elimination of the name of God.

Totally "secular" then was to be the language of the law promulgated on March 29; and totally "secular" were to be the educational programs as of July 27. Octave Gréard, the Vice-rector of the Educational Department in Paris presided over the details of these programs and wrote the instructions that accompanied them. He had a clear head and a strong will. From teaching, which he had pursued since leaving graduate school, he had risen rapidly in the educational department; and he had left his personal mark on numerous ventures. As an educational inspector in 1864, he reformed kindergardens by employing the Froebel system as modified by the French. And as Director of elementary education in the Department of the Seine, he reorganized programs of studies, stimulated competition and astutely divided the educational task; he built eighty-five new buildings and the Colbert, Lavoisier and Jean Baptist Say Junior High Schools. He also opened the first city school for apprentices.[349] For his activities and writings he earned an appointment to the French Academy. This man who was to gain fame as an educator and leader, of course, would neglect nothing in order to assure that the system introduced in 1882 make its impact on history; he cared about it with his whole heart, mind and conscience. But is it possible permanently to assemble the stones of an edifice without a keystone? *Nisi Dominus aedificavit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam.*

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The Republic had taken its leave of God. It held suspect those of its citizens who professed the Catholic Credo and as deserving ostracism those who pronounced the vows of Religion. In this respect most of the people in government were in agreement. On March 6, 1883 the frosty legal scholar and the very contradiction of a rabble-rouser, Waldeck-Rousseau launched an indictment in the Chamber of Deputies against Religious. The worst bigots were to write nothing more harsh nor more libelous. Their arguments are summarized in the following paragraph:

"Through the contract that controls the formation of a Congregation, there are as many civil deaths as there adherents. By one of the vows persons dissociate themselves from concerns that are looked upon as vulgar which consist in being a property-owner, in other words one who works for the prosperity of one's country. When you have stripped from the human personality what enables him to own things, to reason, and to survive his own life-span, I ask what is left of such a personality...If we allow this gift of self, this total abdication that bends a man to the

[348] Quoted by Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 213.

[349] Léaud and Glay, Vol. II, pg. 213.

dominating law of a foreign will, we shall have to say that in that case the individual becomes the property of the association and instead of there being a growth of individual energies through the spirit of union, what occurs is a progressive repression."[350]

The pride of the world, closed off to the lessons of the Gospel, cannot exactly decipher a monk's behavior. In poverty, chastity and obedience it can only see the diminution of the person. It does not suspect that at a higher level renunciation becomes transformed at into a flowering, a liberation and an enrichment.

Christ's doctrine is a "scandal" and "foolishness" in the eyes of a society which has lapsed back into paganism. This is why the adversaries of the Faith will have a field day claiming that members of Congregations are incompetent to educate future heads of families or the children of a democracy. This was precisely Paul Bert's thesis when he demanded that his followers take the ultimate step: once education has been de-Christianized, he wanted to "secularize" the teachers.

His bill, submitted on February 7, 1882, had a rather turbulent history. A parliamentary debate was begun during the following June; and it was not resumed again until the end of 1883. And then, on the author's insistence, the Chamber of Deputies gave it its complete attention beginning in February 1884.

There were many speeches, and amendments succeeded one after the other. The minority that strove to defend Religious teachers found an accredited spokesman in the person of Bishop Freppel of Angers who, since 1882, had undertaken to combat anti-Christian education in pastoral letters which were "models of moderation, logic, systematic exposition, clarity and elegance."[351]

He had been sent to parliament by Brittany, and in this new arena "his keen and agile mind, his massive memory and his extraordinary capacity for assimiliation,"[352] found fruitful employment. His powerful will gained credence among his colleagues, and he was respected and listened to even when he was not followed. They yielded before his nobility of soul. This priest from Alsace "had at heart only two passions: a love of the Church and a love of France."

On February 19, 1884 he set out to destroy the sophistry of Paul Bert. In particular, he stressed the patriotism of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and their political fidelity, and he recounted their claims to the people's affections. In an audience determined to pursue the goals of Free-Masonry, it was a lost cause; nethertheless, justice was vindicated and opinion was apprised.

In July Armand Fallières, Minister of Public Education, brought to the Senate the text of the law voted by the Chamber of Deputies. In the files of the Luxembourg Palace there sometimes existed for indefinite periods dossiers come from the Bourbon Palace. Such was the case with the bill drawn up by Paul Bert and adopted by Jules Ferry. Of course, to senatorial prudence it appeared quite daring and liable to upset traditions and disturb peoples' consciences. Indeed, it might very well have remained "asleep" except for the action of a new Minister who — intransigent and resolute of character — liked to take his responsibilities seriously and pursue his principles and decisions to their logical conclusions.

We refer to René Goblet. He was a Deputy from Amiens, short of height but bold of spirit, who had risen to the top of the ranks. As a lawyer and legal scholar, he possessed talents for oratory, skill in discussion and a well equipped, fearful, brutal logic. It could not be denied that he was upright, convincing proofs of which he had given throughout his career. To this quality

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[350] Raimbault, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

[351] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 41.

[352] Idem. Ibid., pg. 38.

he allied the principles of political "radicalism".

Having received appointment as Minister of Public Education and Cult in Freycinet's third term, in January 1886 Goblet took it upon himself to effect a complete victory in the Republicans' struggle against the "Church's" education. In his view, the State, emancipated from clerical tutelege and indisputably sovereign, through secularization, would eliminate the last vestiges of the "ancien régime"; apart from its direct action, if not from its control, it would allow a margin of freedom wherein faith, prayer, ritual, preaching, confessional schools and the various forms of proselytism could be established.

It was nonetheless one of the faces of official atheism. A human society was claiming to get along without God. And while it did not banish religion and priests, it refused to employ them. Restricted to the cloister, the presbytery, the sacristy and the chapel, they were obliged to offer their services to believers exclusively. It did not forbid them to teach; but the church-related College and the Christian classroom were nothing more than appendages of religious "ritual". Nowhere were members of Religious orders to teach in the name of the nation.

Sixty years ago in France these proposals raised serious difficulties and ran up against the opposition of a large section of public opinion. In the Chamber and the Senate Goblet had to face Catholics as well as such philosophical idealists as Jules Simon. In magnificent language, the latter spoke of the dedication of the Religious Congregations that had been employed by every government since the beginning of the century: — Brothers and Sisters in a variety of habits, spread over every province, and enjoying the trust of countless families. He had no reluctance to denounce the bill as the product of "anger and oppression," dangerous for the nation and shameful for the Republic "that had transformed itself into a sect".

The debates continued on through twenty-five sessions in a display of extraordinary energy and exceptional virtuosity. Finally, the Senate went on to vote on the measure as a whole. Scarcely an article was so much as slightly altered. On October 19 the Chamber of Deputies hurried to accept these changes that had no serious consequences. And on the 30th "the new charter for elementary education" was promulgated.[353]

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"In public schools at every level education is exclusively consigned to lay personnel." This 17th article of the law of October 30, 1886 was — as one of its authors had declared—was "the center" and the most important point of the entire structure.[354]

However, it was impossible immediately to dismiss actually functioning teachers, since personnel to replace them was non-existent. Temporary measures had been provided. There could be "no new appointment of a member of a Religious Congregation" in departments that had been over the past four years equipped with a normal school. A ministerial decree dated December 1 was to determine the regions that the law envisaged as a whole. Concerning women teachers, whose professional training had not been in effect throughout the country, the prohibitions of the law were brought to bear in forty-eight departments. But as early as 1879 a great number of normal schools for student-teachers had been opened under the auspices of General Councils. The eight-six departments of continental France had normal schools by the time the legislative decision had taken effect. In this way, appointments of Religious teachers occurred quite exceptionally.[355]

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[353] Cf. article on Goblet by Maurice Pellisson in the *Nouveau Dictionaire de Pédagogie* by Ferdinand Buisson. — Léaud and Glay, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 107-108. — Brugerette, op. cit.,Vol. II, pp. 217-219.

[354] Duvergier, Vol. LXXXVI, pg. 380.

[355] Idem., pg. 383.

"In the instance in which secularization demanded it", the law authorized "the acquisition or construction" of school buildings. Indeed, we must recall that there were Communal schools that belonged to individuals, founders or benefactors, who demanded their return in order to dispose of them as they pleased. We shall presently see the way in which they were allowed to retrieve their property. But while they succeeded in obtaining justice, a change of classroom arrangements was necessary. Until alterations could be undertaken members of Congregations would be indispensable. Not willingly, but out of necessity, they were temporarily granted the right to teach.

Similarly, as Senator Labiche emphasized, it became necessary "to reduce the difficulties involved in applying the general principle"[356]by specifying a maximum delay of five years for the complete substitution of lay teachers for Religious in the boys schools. Girls schools were to have the benefit of a longer lapse of time.

But, as Bishop Freppel remarked: "If the obedience that binds members of teaching Congregations to their Religious superiors is incompatible with the submission they owe their educational leaders; if they are not quite suited...to teach free men or even to speak about their native land; if they are unworthy and incompetent because they bow to a Religious Rule; in a word, if such a teaching personnel is as dangerous for the political and social community as you claim, it should not be in five years or two years, but rather immediately that they should be banned."[357]

Paul Bert was careful not to reply. In spite of his ideological proclamations, "opportunism" dictated that he not divest himself too soon of the services of people upon whom he was imposing sentence. They were lower-caste citizens, of course, but nevertheless useful functionaries. Their self-sacrifice, their docility, their Christian charity could be counted on to continue the task until the more or less remote arrival of their successors.

The Christian Brothers and similar Congregations would have put the government in a strange predicament if their superiors had decided upon the abrupt abandonment of all Communal schools operated by the Brothers and Sisters. Compulsory schooling would have become a dead letter. But then it would have been necessary to assume a hostile attitude which is contrary to the Church's wisdom; there was the danger of upsetting the nation and of exacerbating divisiveness and hatred. Especially it would have imperiled the moral education, the training and the future of thousands of children. Neither Leo XIII nor the Hierarchy would have allowed anybody to launch out upon any such adventure. And a Superior like Brother Joseph would not allow his thoughts to dwell for a moment on that solution.

The men in power, therefore, legislated at their leisure. Depriving Religious of the use of Communal property, they were concerned to guarantee the conservancy of this patrimony to the cities even if it meant misunderstanding the intentions of the dead. Article 19 quite clearly envisaged the restoration of legacies and gifts granted to the Communes for the purpose of establishing Christian Schools; but it restricted quite narrowly and arbitrarily the period in which appeals could be made: no suit was actionable unless the donors or their heirs filed it within two years of the day on which the secularization decree appeared in the official Journal.

Legal interpretration took a direction most hostile to Catholics. At every trial judges, invoking their supreme authority, weighed whether or not the "determining cause" of a gift was genuinely a desire to entrust a schools to Religious teachers. Contracts and wills might not have been explicit; several not very friendly judges had scarcely any trouble in interpreting them in such a way as to throw the plaintifs' case out of court. In this way a secularized institution became public property.

The same result was achieved in another way: some founders, in order eventually to secure

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[356] Idem. ibid., pg. 383.

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the responsibility for the beneficiaries, had anticipated the possibility of extraordinary circumstances: — the extinction of the teaching Order answerable for recruiting schoolteachers. In that event the Commune was to recover the ownership of the property. The courts figured that this stipulation was involved when the teaching Congregation was summarily suppressed, not due to a lack of personnel, but through the application of the law, even when it was the city council itself that had undertaken the initiative for the suppression.[358] Such an interpretation required an extraordinary misconstruction of language.

After having thus organized, equipped and reinforced the defenses of public education, the legislature condescended to grant private education the right to exist. This was the object of the third section of the law of 1886. Freedom, however, involved certain restrictions: to open a school a written statement was required and the consent of the competent authorities who could refuse the request if it appeared to them that the location was inadequate, poorly constructed or unsanitary. A "Private" teacher had to meet conditions of nationality, morality, age and competence. He had to cooperate with official inspections in order to verify whether anything was being taught contrary to the Constitution or to the laws of the Republic or anything that was of a nature to scandalize conscience or corrupt morals.

Sanctions were applicable to him personally. Convicted, or merely suspected "of a serious fault of immorality or misbehavior in the exercise of his duties", he was — on the strength of a complaint on the part of an educational inspector — hauled before the Departmental Council.[359] In this assembly, where two male and two female teachers elected by their peers joined representatives of the General Council and bureaucrats of the Department of Education, presided over by the Prefect, there took place the resolution of disciplinary questions along with those concerning salaries and work-loads. If the person arraigned belonged to a Religious Community, he did not appear before a court that was always free of bias. He was in danger of encurring either a more or less insignificant censure or — a more severe punishment that might imperil his honor and compromise, indeed, ruin his future — a ban on teaching limited to the Commune in which he lived or extending over an entire Department, or, under certain circumstances a generalized and absolute prohibition against teaching, accompanied by the right of appeal.

While, with respect to those teachers whose services the State had henceforth rejected, the law provided supervision and punishment, on the other hand, it did not envision coming to their assistance. We have already remarked that among most of the leading minds of the day there was no idea of distributive justice nor of shared responsibilities. Nevertheless, among the members of Parliament there was a man who anticipated the concept. As debate on the bill was drawing to a close, Ralph Duval proposed an addendum to article 17: "Nevertheless, any private school having a minimum of fifty pupils and five years of existence must share in the same proportion as public schools in the division of Communal monies without being required to make any changes in its teaching personnel."

The speaker supported his motion with the best arguments. He recalled that in Paris the vitality of the Christian faith had built and maintained 246 educational institutions that had admitted nearly 70,000 pupils; and he concluded: "What I am asking is this: when heads of families have persisted over a period of five years in the thoughtful choice of a school and ratified this choice by a personal outlay of money, that the fraction of their taxes that goes for the obligatory secularized education from which their children do not profit be restored to them!" [360]

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[358] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pp. 461-463.

[359] Article 41 of the law of 1886.

[360] Quoted by Eugene Rendu in the preface to his book, *Sept ans de guerre*, 1880-1886, pp. xix and xx.

To have adopted such a policy, prudently and without precipitation, would have been to set out along a path of total justice. Of course, the majority was in no mood to follow the lead of one who did not share its appetites. Contrary to the example provided by the Belgians and later on the by the Dutch, France clung to its system of flagrant partiality, reserving all the advantages for some and forcing others to pay double for the education of their sons and daughters.

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Under the names of anticlericalism and secularization the spirit of bigotry penetrated every level of legislation. It inspired the law governing divorce. And it even insinuated itself into the municipal law of April 5, 1884 according to which a way was found for the Communes to recover the use of property that had been handed over for religious purposes. [361]

The military law of 1889, far from being free of the virus, seemed, in one of its sections, to be a corollary to the principles set forth in the educational legislation.

Since July 27, 1872 "members and novices of Religious associations dedicated to teaching and recognized as institutions for the public good..." were exempt from military service provided that prior to the drawing and in the presence of the Rector of the Department of Education they shall have committed themselves to ten years of educational work and that they fulfill this engagement in one of the association's institutions...that has been in existence for more than two years or numbers at least thirty pupils."[362]

The law passed by a conservative Assembly, sensitive to the claims of justice, resolved, over and above, to place no obstacle in the way of teaching vocations. The endless controversy concerning public and private schools was terminated. In both sorts of institution, in the opinion of the law's authors, teachers accomplished a task of national importance that was the equivalent of military service. As a consequence, Superiors of recognized Congregations could assign a suitable situation to each of their members without running the risk, as was the case during the years of the Second Empire, of teachers in the private schools being called to the colors.

This breadth of view did not square with the policies of the Third Republic. To the major legislation dated October 30, 1886 was attached the following rider: "Until there is a further vote concerning military recruitment, the promise of committing oneself to teaching for ten years, provided for in articles 79 of the law of March 15, 1850 and 20 of the law of July 27, 1872 can be fulfilled only for public schools."[363].

Since at the same time members of Religious Congregations were being banned from Communal schools, the result that were being sought appeared clearly to view. As Senator Paris said: "You refer to the law of 1850. It is true that under the influence of that law — with the exceptions introduced by way of ministerial decisions — the ten-year commitment had to be fulfilled in public schools. But to these schools all men of goodwill who worked in elementary education had access. To refer us to the law of 1850 in the present circumstances is ludicrous."[364]

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[361] Art. 168; cf. Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pp. 457-458.

[362] Art. 20 of the law concerning army recruitment.

[363] Art. 66

[364] Duvergier, op. cit., pg. 406.

There is no doubt that laicisation could occur only through steps. By some lingering scrupulosity, the new laws relating to the army "did not affect private teachers who had already contracted the ten-year arrangement" before the lay charter. These latter, like their state employed colleagues with ten years service, would keep their positions without any problem. While respecting the status already acquired, a difficult situation was being prepared for the future. "From now on, more than a hundred of our young Brothers each year will have to leave us to live in barracks, " wrote the Lasallian Superior General.[365]

The law of 16th July 1889 – voted to the cry "Put on your haversacks, Priests!"- confirmed these sad expectations. The congregational teachers had three years military service imposed on them while government lay teachers had the privilege of only one year in barracks. On January 20th 1890, "on the feast of Saint Sebastian, valiant martyr, unconquerably faithful to Our Lord in the midst of the perils of the camp, a circular letter of Brother Joseph announced "the demanding test being imposed on the Institute." A form of yet unestablished persecution because, in a general way, all the political governments had done their worst on the Brothers. It wounded the heart of the father of the family.

Brother Joseph with great emotion addressed his children, 'future soldiers': "the enemy of salvation is angered at seeing you serving God faithfully and so glorifying him. He wishes to cast you into the furnace. The Lord's angel will prevent any fire from reaching your soul. In the midst of the greatest danger he will keep you pure as you radiate supernatural life."

Everything was put in order to protect the young Brothers: special instructions, retreats before departure, regular correspondence, welcome in communities near garrisons. "If expenses for furniture and books are needed to set up the soldier Brothers, let me know," wrote the Chief to the Director of a boarding school. He added, "the test of military service is the hardest we have had to experience; it will kill vocations... But saved from this danger, our young Brothers will be men devoted to virtue and duty."[366]

Brother Joseph in no way hides his concerns, even his anguish. The 1889 law made him really sick even perhaps to bringing about a nervous condition and shortening his life. Recalling in a circular of 1891 "the year which has just finished – the year of the first call to the colours – as the most bitter."

There was no absence of consolations from the letters of the absent Brothers to the Superior. Under the military habit they remained fervent followers of the Blessed De La Salle. They suffered with resignation, they prayed, and they remained faithful to their commitments. They showed themselves without any ostentation or weakness, strong in their convictions. Many of them, according to what prudence made possible, exercised their zeal as apostles...

The results of the passage of clerics and congregational members to the barracks denied the cruel hopes of the Freemasons. Some weak members lost themselves, but charity towards souls

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[365] Letter of Brother Joseph to Rev. Le Mée, cure of Saigon, 12th May 1886 (Rigault op.cit.p.253)

[366] Rigault, op.cit., p.255In a "Letter to the Brothers called to the colours´1st November 1990, the Superior General sets out a code of duties for the religious soldier: relationships with the military leaders, with comrades, with confreres, with chaplains and priests, with superiors and communities of the Institute: "We tell you openly, sons of the Blessed De La Salle, to accompany your submission (to your officers) with the attitudes which you have undertaken since your novitiate towards your religious superiors; your obedience will be Christian, universal, exact, complete, respectful, cordial, and to a certain extent, blind. With regard to your comrades, Brother Joseph advises, for the beginning, prudence and reserve."Avoid as regards your faith and practices, nailing your colours to the mast too soon...Don't be too hasty in stating who you are...a watchful silence, a wise caution can take you a long way to perfect loyalty and the courage of your convictions..You need to give proof of human virtues, honesty, goodness, joy, patience; giving good example in service, apply yourselves to be model soldiers.

As good soldiers, young Lasallians will remain good religious in observing poverty, chastity, in being discreet and on occasion, apostles, not neglecting regular correspondence with your Congregational superiors.

Prayer,sacraments, good use of time,vigilance, and the Spirit of Faith will be the means of your perseverance.

grew among a great number. After a period of adjustment and the lessons of experience, the new generations were less put off by the disagreeable aspects. It was not because their virtue was any weaker but rather that the way they behaved was inspired by a new wisdom. Having passed through the feeling of being 'enslaved' they saw much better the greatness of being soldiers. They liked to discover in military discipline obedience, poverty, self-abnegation. Then, through practising compassion, pitying the ignorant, they witnessed strongly to faith, to purity, to irradiating a faith which disconcerted the mockers and touched the sceptics. When the war came, the Brothers of the Christian Schools demonstrated that their patriotism – so strikingly already shown in 1870 – knew how to go even to their most generous shedding of their blood. [367]

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There was a final difficulty troubling Brother Joseph's soul. The occasion – but not the principal cause – was in the fiscal order. Under the initiative of Henri Brisson in 1880, religious societies had to submit to a tax called an "acroissement." Any group was considered to increase its patrimony every time someone died or one of its members retired "in not dividing with those associated with it."[368] As a result, they had to pay a law about change.

Article 9 of the law of 29th December 1884 subjected every kind of Congregation, authorised or in fact in existence within the territory of the Republic, to pay this special tax. The fiscal authority claimed to make the claim of the legislator worse by demanding for each deceased person as many declarations as there were registered offices in the different regions where the real assets were. In this way, in an important Congregation, the death of a single member could require the payment according to many laws. Those affected generally opposed such payment, refused the financial officers, and took the matter to the courts. They sometimes won something, here and there, but when the administration maintained its point of view, the deficit accumulated and the position of the recalcitrants became very delicate when those responsible made use of their resistance to proceed to acts of persecution.[369]

Certain jurists, certain politicians, with conciliatory intentions, suggested substituting a law of 'subscription' to the l.aw of 'acroissement.' Each Congregation would pay a fixed amount based on their capital, in spite of the number of deaths. A more suitable arrangement replaced this annoying system. The inconvenient system would become 'normal' and perpetuate the clearly unjust exceptional tax. The large Congregations, obviously targeted, tried to launch a campaign through the press. Secretary General Justinus worked very hard to convince the deputies and senators. Parliamentarians who agreed with him or who had renounced anti-clericalism prepared legislation to render the law fairly bland. But the president of the Council, Alexander Ribot, did not follow out this direction. The majority in both houses voted a more severe law.

It needed to be recognised, however, that the law of 16th April made some progress. Multiple declarations became useless; inquisitorial searches by the controllers lost the reason for their existence; assets concerning the missions and charitable works were excluded. Finally, the non-recognised Congregations always hoped to escape through the gaps in the net because, from a legal viewpoint, they could not be called owners.

There were also some still quiet indications of a "new spirit" which Pope Leo XIII favoured for trhe peace of the Church and France. The law was obeyed out of deference to the Pope. Neither discipline nor belief were at stake and taking on the attitude of martyrs in reference to a question of money appeared neither useful nor suitable.

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[367] From 1914-1918, as officers, soldiers, nurses or combatants, 4900 Brothers were mobilised: 280 among them fell on the field of honour.
[368] Law of 22nd December
[369] Memoirs of Cardinal Dominique Ferrata, French edition 1922, *My Time as Nuncio in France*, pp.486sq – 502.

The five male Congregations authorised in France. Lazarists, Sulpicians, Missionary Priests, Spiritins and Brothers of the Christian Schools, decided to pay the tax. They made known their decision by a consultative Memorandum. The Brothers obtained a slight diminution in payment for their schools in the East.

After this, there developed a violent argument among Catholics. They suspected, blamed or swore at the Superiors of the Church, some seeing them as "the five wounds of the Church." Brother Joseph's sensitivity felt his share of such insults. Mgr. Ferrata, at that time nuncio in Paris, noted in his memoirs just how the old man was affected.

In a letter addressed to the Supreme Pontiff on October 6th, M. Fiat, who was responsible both for the Lazarists and the Daughters of Charity, M. Captier, Superior general of Saint Sulpice, M. Ambruster in charge of the Foreign Missions, M. Grisard, Assistant-Superior of the Spiritins, and Brother Joseph more than justified their conduct.

"They had," they declared, "sought and found the light and strength in the directives from Rome." This advice, passed on by the Nuncio, "clearly established that what was at stake was not a question of justice but one of prudence." Now resistance to the law "would have exposed the Congregations to dangers, the seriousness of which was only too clear." Not only would heavy fines strike the offenders, but the authority accorded them by their legal person could be withdrawn. They could then only await the time for being taken over and being dispersed.

"Was it worth compromising their secular works, their important spiritual interests, in a venture without any future when the Sovereign Pontiff wanted them safeguarded above all: clergy education, propagation of the faith, instruction of children, Christian charity among the sick, the poor and orphans?"

"In bowing before an unavoidable necessity," the Superiors were trying to say that "they did not accept as definitive the fiscal legislation of which they were the victims. In agreement with all the bishops, they protested against the exceptional rule created by the 1884 and 1885 legislation. Nevertheless, in spite of the rigidity of these laws, they did constitute by certain provisions, the pledge of a reform and a return to equity."

In a circular letter of 24th October, Lasallians read the text and the commentary on the text. Brother Joseph reminded them, that two months previously, he had asked their prayers to obtain heavenly help in these matters. The Council of Assistants had come together, the Superior had shown his wise helpers, the instructions from the Holy See and sixty letters coming from the members of most recent General Chapter. These former capitulants, almost to a man, had expressed this opinion: "that from the viewpoint of principles, the law should be obeyed in order to avoid a complete ruin."

"Certainly, "said their formerly calumniated Leader, "we have in no way hidden these false interpretations, all kinds of accusations of which we have been the object...It has happened otherwise. Opponents simplified and changed the very nature of the problem. Many seemed to ignore that the only assets subjected to the tax were the legitimate patrimony of the Institute, the titles and assets on which the government decree intervened. The law did not in any way touch the schools and the works established and maintained."

Once they were better informed, our friends who previously had shown themselves surprised and upset, recognised their mistake, no longer haggled over their approval, and rose above the passionate attacks and the not very favourable insinuations."[370]

"Patience and silence" were imposed, recommended moreover by the Lasallian spirit. By not replying, peace came about. In fact, all this disturbance over the tax calmed down in the months that followed. Brother Joseph, on his way to dying, did so with tranquillity. The political atmosphere was more calm. The Congregation recovered the chance of being able to retain Rue

[370] The non-recognised Congregations who were among the strongest among the resisters – relatively few in number - were not risking very much because their assets at the time were not the object of the tax.

Oudinot. In the lawsuit after Brother Irlide's generalate, new procedures before various jurisdictions – the civil office of the Seine regarding the conflict of interests, - a judgement of 2nd January1896 marked, not a final conclusion, but at least a favourable direction: the City of Paris, who through its sectarian representatives, persevered in its claims, saw itself refused in its first claim.

CHAPTER THREE

Lost Ground

The spirit and the gesture of "ostracism" with which the Athenians banished Aristide the Just seems in a sense to be reflected in the abiding hostility that generations of Republicans manifested for teachers of Christian education. Services rendered over the years, the huge contribution made to the moral and social progress of the working classes, the successes secured through an educational philosophy equipped with skillful methods — all of this was frantically forgotten. Little credit was given to anything but intolerance; the Religious habit became an irritant; and people were impatient to see the Religious teacher disappear from the school while they awaited his expulsion from the city.

While Parliament elaborated special laws, bureaucrats, journalists and city governments waged campaigns against Brothers and Sisters; calumnies were propagated; and insults grew in number. The lie became the arrow whose poisonous tip struck unerringly, and how many were the militant anti-clericals who did not hesitate to use it! Any strategy that enfeebled the adversary or confused and discouraged the faithful was considered acceptable. If one did not succeed in inciting panic, at least one did something to dishearten a foe or two and seize a fragment of the coveted territory. In support of this general evaluation we shall cite a particularly significantillustration. We shall examine an example of officialdom, government and the educational establishment acting in concert against a Brother of the Christian Schools. The incident occurred in Savoy in 1881, and involved Brother Vigbert Louis, a teacher at the residence school in Thonon.

Among its pupils the school included the son of a Swiss citizen, a wholesale-haberdasher who had long been settled on the south shore of Lake Geneva. A Calvinist, Theophilus Frey had married a Catholic and had agreed to send his two sons to the Christian Brothers. Not long afterwards, the eldest left for Lausanne, but, Albert, the younger of the two, continued his studies in the school founded by Brother Alman. In 1877, with the full knowledge of his father, he made his First Communion, while his mother assisted devoutly at the ceremony. Albert never abandoned his religious practices, as, openly and freely, he travelled back and forth between his home and the church.

Having obtained his diploma in 1880, there was a change in his life but not in his behavior. M. Frey, hoping to have Albert improve his knowledge of German, sent him to a relative in Zurich. The community was Protestant. Nevertheless, the youth was able to attend Mass and observe Friday abstinence, concerning all of which he kept Brother Louis informed.

In his reply on April 2, 1881, Brother Louis wrote to his former pupil about the Congregation of the Most Blessed Virgin that had recently been established at the residence school. After having extolled "the joys and the successes" that we owe "to the good Mother and to St. Joseph," he told the story of "the holy and peaceful" death of one of the members of the new association. "God willed to have him with Him". And the writer added, "this chosen individual possesses for all eternity what we aspire to, but what we can lose. We must live in such a way, my dear Albert, that we merit to die as he did."

But less than three weeks later a touching appeal reached the teacher in Thonon. Albert spoke of a sudden shift that had taken place in his father's thinking. He had written to Zurich: "It is important that you forget the foolishness the Brothers taught you." The son replied: "I mean to preserve the high principles implanted in my heart." M. Frey rejoined: "Those principles are

not mine; I want you take part in the 'Supper'.[371] And if needs be, I have ways of compelling you.

On April 21 the following letter was sent by return mail: "You don't have to get excited...Obviously your father doesn't know what the Catholic Church is...Write to him as follows: if the Catholic religion made people bad sons or bad citizens, I would not have embraced it...But, on the contrary, since it has inspired me with a greater love for my parents and it directs me to be faithful to my duty, and to flee evil, I have reason to believe that the principles that produce these good results are not bad, and I also feel all too keenly that if I were to abandon this religion, I should be nothing but a disgusting and depraved person...Since you can only benefit from my present convictions and dispositions, I hope that you will avoid what can turn out to be a tumultuous dissension... "

These hastily written lines were, of course, intended to give only an outline of a son's letter to his father. As a consequence, the style was somewhat curt. But basically it seemed rather beyond reproach. It affirmed freedom of conscience. Albert, who was fifteen years old, was in a position to choose. In full and legitimate independence he was continuing the line of action that had brought him to his First Communion. If, in 1877 his mother's consent, along with the concurrence — at least tacit — of the father, had been lacking, it might have been possible to suspect the boy's decision and the involvement of his teachers. Actually, at that time there was neither an abuse of trust nor insubordination. And in 1881, sought out for his advice, Brother Louis discharged his mission honorably.

But with the tactlessness of youth Albert merely copied the text without relieving its effect. The result was disastrous: the ancient enmity against Rome rumbled in the paternal spirit. At the same time, one of Albert's cousins in Zurich found in her guest's desk, besides the Brother's advice and exhortations, a missal containing the inscription: "June 10, 1877, Baptism; June 21, First Communion".

Actually, Father Joseph, Director of the orphanage in Douvaine, had, at Brother Alman's invitation, conferred the Sacrament of Baptism "conditionally" on the future communicant, since a doubt existed as to the validity of a previous Protestant ceremony. Informed by his fellow Calvinists, M. Frey raised an outcry. He roused the radicals in Thonon. "A New Mortara Case!" headlined the local newspapers. Like Pius IX, who arranged for the Christian education of a Baptized Jewish child, the Brothers at the residence school had "snatched" a son from his father, walked over a family's rights and kept the conscience of a boy in the dark! The Swiss tailor appealed to the Attorney-general of the Republic. And on September 19, 1881 Brother Louis and Father Joseph were hailed up before the Council of the Departmental Board of Education at Annecy.

At first the Attorney-general attempted challenge the memory of the venerated Brother Alman whom, he said, "misinterpreted" M. Frey's confidence. But, the official added, not without significance, the crime that has been committed "does not belong to the realm of human justice". The guilty party must render an account to another judge, which cannot be required of him here below. Thus, God Himself was being called upon to pronounce an inexorable sentence against His servant.

Father Joseph's "responsibility" was quickly passed over in order to concentrate the court's attention and its stringency on Brother Louis. The indictment, with glaring bias and bad faith, analyzed the two letters written during April: the first one was described as characterized by "a mystical exaltation"; while the second, in the eyes of the Attorney-general, constituted the most flagrant provocation to rebellion, a blatant insult to the religion of the head of a family and to the father himself who was implicitly considered "a disgusting and degraded person"! Here then were combined all the aspects of "one of the gravest crimes a teacher can commit".

[371] Protestant communion

The Council removed Father Joseph's name from the suit. But with Brother Louis it was merciless. The Attorney-general of the Republic had merely asked that he be suspended for six months. However, the judges, who included the Prefect of Upper Savoy, an Inspector of the Department of Education, a general counsellor, a member of the civil court, and a Protestant pastor thought that "an example had to be made of him", and they forbad him to teach in the Thonon region.

It was a harsh sentence, since practically it was the equivalent to exiling a man from his native region, whose whole life belonged to his pupils. It was also an unjust sentence because it punished a citizen who was defending freedom of conscience. And it was an illegal sentence, because in this particular case the law of March 15, 1850, cited by the Council did not apply, as the incriminating letters were addressed, not to a pupil in a residence school but to a young man who had completed his studies and who had undertaken to consult a former teacher.

On October 4, Brother Louis initiated an appeal to the Higher Council of Public Education. However, the immediate purpose of the partisans had been achieved: once the school year began, the accused could not retain his teaching post in Savoy. On his Superiors' orders he went to St. Etienne where he became a teacher of French in the St. Louis residence school. On October 16 the city Council of Thonon voted in the secularization of the primary school accompanied by the following preamble: "It is urgent that the youth of this city be withdrawn from the influence of the Brothers' education; the scandal which recently occurred makes it a duty for us."

With some vicissitudes the appeal process pursued its course. The Higher Council declared the appeal inadmissible, because only decisions carrying "absolute prohibition" were subject to revision; and "M. Fillion" retained the right to teach anywhere except in Thonon. On the advice of a better lawyer in St. Etienne and with the authorization of Brother Irlide who meant to push the case to the bitter end, Brother Louis appealed to the Council of State. There he was defended, without fees, by M. Sabatier: "In such a case," wrote the noted jurist, "we don't do it for profit, nor even for the honor, but for the sake of conscience."

The Minister of Public Education — Jules Ferry — to whom the appeal file was sent, in a long note addressed to the President of the Higher Administrative Court, supported the grounds for the condemnation. According to him, "the actions charged against the private teacher concerned performance of his duties, since he had taken advantage of his daily contacts with young Frey in order, in the beginning, to sow the seeds of, and then to sustain, the child's defiance of paternal authority."

Ferry went on to raise the question as to whether freedom of conscience was a right that belonged to children. Continuing on in an interrogatory style, he concluded in the negative: "Perhaps such a freedom in a creature who has only a confused notion of good and evil and whose mind in still unformed is opened in endless failures."

There then occurs a statement, no less explicit, concerning the rights of a father over the education of his children. "To dispute this elementary truth would be to impair the authority of our natural mentors in the interests of conflicting encroachments and dangerous allurements and undermine one of the foundations of society: the family."

It is both strange and amusing to read, under the signature of a Masonic statesman, one of the most typically Catholic moral positions. This thoroughly orthodox statement sought to destroy "M. Fillion's argument which exposed "the child, alienated from his kith and kin" to the ambitions of the fanatical or the crafty.

The Parisian press was full of the affair. *Le Temps* wrote about "a rather curious conscientious kidnapping". *Le XIXe siècle* and *La République francaise* hurled fire and brimstone on the Brothers. On the other hand, *L'Univers* declared that an educated and gifted young man should be able to assert his freedom of conscience in opposition to an arbitrary command on the part of his parents. And, along the same lines, two other newspapers, equally

faithful to the Church, *Le Monde* and *Le Francais* (a paper formerly associated with Louis Veuillot) published Brother Louis' "open letter" explaining the reasons for his appeal.

The battle ended on July 28, 1882 with a moral victory. It was acknowledged that the accused teacher might freely write letters to Albert Frey, since at the time he was acting outside the strict limits of his functions as a teacher. As a consequence, the government's commissioner should have reversed the Annecy finding.2

Albert Frey continued to persevere in his Catholic faith. After a stint in public education, he taught in private secondary schools as a teacher and examiner in Germanic languages. [372] The same sort of objectivity was met with in spheres that did not suffer from the usual political fluctuations. But below the untroubled clarity of the summits, winds and storms assaulted the climbers in their ascent.

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In the beginning secularization appeared to be an episode controlled by local fervor, a whim of sectarian majorities who were pleased in this way to underscore their conquest. Among Catholics there were some who looked forward to a time of redress. In previous periods the Brothers had experienced such reversals of fortune. Contrite municipalities restored their title to be Communal teachers; or the central government intervened either to restore an earlier arrangement or by refusing to endorse decisions that might upset civic order. Between 1872 and 1878 several Prefects — like those that followed one another in the Department of the Upper Marne — had shown their respect for the Brothers without worrying about the hostility of some of the mayors.

Elsewhere, the inadequate number of lay-teachers forced adversaries of the Christian schools to delay their schemes. Meanwhile, a public relations campaign was set in motion to attract young people to Normal Schools. Before it achieved its results, the situation appeared to be harmless for Religious Congregations who were already in possession of the field. What happened was that they were lulled "into a false sense of security."[373]

Brother Irlide was in no way inclined to share such illusions. But as long as France was living under the guarantee of the law of 1850, he refused to yield anything except with full knowledge. He undertook to resist at every defensible outpost. Even after Bardoux's circular, he continued in this courageous posture, perhaps without too much hope, but still in a way intended to uphold the cohesiveness of his troops. In his circular of January 10, 1879 he wrote: "In order to get a proper perspective on the measures taken against our schools, we must, my dear Brothers, inform you that since nearly every suppression effected by city governments seems to us to be illegal, we have authorized those responsible for these institutions to appeal to the Council of State...As far as we see it, teachers cannot be legally dismissed from their posts unless they have given grounds for disciplinary procedures to be taken against them, i.e., as punishment for serious faults."

The laws, still under discussion, parliamentary demonstrations and voting and governmental action removed the last shreds of optimism. It was important, at least, the no one might accuse the Institute aggressive manoeuvre. Naturally, an anticlerical Republic could not bank on enthusiastic adherents in Lasallian Communities; and in 1880 were no different than the majority of Catholics in their suspicions and in their laments. But this was precisely the reason

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[372] Albert Frey continued to persevere in his Catholic faith. After a stint in public education, he taught in private secondary schools as a teacher and examiner in Germanic languages.

[373] . [373] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique des écoles de Chaumont. Ibid. Historique des établissements de Dole.

for admonishing them to be wary. Their history lessons, in particular, were occasions where they were endanger of making slips of the tongue.

On January 6, 1881 the Superior-general declared: “In explaining the system of government be careful that no one can ever give an awkward interpretation to your words...In principle all forms of government are legitimate and good; in order to contribute to the prosperity of a country, to national peace as well as satisfactory relations with foreign countries they need nothing more than competent, sound and virtuous human beings.”

Brother Irlide, of course, did not add that the people in power answered to his description. The actual situation was all too galling. That in many minds doubts existed as to the future of the Republic, (far from coming as a surprise), was something to which the old man quite easily resigned himself; at his age and in the circumstances in which he found himself, the past assumed the aspects of a happy time. Deep down, there probably eddied a certain longing for the restoration of the monarchy, which could be detected lurking behind such statements as “A political administration that does not answer to the potential of its people cannot last long”. But then there would spring to mind the adage of the theologians and the philosophers: “As long as this administration endures it is the duty of every good citizen to respect it”.

The head of the Brothers’ Congregation, then, was saying the same thing as the Pope. He sought to accommodate himself to events and to men and to draw the best out of every situation. He commented upon the laws with clear sightedness but without rancor. Concerning the credentials that had been required after 1881, he noted in his New Year’s circular, 1882, that while certain retroactive features subverted public justice, in any case the improvements eliminated some injustices. And he joyfully announced the 1100 credentials obtained by the Brothers during the preceding semester’s three examination sessions.

The Brothers were elevating themselves above the level demanded by their tasks. Yet for the good of souls the obstacles they would henceforth have to surmount were legion. “It was never an easy thing to combat all the unmanageable inclinations, the indelible relics of original sin, in children, nor to foster the effort, the vigilance and the indispensable constancy to stifle the emerging passions.” The best government, the best family, the best school had to think about human malice and resist the seed of corruption. What, then, would become of a world that rejected Divine Revelation and refused to restrain nature? The path along which France has chosen to travel may very well lead to something horrible. Let the Brothers be convinced that to bring Christianity into such an environment will be endlessly troublesome. “In the climate in which your poor children live,” their Superior told them, “in the rationalist, hedonistic and atheistic society that is in the making” new problems will arise that will demand extraordinary methods to solve.

And then the law of March 28, 1882 prompted the most disturbing emotions among believers and faced every Religious teacher with a problem of conscience. If public education was “neutral”, if, in class, it was necessary to be silent concerning dogma and the real foundations of the moral life, would the Brothers, “Apostles of the catechism”, remain principals and teachers in the Communal schools?

The simplest thing to have done was immediate withdrawal. And that is what the most conscientious and the most zealous ones would have gladly opted for. In this way there would be no anxious moments, no hesitation, no compromises.

Encouragement along these lines came from all sides to Religious teachers of both sexes. Catholics in the north made a show of united resistance to the “impious law”. Breton peasants refused to send their children to “a Godless” school. Some Bishops — Dreux-Brézé in Moulins, Cotton in Valence — preached a crusade. Archbishop Duquesnay of Cambrai denounced the legislation of 1882 as more disastrous for the country than the Franco-Prussian

war: “It will rot the nation to the marrow,” he said without mincing words.[374]

Meanwhile Belgium exhibited the example of a pitiless struggle. Attacked by Free-Masonry, the Church employed all its spiritual resources: it summoned the faithful to defy the “odious law” by refusing to make use of the public schools. Believers followed the Hierarchy’s orders; and teachers resigned in vast numbers rather than participate in neutral education.

But on the other side of the frontier the constitutional question was never raised. In France the rebellion against the law was scarcely detached from a belligerent campaign against the administration. The Belgians as a people proved to be vigorously attached to their faith, while in the course of the 19th century religious indifference had won over many French regions. Intransigence had very little hope of success. Misunderstood, poorly explained and defended, it ran the risk of escalating the rout and inciting persecution. By declaring the Republic in danger, the administration would have won over the majority of the electorate.

Furthermore, the advocates of non-resistance were devising a satisfactory *modus vivendi*. In 1882 the clergy had been admitted to the “School Commissions” which had taken on the responsibility for promoting education. The priests who were selected by city councils to cooperate in this work were rather numerous: there were 75 in Ille-et-Vilaine, 107 in Doubs, 104 in Pas-de-Calais, 80 in Gironde, 54 in Puy-de-Dôme and 50 in Nièvre, etc. It was believed that 65% of these Commissions were highly motivated.[375]

Moreover, the Higher Council on Public Education had drawn up rules for neutrality that respected religious convictions. In these directives, the name of God, which the law had effaced, reappeared: teachers were to instruct their pupils that this name was not to be used lightly; and he was to accustom their minds to incorporate “a sense of veneration with the idea of the First Cause and the Supreme Being.”[376]

The Bishops, therefore, were loath to approve of violent language. The instructions that the Papal Nuncio, Bishop Czacki, received from Rome supported this line of conduct. The tradition of the ‘Concordat’ reinforced it: since 1801 corporate action seemed nearly impossible for the Church in France. Every diocese was regarded as a sovereign domain and — by the will of the State and the native individualism of the people — surrounded by a moat and a wall. If any sort of unanimity emerged, it did so in silence rather than out in the open.

Superiors of Religious Congregations appealed to the Church Hierarchy to put an end to indecision and controversy. Their personal opinion was clearly stated: that it was impossible to throw forty-thousand school teachers out into the streets, and plunge into the unknown.[377]

No doubt, this was Brother Irlide’s position. His circular of April 7, 1882 provides all the information we need on this question: “The judgments occasioned by the law on elementary education in the course of its discussion in both Houses have assumed a still more truculent character after its passage, because there are people who are planing to organize associations or committees of opposition...We have been urging you, my very dear Brothers, completely to avoid any action, petition or protestation, whether oral or written...Rather than further them, you might very well compromise the sacred interests of religion which are more heavily involved in this controversy than you perhaps imagine.”

Once he had declared this ban, the Superior-general explained his position with regard to the policy of “educational neutrality” the principle of which he condemned, while he discounted watered down forms or variations of the system.

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374 Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 220-222.

375 Statistics provided by Brugerette, op. cit., pg. 225.

376 Brugerette, ibid.

377 Lancanuet, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 149.

"God keep you from saying: Don't bother about the wretched consequences that the law splitting the Christian religion from elementary education might have." Nevertheless, it is important "everywhere to make up for the lack of religious education during the school hours."

And the strategy to be employed? "The educational authorities, we cherish the hope, will understand that the thought of prohibiting those of you who teach catechism in Communal schools could not have entered into the minds of the lawmakers...That would be directly opposed to the wishes of the families who have chosen to send their children to your schools." Obviously, the omission of religious instruction in the educational programs was a lapse that could not become general practice: how should it concern teachers who, by their religious vocation, "are committed to a career in education?"

The approach would require a certain amount of tact. The public school teacher, the Brother, should teach his class in conformity with the law and with departmental directives. At all other times and places, as a Religious he would avail himself of his freedom to teach catechism to his pupils. That is what emerges from the following paragraph in which Brother Irlide ventures to unravel the difficulty: "You have full freedom to reveal to us your misgivings and your aversion for remaining in charge of the operation of schools in which you are no longer free to teach catechism or preside over the recitation of the customary prayers. We will not, and we must not, subject your consciences to any sort of anguish, even though we are prepared to demonstrate that, at least for the time being, there is no fear of incurring any censure or of committing any sin if you are obliged to forego prayers and catechism for as long as your pupils are on school property."

Elsewhere, the placating phrase read: "It is possible, without sin to obey a civil law which rules out a certain place or a certain time to perform a professional work of religion, charity or zeal, especially if, by conforming to the law, we safeguard a greater good, i.e., the higher interests of religion."

The Institute's General Council looked into special cases, and refused to allow that excellent Brothers should flounder in quagmires of conscience. The Superior-general was gently attentive to the Brothers' appeals, but the heart of his letter was contained in its closing statements: "Generally and without consulting particular cases, we do not agree that any of you should or can teach or practice resistance to the law of last March 28th..." As a consequence, there was a formal order of "rejection" regarding the quarrel into which "friends" thought to plunge the Brothers. "It belongs to the Hierarchy in union with the infallible Head of the Church to indicate what is permissible and what is forbidden."

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The Superior-general knew that he was in agreement with the principal leaders of the Church in France. Immediately after his circular there appeared a document written by the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Guibert — a letter dated April 8, 1882 and addressed to Brothers and sisters teaching in public schools:

"Remain at your posts (he wrote); and without failing in obligations that are determined by law and by instructional programs, continue to provide religious education. Only in a situation in which this right is absolutely repudiated should you give up a ministry in which, through your knowledge and your dedication, through your tested methods and through your remarkable results you have deserved the esteem and the gratitude of the nation."[378]

Given the accord of such a highly placed authority, the Institute's General Chapter, which was held during the following October, had no difficulty ratifying measures demanded by the

[378] Lacanuet, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 150. — Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 224.

situation, which was the purpose of its first decision.[379]

After listening to Brother Irlide, the assembly declared its "profound distress" with the restraints interjected into the teaching of the faith in the schools of several countries. It "approved and commended" the directives contained in the Superiors' circulars. And on its own authority it declared as follows:

"For as long as circumstances do not change, our Brothers may continue to direct public schools, even though religious instruction and prayer are therein forbidden, provided that in this respect they make up what they are prevented from doing during class hours and provided they do their utmost in favor of the Christian education of their pupils, in conformity with the regulations that will be worked out by the General Council."

It was a careful renunciation, total, but at the same time bitter. Accordingly, the religious sense of the Capitulants inspired something of a compensatory gesture. Religious images had disappeared from school property; crucifixes, as we have noted, were violently torn from walls, thrown to the ground and broken. Teachers and pupils were unable to give external expression to their beliefs and, at least as regards outward display, forced to maintain a cruel silence toward God. The Institute's representatives proposed "to offer reparation to Our Lord for the outrages inflicted in so many place on the sacred sign of our redemption, as well as for the sacrileges committed against the Holy Eucharist."

As a result, they stipulated: "Brothers in vows, whether temporary or perpetual, will wear under their regular habit a brass crucifix mounted on ebony and suspended around the neck from a chain." This new symbol of religious profession has been customarily called "the vow crucifix".

Brother Irlide called it a "token of expiation" which he placed over the hearts of his Brothers, because walls and entrance ways in classrooms and schools were devoid of symbols, in school halls and shelters, and because at the same time, "a relentless struggle" was being carried out against the Cross at crossroads, street corners and at the center of cemeteries. A Brother who had already kissed the image of the Savior on the end of his Rosary beads would receive the "second crucifix" when, on his knees, he presented the Superior's delegate with his vow formula. He was to promise to the persecuted Christ a continuous but inward devotion, except under extraordinary circumstances when he would be authorized to bear openly the sign of salvation.[380] A Papal decree, dated February 17, 1883, enriched the vow crucifix with indulgences, thus conferring ultimate approval and complete validity upon the Chapter's initiative.

To seek divine assistance, to live more fervently, to count on the power of prayer, such were the timely watchwords. Brothers teaching in the public schools would suffer many indignities. Surveillance was set up to see whether they dispensed with Bible History and catechism during school time. Even when the regular school day was over, woe betide them if they were surprised by some half-baked informer talking about the Commandments or the Gospel within the walls of the Communal school.

The fanaticism of educational bureaucrats was sometimes not above stooping to mean-minded provocations: in Bas-en-Basset the Brother Director had to be removed for persisting in praying out loud; he was also accused of lacking dispatch in removing a particular holy water fountain. A similar disciplinary punishment was visited upon the Director of Banassac in whose classroom was discovered copies of a hymn. Brother Nonce Joseph, a saintly man who taught in Aurec, was expelled from teaching in the Upper Loire: he had allowed his pupils to take advantage of a holiday that the mayor had personally seen fit to grant

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[379] Appendix to the circular dated January 3, 1883.

[380] Circular, dated January 3, 1883.

in honor of a visit to the Commune on the part of the Diocesan authorities.[381]

Throughout the year 1883 instances of bigotry grew in number; an Inspector of elementary schools in Charente found a catechism on a desk: "Remove all that filth", he shouted, "there will be no more talk about God here." There was another Inspector in the Upper Garonne who maintained that the catechism and Bible History "besotted" the mind. And an Inspector in the Pas-du-Calais ordered the teachers: "First all, get rid of the crucifix!"[382]

Some of the textbooks were clearly irreligious. The Bishops brought them to the attention of the faithful by placing on the "Index" Gabriel Compayré's *Elements d'instruction morale et civique*, Paul Bert's *Instruction civique à l'école* and *L'Homme et le citoyen*, a book by Pastor Steeg. The gesture amounted to striking at the prophets of the new age. Clergy guilty or implicated in these efforts were punished by being deprived of their salaries. And in the Senate on the 5th and 31st of May 1883 Ferry appointed himself the defender of textbooks. Finally, it was agreed that the three books would remain as instructional tools for the teachers, but they would not be obligatorily imposed for youthful examination.[383]

Nevertheless, an inescapable conclusion emerged: even before the law of 1886 teachers who were members of Congregations functioned with increasingly greater difficulty in the public schools. They were unwanted and suspect. There was a tendency to entrap them and to catch them in the act error. There was a policy of gradually eliminating them and, wherever the opportunity arose, to speed up the movement toward secularization. Incidents in the area of religious neutrality were easily fabricated. The limits within which the Brother-catechist had to confine his action weighed upon him as the severest of restrictions. This policy of withdrawal imposed upon him by his ecclesiastical and Religious superiors could not always be maintained. The bigots accused him of having violated the law: actually, how was he going to attempt to remain faithful to his vocation as an apostle? The very words he used were almost necessarily pervaded by the language of Christianity: — allusions, comparisons, metaphors sprung to mind from novitiate experiences and the reading of the Old and New Testaments. A pupil, vindictive or talkative, would recount one of his teacher's suggestions — perhaps distorting it in a variety of ways. The statement would be peddled around town — whether too candidly or misunderstood; in which form it would reach hostile ears. An Inspector would appear and seize — as we have seen — some religious object. A file would be opened, and the Prefect who investigated the teacher would respond to the demands coming from a City Council and accumulated merit-points in the eyes of a Deputy or a Minister by decreeing the dismissal of the entire teaching Community.

Such a scenario shows the stuff of which this obedience, dedication and courage were made over the years during which it prolonged the precarious life of the education provided by the teaching Congregations in the service of the public authorities. Since it had been decided that, with a view to the greater good, these teachers await patiently the fatal blow, this work, without hope of reward, without security for the future and under the fist of the adversary, became heroic. From that moment on nobody talked about why the Brothers remained in schools that were legally neutral until, first, the administration, and then the legislature expelled them. There was nothing left to do except to share the views of Brother Joseph who, on January 18, 1887, urging the Brothers "to dismiss all uneasiness", even if one were groping in the dark; and "abandon oneself to the Heavenly Father" by refusing to anticipate Providence and by praying

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[381] Archives of the District of Le Puy, Historique des établissements.

[382] Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 226.

[383] Idem. ibid., pp. 226-229.

that, according to His good pleasure, to be open or to close available roads.[384]

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As we know there were instances of secularization prior to the "laicization laws". Beginning in 1881 the government's attitude could only supply cities with the most powerful motives for removing Religious from operating schools. The modification of instructional programs foreshadowed and in the end had to determine a change of teachers. There was no need of the law of 1886 for one to foresee such a transformation and for it to be speedily conducted on a rather vast scale. The principles and the conclusion of the Paul Bert project were, moreover, known for a long time; they had inspired the entire educational policy; essentially René Goblet's industry had as its results both to approve of what had already happened and to assign a legal respite to the definitive expulsion of teachers who were members of Congregations.

In boys' schools the replacement of personnel, legally, had to be concluded by the end of 1891. This date — exception being made for a few extraordinary arrangements — marked the end of the service that the Institute had been supplying the "University" since 1808.

It would be well to pursue this dismantling process in various regions of the country. It turns out to be a somber and monotonous business, and we would be wasting our time recording the wrecking crew's every blow. Rather, we shall pause here and there to listen for the noises of earth being moved and walls crumbling.

In the North the Brothers schools in Lille had not been Communal since 1868. At about the same period Roubaix turned over the instruction of nearly all its pupils to the Brothers. Eight schools were operating at the same time, and, with the exception of a single one, they were all tuition-free. A municipal election on January 17, 1882 insisted on swift secularization. The measure fomented dissatisfaction among the citizens who, in the elections of 1884, voted Brother Emetère to take a seat with the new members on the City Council. And while the assembly was unable to restore what had been destroyed, it at least showed its even-handed toleration by paying for the school supplies of all poor children. The gesture was not followed by the Council in 1888.[385]

Armentières, which had voted republican in 1878, saw a secularized school for boys open in a building that formerly had been an insane asylum. It was quickly maintained that this effort was worth expanding: in February, 1881, under the pretext of establishing a balance between lay teachers and members of Religious Congregations, the administration demanded that the Brothers vacate their residence on Rue Solferino; it was taken from them on March 6, 1882 on the strength of a report from the Inspector of elementary schools; and it was to no purpose that at the city hall they ran into a brilliant and courageous defender; the bureaucrat from the Department of Public Education criticized "their obsolete methods" and their "prejudices inherited from another age". The majority of the Communal counsellors confessed themselves convinced by this indictment.[386]

There was a longer resistance in Tourcoing where the Brothers had been operating the public schools since 1827. In over sixty years there had been only three Directors, the third of which, Brother Flour, had arrived in 1881. He managed tuition-free schools on Rues Orphelins and Pouilly and in the St. Jaques community. He was a skillful, dogged and strict master. Among his superb associates there was a Brother Fernandis who, as an apostolate, chose to help the

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[384] Circular addressed to the Institute after the law of October 30, 1886.

[385] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique.

[386] Archives of the District, notes on Armentières. — Pamphlet on *Centenaire de l'arrivée des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Armentières, September 1947.*

intellectually slower pupils. The popularity of teachers such calibre is readily understandable. And it remained intact until 1891 when, the legal stay having expired, the Brothers yielded their posts to lay teachers.[387]

The same story and the same aftermath surround Valenciennes which, for sixty years, had engaged the Brothers. The last Director, Henri Fournet — known as Brother Fidelis —enjoyed universal respect, and his kindness, his knowledge and his piety were cherished. His decade-long leadership was followed by additional fruitful years.[388]

The question of the teaching of religion caused stirrings in Artois, where the Brothers, banking on a tolerance that was frequently exercised, taught catechism to their pupils in the middle of the school-day. In 1883 the Inspector of the Educational Department conducted an inquiry which concluded with the dismissal of Brother Evaristus de Jésus, the Director of the main school and with the temporary suspension of his colleagues in the branch schools. A few months later a lay-Director was appointed at St. Nicolas — the building in which the Community of Brothers resided. The newcomer took over the classes and, with his family, moved into one of the apartments but left the residence to the Brothers who were still being employed by the Commune in various neighborhoods of the city.[389]

Similar violations of neutrality occurred in Aire. The penalty inflicted upon Brother Èbert by the Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais was a reprimand. Going the executive branch's representative one better, the mayor interdicted catechism lessons even in the Brothers' residence on the grounds that it was Communal property. Fortunately, the young men's club remained at the disposition of the Brothers as assistants to the clergy. Meanwhile, four years went by, and then in 1887 a curious incident took place. A Brother named Emile Leonce left the Institute; laicized on his own initiative, the former Brother (M. Gombert) accused Brother Director Ellebertis of having resumed catechetical instruction within the confines of the school building. The Departmental Council was informed and concluded by dismissing the Brother thus implicated, and thereupon the entire school was handed over to the management of lay teachers.[390]

Elsewhere in this District there were stirring episodes that revealed the depths of peoples' feelings. The Director of Estaires, Brother Edicte, died at his post; and after his death it appeared as though the law of October 30, 1886 was certainly going to be applied to the teaching personnel within the Commune: — something quite opposed to the desire of the population. The mayor, in a speech in defense of the Brothers, recalled their fifty-three years of good and faithful service; and the city council unanimously demanded that they be retained. Such a request had very little chance of being heard. And, as a matter of fact, the secularization decree was not long in coming; it was dated September, 1887.[391]

In 1888 Hazebrouck, which, according to Lasallian geography, belonged to the jurisdiction of St. Omer, was able to bear witness to its gratitude to the Brothers who were being dismissed. Six days was the extraordinarily brief time-period prescribed by the Prefect for the resettlement of the Community. Furthermore, the Inspector refused the Brothers any time off prior to departure. The people came to their aid; and a private school was equipped. And then at the fateful moment a huge crowd, "crammed together as on the Feast of Corpus Christi", awaited

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387 Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique.

388 Ibid., Historique.

389 Archives of the District of St. Omer, Historique.

390 Historique du district de Saint-Omer.

391 Ibid.

the end of classes. The pupils, bouquets in hand, crossed the threshold and marched in procession to the building where their teachers in their "white rabats" would continue to instruct them. And as an equally harsh secularization was directed against the girls school, a similar procession of little girls paraded by. Six thousand people cried out: "Long live the Brothers, long live the Sisters!"[392]

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Normandy also expressed its regrets. Some schools — such as the ones at Saint-Valery-en-Caux and Pont-de-l'Arche — were closed in 1883, not by a prefectural decision but on the initiative of the Superior-general. The District lacked personnel; but it had also, temporarily, to withdraw young Brothers from their teaching posts in order to prepare for their credential examinations. Brother Joseph, as Brother Irlide's Assistant, was responsible for informing the mayors in the various regions of these unpleasant developments. Saint Valery had maintained a Brothers' school since 1855 and Pont-de-l'Arche since 1860. In both places the Brothers had won the friendship of both the people and the community leaders. The city council in Pont-de-l'Arche was speaking for the town's families when it raised noisy objections to the closing. The Brother Assistant could only explain the reasons that guided the Regime; but to the gratitude he expressed for past favors he did not dare add any hard-and-fast promises for the future. He used similar language regarding the school in Saint Valery. The mayor submitted the Assistant's letter to the counsellors in their meeting on September 15, 1883; and he was instructed to convey the city's gratitude as well as its distress.[393]

Lisieux also wanted to retain the Brothers in charge of the Communal schools. In May 1884 when the Prefect of Calvados and the Inspector of elementary education summoned the elected representatives in the ancient Norman city to make a choice, there were thirteen votes in favor of the Brothers against ten for secularization. But it was the minority that carried the day, and the Prefecture notified the Brothers of their dismissal, giving them four days to remove all their personal property. In another chapter we shall relate how the Catholics in Lisieux would retrieve the situation.[394]

Thus, in spite of local authorities and the unequivocal preferences of families, it was the government that decided not to postpone the application of its policies. After 1886 the legislature's intervention provided this system with a regular and uninterrupted operation. Lay teachers replaced members of Religious Congregations the moment it was possible to take advantage of, or even to create, an occasion. If there were no deaths, retirements, suspensions or "administrative difficulties", then an order from on high would arrive in the nick of time.

A City Council that wanted to keep teachers who had proved their worth had to be satisfied with wishing them a fond farewell. Chantilly, at one time connected with the District of Normandy, between 1851 and 1888 had considered itself fortunate because of the success of its school and the good shape it was in. Hard work, intelligently directed zeal and sound relations with the pupils' parent had attuned the Brothers to this very attractive city. An English-speaking colony, that dwelt around the race track, was particularly pleased with the Brothers' methods; their Protestant traditions did not prevent them from resorting to Roman Catholic teachers; while an occasional conversion gave evidence of the Brothers' influence in

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[392] Ibid.

[393] Archives of the District of Caen, *Historique manuscrit des Maisons de Normandie*, Vol. II.

[394] Archives of the District of Caen, Historique de Lisieux.

this highly visible community. The inescapable secularization dismayed both citizens and foreign residents alike. Brother Anacletian, who had been directing the school since 1865, was accorded a warm tribute from the city's administration and all the gratitude that twenty-three years of work deserved.[395]

In Brittony, where the Lambézellec episodes[396]. were only prelude, pandemonium had to be expected. In one place in Finistère, in the port town of Concarneau, the mayor had embraced the position of the secularizers, and in doing so came in conflict with the people. It was the women who flew to arms. On September 24, rising in rebellion against the teachers' impending departure, they congregated in front of the Brothers' house: "Remain! do not abandon our children!", they cried beseechingly, tearfully. They then went to the mayor's residence and demanded to see him, and when he appeared he was surrounded and insulted. He called out the troops, and although soldiers and police showed up, the women continued to shout. One of the more excitable ones was arrested and brought to the police station. Once her husband had been alerted, he demanded that his wife be released. At this point, sailors, who had been kept ashore that day because of the fog and the rain, joined their comrade to object to the mayor's actions and orders. In the end, passions subsided, and as evening approached, no very serious disturbances had occurred. On the following day there took place the sale of the Religious Communities' furniture; bidders contested the simplest objects — not, indeed, out of greed, but in order to restore it to the Brothers or to make a return of the highest monetary price to the Congregation.[397]

At Plouguerneau in the region of Léon, a school opened by the Brothers in 1869 remained continuously Communal up to the passage of the law of 1886. In December of 1883 it had been obliged to yield to the wishes of the Inspector of elementary education: religious symbols, with the exception of the crucifix, disappeared. Finally, reducing the seriousness of the infractions, except for resident pupils catechism ceased to be taught on school property; and for this sort of instruction, day pupils were convened in a chapel in the village.

This precarious arrangement had been going for scarcely three years. On September 3, 1886, the mayor of Plouguerneau, M. Cabon, read a letter from Brest to his Council announcing that the Inspector of the educational department was planning the immediate secularization of the school. Prior consultation with the Council was required.

"The Brothers," declared the Plouguerneau counsellors, "have preserved their popularity in the region; we want them to remain on as our public school teachers." But on September 13th the Prefect of Finistère wrote the Superior-general at Rue Oudinot that the teaching personnel in the Breton village would be shortly dismissed.

Nevertheless, classes resumed in the fall as usual. Fifteen days later five lay teachers arrived displaying the proof of their official appointment. The Commune complained, but to no effect. The Brothers vacated the school, and the Director, with an associate, found refuge in the priest's house.[398] During the following year a particularly powerful protest was lodged from the Island of Ouessant, where the people are rather intimidating. Under the leadership of their chief officer, Jean-Marie Malgorn, on August 8, 1887, they declared that their school had been secularized against their wishes: "We urge the Mayor to be kind enough to express the Council's gratitude to the Director of the Brothers for the understanding and dedication shown

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395 Historique de Normandie, Vol. II.

396 See above, pp. 190-192

397 Archives of the District of Quimper.

398 Archives of the District of Quimper.

by his Brothers over the past twenty-five years...The Council wishes the Brothers to return to Ouessant to resume their former functions, whenever the citizens of the Commune are free to select their children's teachers."[399]

Meanwhile, in Saint Malo the Brother Director of a public school resigned because the administration imposed three lay teachers on him as associates. The building that had been bequeathed to the Bishop of Rennes by a sailor Jacques Alain Bichat and which the heir ceded to the city in 1826 in order to perpetuate the recently revived work of the Christian Brothers had to be given over to the new teachers.[400]

In Morbihan (leaving aside the capital, Vannes, where a teacher's infraction incited the closing of St. Patern's school in 1882 and where in 1883 the Communal school of St. Peter's was secularized on the authority of the mayor) governmental decisions were rather poorly received. On August 15, 1888, the City Council's response to an effort of secularization was a statement of "its profound esteem for, its respectful recognition of and its unshakable attachment" to the Brothers.

In Muzillac, the same feelings were translated into a decision that did not lack for daring. In 1880, when the anticlericalism of the Republican leadership had already been well publicized, the local Council assumed the expenses of a new school building, "on condition that the Brothers of the Christian Schools continue on in it". The structure, which had been completed in October of 1882, was inaugurated by the mayor and blessed by the pastor. August 8, 1888 saw the end of the ancient stipulations that had been misunderstood by the law. Unanimously the Council affirmed — at its meeting of the 26th — that Muzillac would not change its principles: religious instruction remained "the wish of its inhabitants".

Lorient was never so explicit. But meticulous justice was handed down there by a civil court when the building on Rue Vauban, from which the Brothers had been expelled on September 3, 1888, was finally awarded to the donors' heirs.

There followed a period during which the final processes of secularization took place, when, in another Department of Brittony, St. Brieuc, Bishop Fallières supplied hospitality in the Major Seminary to the teachers who had been called in 1818 by the Vicar-general of the diocese, the Venerable Jean-Marie de La Mennais.[401] Bringing up the end of the list were the Morbihan Communities of Roche-Bernard and Guidel. Here the Brothers occupied a house built for them by the Rector of the parish, Father Jaffré, who had been a Deputy in the National Assembly in 1871. These simply ceased to be Communal schools beginning in September of 1891. When the Prefect announced the application of the law, the City Council, meeting on August 28, declared that they "submitted to" the law "under constraint and force."[402]

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In 1880 in the Southwest, Bordeaux had sent up signals for total eradication, and, during the following year, eight Communal schools were removed from the Brothers' control: Castillon,

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[399] Ibid.

[400] District Archives. — At St. Meloir-des-Onde, also in the Ille-et-Vilaine, a school that had been operated by the Brothers of Jean-Marie de La Mennais between 1827 and 1877, was handed over to the Christian Brothers after consultation between the City Council, the Pastor and Brother Irlide. Brother Calice of Mary assumed the direction of it on September 8, 1877. Eleven years later it was secularized.

[401] De La Mennais had clearly intended to leave the cities and large towns to the disciples of John Baptist de La Salle as their field of action. The Congregation he founded was destined for schools in the countryside where there was room for no more than a single teacher dependent on the presbytery.

[402] Archives of the District of Quimper.

Bour-sur-Gironde, Vayres, St. Ferdinand d'Arachon, Nérac, Casteljaloux, Agen, and Tonneins. In 1882 they were excluded from Périgueux, and in 1886 from Marmande, where the residence on Observance Street had to be vacated along with its chapel, which had become the center of an ardent Marian devotion; as well as from Sarlat where the Community had been teaching elementary classes since 1852.

St. Foy-la-Grande nearly lost its Religious teachers in November of 1885 when the official Inspector gave orders for the removal of religious symbols. "The crucifix has to stay," the Director replied. And he added that "If I obey your orders, there is danger of inciting the population to violence." And, in the end, he seems to have had the last word. However, in April of 1889, St. Foy was obliged to submit to the rigors of the law. At the same time the Villenave school disappeared, followed by those at Bègles, Pauillac and Blaye. By 1890 the Brothers had been in Blaye for seventy years. The saintly Archbishop Aviau had invited them and had personally conducted them to their residence; a distinguished native of Bordeaux, Count d'Isle, assumed the responsibility for obtaining financial assistance for them from the royal family; and Count Sainte-Aulaire championed their cause. And, in spite of the vicissitudes that had altered the political map of the country and took captive one of their benefactors, the Duchess of Berry, the Brothers had retained the peoples' affection and earned the complete confidence of the city government.[403]

Such, in brief, is the "negative balance-sheet" for the Gironde, Dordogne and Lot-et-Garonne. In Bayonne, too, beginning in 1882, Brother Visitor Calimer experienced the spread of violence associated with secularization in the District of the Pyrenees. He had to temper peoples' souls for the good of the enterprize; and he had to contend against vile calumnies.[404]

Neighboring regions — Tarn-et-Garonne, Gers, Upper-Garonne, Aude, Ariège, and the Lavaur district in the Tarn — surrounding Toulouse underwent secularization, echoes of which have been transmitted to us in traditional Lasallian "accounts".

In 1881 there was the closing of the school of the Madeleine in Auterive; at the time the Commune planned to take over another schools in the Deanery of St. Paul. But, in view of governmental policies, the project turned out to be illusory.

The town fathers in Montesquieu-Volvestre were much more radical. They were among the very first to demand that the Brothers leave; their decision on October 4, 1878 was drawn up in stuffy language to which the local inflection lent a special flavor: "People here say that the members of Religious Orders were started up only to put our light under a bushel, and teach absolutism; they know no other Eldorado for people except a diet of the Syllabus!" Three years later, the Republic appeased the flaming adversaries of "obscurantism" and "priestly tyranny".

Seysses, in the same Department of the Upper-Garonne and Castelnaudary, a sub-Prefecture of the Aude, broadened the field of secularization in 1882. Montauban was, at the same time, expelling the Brothers from the schools they had been operating in the neighborhoods of Villebourbon and Vellenouvelle. However, in 1875 the city had signed a twenty year contract with the Institute. And so, the Superior-general brought suit in the civil court against the mayor. A court injunction temporarily restored the Community to their residence at Villebourbon. The respite was not to last; the injunction was rescinded by a court of appeals; and a final judgment granted the teachers, as the injured party, an indemnity of "damages and interest" that was insignificant.

There followed the disappearance of Christian Communal schools in St. Antoine

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[403] Archives of the District of Bordeaux.

[404] Obituary, 1906, pp. 9-12.

(Tarn-et-Garonne) in 1883, at Pamiers in 1885, at Ax, a village in the Ariège, in 1886, at Belpech, in the Aude, in 1888. Since 1836 in Puylaurens, a Commune dependent upon the sub-Prefecture of Lavaur, there had been two primary schools. One of them was for Protestants, the other for Catholics, and both of them were city schools. The Brothers, who had been earlier given a residence by a M. Paul Routour, had become public school teachers when Louis Philippe's government consented to the requests of both religious confessions in Paylaurens. When the decree of secularization occurred the Commune wished to appropriate the Routour house; the Institute recalled that the donor had reserved the use of the place for the members of the Congregation prior to their official recognition. As a consequence, the court in Lavaur, in a judgment rendered on August 12, 1890, ordered Puylaurens to restore the property it had usurped.

There was a similar settlement at Auch. After the secularization of the St. Orens and St. Paul "annexes" in 1879, the main school, St. Mary's, founded May 1, 1817, was retained. Dismissed in 1891, the Brothers laid claim to the building they had been given by Canon Ferrasse and Father Aignan, the founders. At the end of a long process, it was restored to them.

In Toulouse a crisis was resolved by an out of court settlement, with an account of which we shall conclude our over-view of a very important District of the Institute. On November 7, 1874, "Joseph Just Paget, known as Brother Olympe, Superior-general" and Viscount Francis Gustave Toussaint, Mayor of Toulouse, signed a contract according to the language of which the city was committed for fifteen years each year to pay representatives of the Congregation 57,000 francs for the employment of seventy-one Brothers distributed over thirteen Communal schools.[405] And on November 24 the Prefect of the Upper-Garonne approved the agreement.

But on September 15, 1883 the Dalbade, St. Michel, Minims, Sacred Heart and St. Sylvia schools were secularized. And on July 5, 1888, the City Council meeting in the Capital, voted for the secularization of the eight remaining schools. A year prior to its expiration the 1874 contract had been voided.

Both sides had decided upon a compromise. It was important to determine the legal status of several school buildings — at St. Aubin, St. Sernin, St. Nicolas, St. Jerome and at Dalbade. These structures had been built by benefactors and handed over to the city in support of Christian education.

"In order to avoid expensive legal procedures", and with the consent of the heirs or beneficiaries of the founders, the properties of St. Sernin and St. Jerome reverted purely and simply to the Commune of Toulouse; St. Aubin, St. Nicolas and Dalbade were restored without contest to the Institute's estate, along with whatever improvements or changes on the original property or its annexed parcels that had been made whether by the city government or by the Brothers. The Congregation, through the mediation of Brother Jurson, former Assistant, Visitor-provincial and of Brother Visitor Liacim, relinquished all rights rising from the 1874 contract. On these conditions the City's representative, M. Durant, associate Mayor, accepted all the above mentioned stipulations.

This was the agreement of December 31, 1888, which preserved for the Lasallian patrimony gifts "the specific cause" of which, according to the language of the signatories, "was nothing less than an "enduring commitment to the education dispensed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools". The property most precious to the Community in Languedoc — Father Bernadet's ancient donation — after a century remained a center of prayer and study and was called the "St. Aubin House."[406]

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405 Four of which had not yet been opened.

406 Archives of the District of Toulouse, Historiques of various schools; Resumé historique written in 1904.

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A bastion of Catholicism and a nursery for Religious vocations, the District of Rodez had, for a long period, preserved within the fold of the faith a large number of public schools. Resistance to the secularizers made itself felt among the citizens and the elected officials. Nevertheless, cracks had been opened up in places that had been poorly protected; and they spread during the last years of the postponement provided by the legislation of 1886.

There had been the blows of the probers in the walls during 1879 and again in 1880. Gourdon, in Lot and La Bastide-Rouairoux, in Tarn, had fallen immediately. And then came the secularization of Martel. "On the whole, the people in that parish were indifferent", wrote a former Visitor of the District of Moulins, Brother Isaiah Michel, a valiant octogenarian who, in 1877, at fifteen years of age, had begun as an associate in "an elementary class" of seventy-three pupils. "Very few men attended church, and the zeal of the priests was not exceptional." There was no ill will on the part of the local authorities. Brother Imilian, an intelligent and experienced Director, fatherly in regard to his auxiliaries as well as in regard to the pupils, won general respect and created friendly relations. But the soil was without texture, and the edifice, quickly ravaged, was never to rise again.[407]

More extraordinary events were the successes achieved in Aveyron in 1881 and 1882 by the anticlericals. With a unanimous vote of the members in attendance at the Rodez City Council meeting of May 10, 1881 it was decided to secularize the school in the St. Cyrice neighborhood. In spite of steps taken by Senators Delosol and Mayran and by Deputy Azémar, Brother Irlide did not think that conditions were right for responding with the opening of a private school.[408]

The incident, then, only seemed to matter, if one took the thing too seriously. But eight months latter the storm reverberated in Millau, where the City Council had opened a secularized school in 1878, which the clergy vigorously denounced. Passions became excited, caustic remarks were hurled, and there was a feeling of the Midi right in the heart of Millau. Provocation grew apace.

At the meeting of September 18, 1882, presided over by Mayor Abric, several counsellors demanded the secularization of the Brothers' schools; they cited the attack directed by Catholics against the neutrality law: "Republicans," they said, "have the right and the duty to defend the government against its most relentless enemies; are we here going to assist campaigns by our adversaries with public funds?" The assembly came to the decision that the Brothers were to be replaced by October 31.

A petition endorsing the opposite position was able to attract 2,000 signatures. It indicated to the Prefect of the Department that eleven twelfths of the city's families opted in favor of Christian education. Actually, on October 1 more that five hundred children returned to the Brothers, and the secularized school, Eugene Celles, included only about forty.

On Thursday, November 2, the Inspector for elementary schools informed Brother Director Kellac that he and the Brothers had two hours to depart the school. It was the middle of the school day. The members of the Committee for Catholic Defense assembled and protested against the ruthlessness of the notice. Meanwhile, the news spread through out the town; and soon the streets were filled with a crowd dominated by women. Hoots re-echoed and grew louder when the Mayor appeared escorted by the police. Abric was threatened, and one of the

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[407] Archives of the District of Rodez, Martel file.

[408] Ibid., Historique manuscrit, 1887.

demonstrators tore off one of the tails of his coat.

He succeeded in liberating himself from the angry mob and called a meeting of his Council for that very evening. At the city hall the Council voted him a commendation "for his civic courage", and a delay until nightfall was granted the Brothers.

Cheers greeted the expelled teachers; they were presented with flowers; and a procession was organized, with torches, to the residence school of the Sacred Heart and to the Capuchin monastery, the two institutions in which the Community was given shelter.

The following day the lay teachers were at their posts in the school on Rue Cheval-Vert. Alone or in groups, the pupils were there also, but they were mostly noise and disorder. "We're not staying; we only came to get our textbooks and notepads," they shouted in their over-excited packs. Some of the windows flew out in pieces.

All pupils without exception rejoined the Brothers in makeshift quarters. The secularized classes were empty. Eventually, they came to be occupied by pupils from the Protestant school. Judicial proceedings were undertaken against the people who had demonstrated on November 2, and there were those of them who were condemned to five days in jail and a fifteen franc fine.

In the municipal elections of 1884, the "question of the Brothers" determined the positions taken by the parties and the choice of the electorate. The incumbent counsellors were defeated, while their successors declared that they were prepared to pay the Institute an indemnity of 8,000 francs as a result of value added to the school building by various improvements. The agreement was signed on March 12, 1885 by the first associate mayor and a delegate of the Superior-general.[409]

The same year as in Millau a sort of riot also took place in Marcillac, where the school, set up conjointly by the Pastor and the city during the Second Empire, lost its Religious teachers. The Communities in Lisle-sur-Tarn and Castelnau-Montratier disappeared into the neighboring Departments without a trace.

In a visit to Cahors, his birthplace, Gambetta, in 1879 urged the Mayor to put lay teachers in the place of the Brothers who had been summoned back by the people after the Revolution. At first, there was set up a new school that conformed to the ideas of the celebrated populist. Thereafter, "republican" ideologies were propagated and in September of 1881 a counsellor proposed that the Religious teachers be sent away immediately. The assembly was divided, but, by a majority of a single vote, the moderates prevailed over the querulous secularizers. The latter resigned in order to make an appeal to public opinion, but on October 10 they were ignominiously defeated at the polls.

Their revenge was not long in coming. The City Council elected in 1884 was made up of Free-Masons; and on August 25, twenty-one of them voted in favor of secularization. There was only a single negative vote.[410] In 1886 came the end of the Christian Communal school in Espalion, and, in 1887, the secularization at Saint Céré.

The political tides had become sufficiently strong to break over the walls. Schools founded in Decazeville by an Aveyron coal company had been transferred over to the ranks of public schools. They continued to train bookkeepers, geometricians and draftsmen to whom industrial enterprises routinely provided jobs. Without regard to the wishes of employers, the desserts of the teachers, the Prefectural administration went on secularizing.

By 1888 the tide had reached Brassac and Rodez. Lacombe, the Mayor of the principal city,

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[409] This was Brothe Tempier, a learned legal scholar. — Archives of the District of Rodez; monograph on the District and Historique de Millau.

[410] Archives of the District of Rodez, same monograph; and Historique de Cahors.

on September 29, informed the Brother Director of the resolution that had been taken the evening before by the Prefect: “In view of the law of October 30, 1886, and in view of the authorization coming from the Minister of Public Education, and in concurrence with the Inspector of the Education Department, lay personnel has been substituted for the Religious personnel in the Frayssinous and Lebon Communal schools...”

The city government of Rodez had rarely shown any enthusiastic concern for Religious teachers. Among the convinced Christians who inhabited the neighboring countrysides, it appeared rather “opportunist”.

Castres, on the other hand, although partially Calvinist in religion, remained remarkably faithful to the Institute which Bishop Barral had sponsored in the 18th century, and which, at the height of the revolutionary period, still strove to serve a city to which it had profound attachments. In August of 1877, Mayor Milhau-Ducommun, a Protestant, presided over the graduation exercises at the Brothers’ school. In 1882 the City Council increased the salaries of the two Directors and their fourteen associates. Since the Prefect of the Tarn had placed his veto on this latter decision, the representatives elected in May of 1884 picked up the gauntlet. At their meeting on December 13, they stated that “the Brothers’s situation (financially) was worse than other Communal teachers, even though 900 pupils attended their classes. However, they could lay claim to the value of their labors; justice demanded that their total dedication be recompensed.” If the State refused to assume responsibility for raises, then the City of Castres would finance them “as indemnification”.

This is the way it was for several years. On November 10, 1886 M. Gabriel Guy, chairman of the local budget committee spoke as follows: “At a time when Parliament is putting the finishing touches on a law which, within five years time, obliges the Communes to secularize all their boys’ schools and exclude from Communal education all members of teaching Congregations, it is our duty to affirm openly the double principle of liberty and equality which has been our consistent guide. You have always held in high esteem a respect for the freedom with which a head of a household chooses the school wherein to educate his child. By generously enlarging the budget for public education you have guaranteed the simultaneous existence of schools whose variety has met with the approval of a diversity of families. This so profoundly equitable arrangement the law of October 30 will overturn... "

The man who spoke with such candor and good sense became Mayor in 1887-1888. When the Council was up for re-election in 1888, Castres showed its respect for him by giving him a huge number of votes; but at that election Gabriel Guy was the only candidate on the list who was re-elected. The parties supporting the government won twenty-six seats.

As a result, on October 29, 1889, the Committee responsible for the elementary school budget declared itself unanimously (save one) in favor of immediate secularization. The sole adversary, M. Roch, preferred the *status quo* because of the religious divergences which complicated the problem in the city. “There is no longer any place for denominational schools”, replied M. Loup, (the author of the measure) in public session. Frankly, another councillor, known for having undertaken an inquiry among his workers, won over four fifths of the votes in favor of the Brothers. And M. Guy, interceding, pleaded with his colleagues “not to violate the spirit of tolerance and freedom” by curtailing the postponement afforded by the legislature.

M. Sicard, the new Mayor, was a Protestant but not a sectarian. Throwing the weight of his authority into the balance, he supported his predecessor’s motion. The majority, however, did not follow him, and by a vote of sixteen to seven the report’s conclusion was ratified. M. Sicard immediately resigned.

The Prefect of the Tarn did not sign the ruling until ten months later, on September 12, 1890. On the 24th a process server summoned the Brothers “in the person of Celestine Alibert, called Brother Lazardine”, to vacate the premises in forty-eight hours. Brother Lazardine engaged

another process server to inform the city government that, in view of the fact that the building had been given to Castres in 1775 by Father Barral, brother of the late bishop, to do serve as a Christian school and as a dwelling place for teachers, he refused to be forced out.

The Brothers remained on in their residence until November of 1891. A suit for the restoration of property was introduce by Count Horace Barral, the great-nephew of the priest. It gave rise to a judgment on January 4, 1894 handed down by the court in Castres: since the deed, dated April 1775, had not anticipated the return of the property to the heirs, but, in the instance that the schools were suppressed, it provided for the sale of the property to benefit either the Seminary, or the Poorhouse, with a fifth of the funds realized going to the city, it was impossible to allow the claim of the petitioner. The house built on the land of the former "Handball Court" had to be put up for sale, and — since the Seminary no longer existed —Poorhouses and the Commune were to share the sale-price, according to the terms of the contract. The Committee for Catholic Schools did not have to await a court decision in order to urge the Brothers to release the building.[411]

In Puy-l'Évêvque in Lot, Brother Director Idilonian took a hand in closing his own school when he realized that he was being exposed to the hatred of the Free-Masons and of on the verge of eviction.

As early as 1886 there were some politicians who were demanding his expulsion. Informed by the Prefect, the City Council rejected the request. At the meeting, members spoke of the "respect, the support and the admiration that the character of the Brothers and of their distinguished leader had inspired in all men of sensibility"; they emphasized "the austerity of their lives, the gravity of their appearance, their professional commitment and finally the ever-increasing success of a school which was rated among the first in the Department." Mayor Delbreil sent the Minister the minutes of this meeting.

In 1889 the Council over which he still presided ceased to be influenced by him. It now included "progressive" elements who had been victorious in the recent election; and it was now composed of a majority of secularizers before whom, M. Delbreil, reduced to silence, retreated. Brother Idilonian received a letter from him that was filled with affectionate gratitude; and an elementary Inspector, M. Pelouse, was proud to write to the celebrated Director in a similar strain.

On September 28, 1890 Brother Idilonian published a leaflet entitled: *Farewell to Our Pupils, their Parents and the People of Puy-l'Évêque*. After twenty-four years spent in this town he was leaving it in sadness. "My Brothers and I" (he wrote) "have been the object of mean-minded irritants and under the constant threat of dismissal. On the 17th of August the Mayor declared that what was needed here was à sounder, more democratic education...' I can provide none but what is specified by the official programs, an education that twenty Prefects, twelve Inspectors of the Educational Department, eight elementary Inspectors and five city administrations, prior to the present one, have controlled one after the other; an education ratified by 689 favorable results in examinations, sixty-five medals or honorable mentions and all the awards that the Educational Establishment confers upon successful teachers. As a member of an ancient and respected Congregation I reject both insults and injustices directed against it. That is why on September 20 my associates and I submitted our resignations as public school teachers."[412]

In 1891 the grace-period granted Communal schools in which to part company with members of teaching Congregations would come to an end. In the District of Rodez there still

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411 Archives of the Distric of Rodez, Historique de Castres.

412 Archives of the District of Rodez, Puy-l'Évêque file.

remained nineteen schools of this type. In a single stroke fourteen of them were wiped out: Albi, Anglès, Lacaune, Mazamet, Rabastens, Cajarc, Saint-Affrique, Aubin, Saint Chély d'Aubrac, Saint Geniez, Najac, Rignac, Saint Salvadous, and Villefranche.

Overall these were solid bastions of Catholicism. At the time of the Revolution, Lacaune had taken shape as the "Vendée" of the south. Rignac, the flourishing Canton-headquarters at the center of a fertile plateau, defended the faith of ancient Rouergue. In 1877, Bishop Bourret of Rodez, seeing Brother Irlide balk at providing Brothers for this mission, wrote to the Superior-general: "You cannot be such a foe of your Congregation as to turn down an area from which many novices will come. Do not procrastinate when one offers you the best return on your investment... [413]

Villefranche-de-Rouergue which, in 1822, had opened the ancient refuge of the "black Penitents" to the Religious educators, had them transferred from this picturesque but rather unhealthy spot to more spacious quarters in the Savignac neighborhood.[414] Five schools were given the benefit of a special deferment which, however, was rather brief. Lautrec, Laguiole and Mur-de-Barrez had until 1882 and Gua one year more. The last one, Basse-Vors, vanished in 1894.

Thirty-two scholastic projects had been dislodged from the Institute since 1879. For the lack of explicit language in wills or deeds of donation, twenty-four buildings put to use for classrooms or Brothers' residences remained the property of city administrations.[415]

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The inquiry which detailed itineraries, numerous landmarks and excellent guides have enabled us to undertake in a number of provinces cannot be very usefully pursued into the least Cantons of the Republic. But everywhere we would find the same strategies, the same men, the same bitter criticism and impassioned praise, the same brutal dismissals and heartening ovations. [416] While is some regions, notably in Corsica (where fourteen of seventeen Communties were abolished), secularization bred total disaster, elsewhere people refused to be satisfied with grief and denunciation. As we shall presently observe, what was what was dead was restored to life. It was transformed and clothed in youthfulness and pristine power, relieved of oppressive burdens, of certain types of vexation and troublesome bondage, if not of all earthly preoccupations and misfortunes. To rehearse them all would mean going over areas that we have already covered. But before setting out on another voyage, we shall pause only in the Massif Central and, thereafter, for a moment in Franch-Comté.

Between February and October of 1884, Brother Cyrus, Visitor of the District of Clermont-Ferrand, had to hand over twenty-seven schools to lay-teachers; ten of these were completely wiped out: Volvic in Puy-le-Dôme, Curemonte in Corrèze and Guéret in Creuse.

The outcome of innumerable administrative irritants, secularization struck down the schools in Clermont in 1883. On August 17 twenty-one city counsellors called for the sledge-hammer

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413 Archives of the District of Rodez, Historique de Rignac, letter dated October 11, 1877. The rebuke had been a sharp one. By return mail, Brother Irlide replied: "I give over the tiller and the sails rather than draw down the lightening with which Your Excellency threatens my fragile barque. I am awaiting Brother Jurson [the Visitor] to tell me the ways and means of opening the school at Rignac without tempting Providence over much... The Brothers settled in Rignac on November 3, 1877.

414 District Archives, Historique de Villefranche. Mayor Alfred Cibiel had given 25,000 francs toward assisting the transfer.

415 District Archives, monograph about the District.

416 Thus, at Nîmes in 1881. (F. Durand, *Les Écoles des Frères à Nîmes*, pp. 47-48.

to be applied. At the same moment Montferrand, where the Brothers had once been invited by Baron Aubière and introduced in 1828 under the auspices of another of Clermont's administrators, Antoine Blatin, was now disavowing them. Besides that, they left their classrooms in Aubusson, Maurs, and Ambert. Five lay-teachers showed up in the classes in Aubusson on January 17, 1882; the Mayor and the Inspector inducted them, to the great excitement of the pupils and the scandal of a segment of the population.

Every Department of the District witnessed the ouster of what was left of Lasallian personnel in public schools after the law of October 30, 1886. Saint Saturnin, Aigueperse, Saint Amant Tallande, Cournon, Job, Dorat, Thiers, Vollore-Ville, Romagnat, Pontgibaud, and the Communes of Puy-de-Dôme saw changes in teaching personnel in 1886, 1887, 1888 and 1891. Cantal retained the Brothers at Murat, but the law was quickly applied to them. The schools in Eymoutiers in Upper Vienne, and those in Feletin, in the same jurisdiction, suffered the same fate in 1888 and 1891.[417]

Twenty-eight schools were secularized in the District of Puy; three in 1886, six in 1887, four in 1888, one in 1889, two in 1890 and twelve in 1891. Schools in the principal city of the province were affected during the first half. After having left the house on Rue Bessat, the Brothers were also obliged to depart their ancient residence called "Gouteyron". Goodbyes were sad and solemn and preceded by a triduum in honor of Blessed de La Salle. When the doors to the house and chapel were closed, a crowd of Catholics accompanied the Brothers who were leaving to resume at another location in the city their more than century-old work. Among the Communities placed on the last proscription lists in 1890 was Brioude, where Brother Gabriel-Marie, the future Superior-general, had once dispensed his brilliant scientific lectures and Saugues, where Blessed Benilde had for twenty-one years been Director until his death.[418]

In whatever region of France one pursues research, certain conclusions come to the fore: the positions taken by city administrations did not always translate into popular preferences. Citizens empowered to vote selected people to represent them whose program involved the slogan: "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"; these were the Republicans, and, on the whole, the nation opted in favor of the Republic. But these Republicans had declared war on the Church, and, before all else, they were ardent "anticlericals". Their action went well beyond the intent and wishes of their constituencies. In 1889 one of the city counsellors in Castres said: "If elections were undertaken to decide the question of the Brothers' school, no member of the Republican majority would have been elected." But, once seated, the politician stood revealed; and free to act as he pleased, he presented the elector with "an accomplished fact" The past cannot be undone. On the contrary, the power of people and of events weigh with an inexorable burden upon the future. Public opinion, impelled and shaped, alters from day to day. And the next generation is molded to the tastes of partisans.

Free-Masonry rarely reveals its true features. It hides behind a political mask of justice and progress. Depending upon circumstances, it denounces "reaction" or "the adherents of privilege", but not the faithful. In this sense, the Mayor of Pontarlier, in February of 1881, who recommended the Brothers' departure on the grounds that, with their approval, there existed in the Communal school, "a real club". Actually, the "club" they were talking about was "a chapter of St. Vincent de Paul society", a charitable association. But to listen to the city officials, it was composed of nothing but enemies of the government, men whose rôle proved to be the downfall of the teachers.[419]

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417 Archives of the District of Clermont-Ferrand, Historqiues.

418 Archives of the District of Puy, Historiques.

419 Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique de Pontarlier.

Sometimes hatred was given a great deal of room within which to operate. It did not flinch at setting in motion the most serious calomnies. In 1875 the school in Isle-sur-le-Doubs was entrusted to the Brothers by Mayor Louis Meiner whose Protestant conscience was proof against narrowness and inflexibility. The town, in which the great Japy complex operated, was a well organized industrial center that shared a climate of social serenity. But in 1886 troubles arose: the Brother Director and one of his associates were accused of a shameful crime; and there were stratagems so skillfully woven that the two incriminated men were imprisoned. Finally, after five days there was no doubt as to their innocence; and, upon returning to the Commune, they were given a triumphant welcome. Nevertheless, the charge had borne fruit; it fostered secularization.[420]

In Besancon feelings were not allowed to get overheated. People surrendered to the prevailing ideology, and they embraced opinions suggested by the reigning teachers. On March 18, 1881 the qualified Committee voted in favor of secularization; and Inspector Demongeot announced that he held in readiness replacements for the Brothers in the school on Rue Battant. Thereupon, a unanimous vote was obtained in the Council.

On March 25th Mayor Delavelle's letter reached Brother Joannes, Director of the Brothers' school in Besancon:"By accepting the decision which releases them from all obligations to the city, the teaching Brothers who professed their art on Rue Battant must be convinced that this decision does not imply, as far as they are concerned, any dissatisfaction on the part of the administration; we are merely applying a principle. The city wishes to express its gratitude to the Brothers.

And, in this fashion, the demands of courtesy were fulfilled. After all this, (since a pledge had been given to the adversaries of religious education) the Religious teaching personnel at St. John's school was retained. But the end of the five-year period of grace stipulated by the law of October 1886 was drawing close; and M. Veuillecard, Mayor of Besancon at the moment, asked the Ministry for a two year extension, which was granted to him on September 25, 1891. Actually, it was extended to October, 1894. A man like Brother Joseph, who had operated the school and could boast of more than thirty years of service, was refused retirement benefits. On the other hand, the Brothers were not obliged to leave their residence.[421]

Such were, in the west and east, north and south, the features of the offensive against the ancient French education that had been patronized and guaranteed by the Church. The nation had slipped away from the Christianity that had begotten it. Whole regions and people by the thousands would fall under other influences. A minority, however, genuinely undaunted and generous, limited the disaster. Without fearing difficulties, without repudiating sacrifice, it organized a solid network of defense. And it entrusted it to experienced forces several of whose bands had just been certified by the public authorities, and which still retained the freedom to dedicate themselves to the common good.

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[420] Ibid., Historique de l'Isle-sur-le-Doubs.

[421] Archives of the District, Historique de Besancon.

PART THREE

THE WORK OF THE BROTHERS

CHAPTER ONE

Private Schools

Uncovering once again, under the impact of their adversaries, the full zest for life, French Catholics were not satisfied with objecting to the State's educational policies, they prescribed for themselves a compensatory action. In this connection, laws presented no obstacle; since the doughty campaign of the newspaper *l'Avenir* and following the persistent work of men like Montalembert, Bishop Parisi and Bishop Dupanloup, freedom to teach had been secured. We have observed private elementary schools in the days of the July Monarchy. They grew in numbers — and, along with them, colleges and resident schools, all institutions at the higher elementary or classical secondary level — after the voting in of that "great charter" of 1850, which continued to bear the name of its author, "the Falloux Law".

De La Salle's disciples had taken part in this movement. Their acknowledged status as auxiliaries in the "University" (the Educational Corporation) and the favor which governments generally showed them could not stand in the way of their responding to the appeals of their fellow-Catholics. Pastors of parishes, devout laymen, and private associations selected the Brothers to teach in classrooms that had been opened for the children of the people. It sometimes happened that these schools provided the groundwork for an agreement between the founders, the teachers and the Communes; but, most frequently, after 1850, a school that had been declared "private" remained just that. Retaining this independence seemed elementary good sense for anybody who contemplated the fragility of public opinion and the evolution of the revolutionary spirit. Thus members of Religious Congregations were in some places hired as public schools teachers but elsewhere as Religious teachers invested in a very special way with the confidence of the clergy. At the command of his Superiors, the same Brother could proceed from a Communal classroom to teach in a parochial school or vice versa. It was quite simply a matter of administrative arrangements, the utilization of talent or, at some periods, exemption from military service. Furthermore, the Institute offered the lower and intermediate *bourgoisie* and the more gifted among their elementary school pupils classes dispensed a special instruction in their resident schools — a special instruction, diversified, adapted to regional demands and always disbursed apart from the public school programs.

Logically, secularization had to secure a much great surge of private education. To the neutrality that had been advocated and then imposed by Free-Masonry believers answered with a vigorous affirmation of their own Christianity. To teachers humiliated and spurned by the civil authorities, branded for banishment by the lawmakers, they gave the means of continuing a mission of unequaled importance. Bishop Freppel had uttered the watchword: "Wherever the new system of education appears the Christian school must rise up in opposition to the institution that has usurped the name of school."[422]

At that time it was impossible to meet with a faithful Catholic who would argue with such an obligation. What was needed was to organize this immense capital; and French generosity was equal to the task. As early as 1882, Brother Irlide was struck by this enthusiasm. In his circular for the New Year, he wrote: "By changing their pattern, our schools have been deprived of all civil assistance. Considering the huge number of charities that exist only by the support of Catholics, it seemed foolhardy to expect to obtain the necessary funds for new educational undertakings...It has been quite the reverse...You can form your own idea of the vastness of the expenditures when you understand that, in Paris alone, the sum comes to more than eight

[422] Cited by Brugerette, Vol. II, pg. 229.

million francs."

Nevertheless, the Republican government strove with might and main to raise difficulties. If any teaching Congregation thought it was going to be the beneficiary of a legacy, there was a good chance that it was going to learn that it was not qualified to accept it. Ministerial offices would allege reasons based upon public order or else interpret the will of the testator in their own way. Between 1883 and 1897, out of 279 legacies left to incorporated Religious societies, 152 (with an overall value of one million francs) were invalidated; those who actually did receive legacies did not even realize three-hundred million francs.[423]

In 1891 the Council of State had to resolve a question handed on to it by the executive branch: was there an opposition between the doctrine of neutrality a teaching Congregation's right to receive gifts and legacies to support schools in a locality in which public schools were already operating? In plain language, it was a problem of banning any written pledge that made grants to societies which, although beyond a doubt legal, were nevertheless capable through their education activity of running serious competition with the personnel of public education. The government found the Council balking and, finally, unwilling to create a grounds for disability that was not envisioned by the law of October 30, 1886. In the eyes of the Council all that was required was the investigation of individual cases; if the effect of a given gift seemed of the sort seriously to inhibit the interests of a Communal school, the Minister would obviously take steps not to submit a favorable decree for the signature of the President of the Republic.[424]

All things considered, the government failed to obtain a judgment on the principle which would have enabled it to reject every request authorizing a legacy without any further legal process. But it did retain the broadest possible latitude.

At about the same time, the administrative court, induced once again to interpret the school law, decided completely in favor of the Prefectures against several city governments. The latter had voted subsidies to private schools: no legal text expressly forbade such a justifiable gesture. Nevertheless, the Prefects had stricken from local budgets all expenses so designated. The cities which had appealed the decision — Muret, Nantes, and Vitré in February of 1891, Espalion in April and later on Saint-Michel in Herm, Lescar and Nontron — knew that they were not supposed to be involved in promoting any form of education that lacked the national stamp of approval. On this point, in the eyes of the Council of State, the intentions of the legislature, although not explicit, left no room for doubt. There was only one way for the Communes to be relatively impartial: it would be perfectly acceptable to allow the granting of "individual assistance" to poor children who attended a private school.[425]

To this harsh legal philosophy there were the hurdles to the operation of the new schools promoted by the Inspectors of Primary Instruction and by the Departmental Councils of Public Education. Fastidious inquiries into files, difficulties having to do with the soundness of buildings, their arrangement, their lighting, their hygiene, etc. Frequently it was necessary to appeal to a higher Council, which, happily, showed more evenhandedness and more composure; and a large number of appeals obtained satisfactory solutions. The school would then open, to the displeasure of the prejudiced opposition.[426]

Between 1880 and 1900 the number of schools opened by Catholics arose from 12,526 to 17,348 (or a total of 4,822 new schools; and the number of pupils arose from 751,453 to

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[423] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 268.

[424] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pp. 466-467.

[425] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pg. 459.

[426] Lancanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 268.

1,377,578.[427] Comparing statistics for 1875 with those of 1892,[428]I.e., the expiration of the postponement provided by the law of 1886. we see that teaching Orders of both sexes, after the loss of all their Communal schools, preserved the most of their capacity. There was an 18% reduction in the overall number of schools: the weight of all the adverse forces had only procured this decline and without a debacle.[429]

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In order to hold forth so energetically, teachers, parents and benefactors combined their forces. The organization of "Tithes for Schools" secured a constant flow of funds. Further, it was necessary to require the cooperation of families whose children constituted the clientele of private education. To agree to this financial sacrifice seemed all the more meritorious in that all tuition had been abolished from the Communal schools; the tuition-free education for which the Founder and the Superiors of the Institute had struggled and suffered for two centuries had become the law of the land at the very moment Catholics were abandoning its general practice.

Eugene Rendu, one of the leaders of the movement in Paris, describes the situation in the following terms: "When Blessed de La Salle pinpointed gratuity as the foundation of his work, he was talking about the Church's gratuity: issuing in charitable works, it had no other inspiration or goal than Christian fraternity exercised in favor of the poor. But when gratuity becomes a means to promote State usurpation, interposing itself between the family and the school in order to dominate the child, why not have recourse to the defensive instrument which is the voluntary contributions of parents to cover educational expenditures? Does not tuition then become a protective weapon and the guarantee of familial action against the intrusion of the public authority?[430]

Actually, the French middleclass continued to harbor distaste for tuition-free education. It agreed to subsidize the education of the poor or to exempt from tuition this or that individual among its wards in the way one would grant an alms. It wanted the people, if they possessed some little sufficiency, to pay for their children, not in the form of a spontaneous contribution, a free and general community tax, but directly, payable at a given time and because of the presence of a man's child at a desk in a classroom.

This system, which — as we have just considered — many distinguished lawyers recommended but which enlarged social inequalities, was rather widespread. The clergy, diocesan and parochial councils set it up as often as they could into an absolute rule. The Brothers complied with it: since the days when Napoleon III's Ministers commanded them with threats to submit to the system, they had received the necessary dispensation from Rome. Thus, in some places in the Nord, the Congregation's Superiors had to allow the coexistence in the same building of two schools, one requiring tuition, the other tuition-free. In Roubaix, the poor, called "sponsored pupils", were asked to seek out benefactors who would pay their monthly fee — which, by the way, was quite nominal — and foot the bill for their school supplies. Catholic Congresses in Lille came out clearly in support of this system. And in favor of its growth Committees in Tourcoing and Armentières undertook vigorous campaigns. Apart from budgetary reasons, people, on some occasions, did not boggle at using an argument that was open to the charge of promoting selfishness and fostering class jealousy and resentment:

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[427] Figures given by Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 233.

[428] Des Cilleuls, op. cit., pg. 678.

[429] Eugene Rendu, op. cit., pg. 66.

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tuition authorized the "selection" of candidates.[431]

In spite of controversies and in the midst of difficulties, the Brothers set to work with all their zeal for the expansion of private schools. Along with the Superiors-general Irlide and Joseph, there were two Brothers in particular who supplied the Church and lay staff members of Christian education with a long and fruitful collaboration: Brother Tempier, as legal scholar responsible, in reports and abstracts, for analyzing laws and regulations and for pointing out ways of avoiding ambushes; and Brother Anthymius, whose competence as an educator was brought to bear in aiding Directors called upon to open schools; he carried on a huge correspondence with them as well as with founding committees.[432]

When Eugene Rendu writes about the educational crusade that was begun in 1880,[433] he ascribes to the Brothers' credit: teaching programs and methods, the organization, preparation and supervision of contests, participation on examination committees
set up not only for religious teaching but for graduation from primary studies, the progress of pupils toward official diplomas, and the compiling and presentation of materials for international expositions.

It was a well-founded tribute, but the honor could not be precisely proportioned to the exertion. As the city administrations had done in the past, so now the parishes and the diocesan committees asked for teachers in Religious Congregations. Since there was not enough of them to go around, they had to be asked to perform nearly superhuman tasks. Their days were consumed and their efforts were unrelenting. Among the Brothers there were the very young who had to teach a class of 120 youngsters, whom they divided up into eight or ten sections, and questioned one group while they assigned "quiet work" to the others, or took on a few hard-working monitors as assistants. Nevertheless, under such conditions, exhaustion was no guarantee of the quality of the results.[434]

Assistance in the form of lay personnel appeared urgent. And that recourse was taken — especially in Paris where staffs had to be increased after the fragmentation and redivision among the parishes of the once larger Brothers' Communities. As early as 1885 there were forty-two lay teachers associated with the Brothers in the schools of the Seine. More were added when the military draft put a three-year interruption in the careers of young Religious. In 1903 ninety-nine lay teachers contributed to the operation of the Institute's schools in the Paris region.[435]

This group was not placed alongside but subordinated to the Brothers. Impetus came from the Director and example was presented by the men in white rabats. There was no danger of forgetting the principles embodied in the *Conduct of Schools*. On the contrary, the whiff of persecution had kindled the apostolic fire. Father Lesêtre, pastor of St. Étienne of the Mount on March 15, 1897 published an article entitled "A Report on the Catholic Schools" in the *Revue du clergé francais*. He writes: "While, at the moment, Congregations are still operating with members who have not been able to form an exact idea of the new requirements, it is certain that teachers trained since the period of secularization are permeated with a more strictly religious spirit and are equal to performing the task that the Church expects of them.

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431 Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique.

432 Obituary, 1904.

433 Volume cited, *Sept ans de guerre*, (passim).

434 *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for May 1907, pp. 140-141.

435 Archives of the District of La Puy, noted entitled "*Coup d'oeil rétrospectif*."

And after having recalled the beautiful eulogy that the Archbishop of Lyons had delivered on the preceding January 7 in honor of the M.H. Brother Joseph, "an apostle through the power of his faith" and a leader heeded and imitated by "the members of his vast family", the author answered the question: "Are the Catholic schools what they should be?" In general yes. Superiors and other people directing teaching Congregations are, above all, concerned with preparing Christians.

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Thus private school teachers and, to a very large measure, the followers of John Baptist de La Salle among them, contributed to the creation of a religious climate in a France that was already infected by materialism.

Eugene Spüller, Minister of Public Education, on December 30, 1894, speaking frankly to a group representing elementary education, declared: "There are those who believe that the task of this level of education is something achieved and perfect in our country. But a part of the task remains; it is a large and very difficult part, the most difficult of all to accomplish, or, I should say, to undertake seriously and resolutely: and that is the moral factor of education."[436]

Such an open avowal revealed concern. He went on to explain the genesis that "new spirit" the spread of which Spüller himself looked forward to and which was mentioned again in 1896 by Gabriel Hanotaux, Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking to the Papal Nuncio, Bishop Ferrata: "It is contrary to the true interests of the nation as well as those of the Church to bring up generations of irreligious and atheistic youths."[437]

Nearly ten years after the first "secularization laws", therefore, there was a feeling in the world of politics, a desire and a need for rehabilitation. Leo XIII, the placating and prophetic Pope, advanced this mood with all his power. He admonished Catholics not to become frozen in postures of sterile lamentation and, accepting the Republican Constitution unconditionally, to work with all of their fellow-citizens for the progress of the nation and for social advancement. A qualified interpreter of the Papal directives, the representative of the Holy See in Paris, exercised an intelligent, skillful and persevering influence.

He had his disappointments. He ran up against inflexible people on both the right and the left; of some of those who were blind he was unable to open their eyes, nor could he help those to hear who were willfully deaf. Nevertheless, a relative peace was setting in. But would it take root and flourish? A suspicion was all that was needed to spoil it, a jolt to bring the whole thing down. But in the best days of Leo XIII's papacy the life of the Church in France demonstrated intensity: devotion, science and doctrine underwent both renewal and growth. At the same time that charitable projects were developing, social justice owed to the preaching of Christ's Vicar the hope of an imminent burst of new life: better understood, it had increased chances of being better observed.[438]

Educational projects improved this climate and intensified this light. There were the labors of young Catholic Faculties, and the more determined and more distinguished, if not always danger-free, participation of the clergy in scientific and philosophical movements. But also, in the realm of human activity, through the cooperation of Religious, diocesan priests and dedicated lay people, there were successes in secondary education and more promising prospects for the teaching of the masses.

The Hierarchy, although divided and uncertain in political matters, was unanimous in

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436 Quoted by G. Goyau, in *L'École d'aujourd'hui*, Series 1, 1899, pp. 112-113.

437 Goyau, *Histoire religieuse de la nation francaise*, pg. 601.

438 Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 1 and 2.

questions of faith and morals. It knew the good of souls as guaranteed by education. To build schools, recruit teachers and remind families of their duties to their children were, in every diocese, the primary concerns.

At this time the Church retained an official position in the nation. The Concordat of 1801, which continued to be in force, regulated the relations between the clergy and the public authorities. And, no doubt, this situation involved a grave inconvenience: The State looked upon Bishops and Pastors as functionaries whom it had nominated, paid and over whose actions it pretended to practice supervision and, on occasion, to censure their pronouncements. There were the ambitious and the second-rate who were able to employ intrigue or take advantage of convenient connections to achieve ecclesiastical honors. On the whole, however, the independence and the dignity of God's ministers remained intact. The Pope would refuse to confer canonical recognition on conspicuously incompetent candidates or those who were, with good reason, suspect: the Holy See's choices were restricted, but they were not paralyzed. Even if a new Bishop had, prior to his nomination, made rather too many promises to the government, he would feel after his consecration the full weight of his responsibilities and reckon the full magnitude of his calling. When the time came, he would utter his non possumus. And while he might be courting the accusation or condemnation — which, by the way, was merely verbal — of highly placed persons in the Republic at a meeting of the Council of State, he would win over the hearts of faithful Christians and command the respect of his adversaries. His "salary" would be cut off — a mean-minded reprisal and an obvious injustice; for, since the confiscations in the days of the Revolution, France had contracted a debt to its priests. Here was the head of a Diocese who now took his place among the poor. In any case, he might immediately take heart: spontaneously his flock, as in the first centuries of the Church, would assure his maintenance.

And so, it was in this way that the bonds between pastor and flock were tightened; and so, too, in every domain — whether in questions of religious services or of building a school — Catholics became accustomed to relying exclusively upon themselves. Politicians who belonged to the extreme left demanded the abolition of the Concordat; and when the abrupt break came, Catholics avoided despondency, and they were quickly on their guard against confusion; the struggle against secularization had generated initiative.

Those who led that encounter stand out nobly and proud. We should place front and center those who were most typical, those whose features are inseparable from any picture of Catholic France. At the forefront appear the shapes of bishops especially distinguished by Leo XIII: — the Cardinals of the eve of the rupture and of the days that immediately followed. There was a man like Adolph Perraud, a former student in the Higher Normal School, a member of the Oratory and Bishop of Autun between 1874 and 1906; he was an ascetic with deeply-set eyes who was both intimidating and timid, a model of all priestly virtues and a man of thought and of prayer rather than boldly enterprising. There was also a man like Francis Richard, who did not possess the same intellectual gifts, but he, too, was a magnificent soul; over the pallor and leanness of his features there radiated the light of holiness. As Vicar-general of the Diocese of Nantes, he had been called to Paris in 1875 in order to become Cardinal Guibert's coadjutor; in 1886 he became the Archbishop of Paris. And in this lofty position, under difficult and extremely complex circumstances, he turned out to be a hard-working administrator, a wise counsellor and an example of integrity, fidelity and justice.[439]

Bishop of Montpellier since 1874 and therefore a contemporary of the two preceding figures, the future Cardinal Cabrières was a gentlemen in the sense of the *ancien régime* because of his graciousness, his exquisite manners, his political convictions and a flower of chivalric honor,

[439] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 81-86 (Archbishop Perraud), pp. 7-10 (Cardinal Richard).

but an apostle who understood the needs of modern society and had no hesitation in taking his place with the progressives alongside Albert de Mun.[440]

And then there was a figure, also occupying a secondary role, but nonetheless an outstanding personality: Archbishop Bourret who, arriving in Rodez in 1871, joked with the Church in Rodez, "his new spouse", by adorning to welcome her snow-white vestments and icicles "as earrings." This caustic mentality was able to win peoples' affection. He ruled with authority and with extremely exact sense of what was possible and realizable. He covered his diocese with churches and schools; and for some he provided numerous pious and learned priests, while for the others he took advantage of the dedication of the Congregations.[441]

For as long as the former professor at the Sorbonne, Cardinal Caverot, Archbishop of Lyons, worked for the advancement of private education, he was as much interested in elementary schools as in the Catholic University of the Southeast. He died in 1887. After five year under Cardinal Foulon, the disciple of Bishop Dupanloup and biographer of Bishop Darboy, the people in Lyons experienced the gentle guidance and the generous and sensitive heart of Bishop Coulié, who had come from Orléans in 1894 and was made Cardinal in 1897.[442]

In the West we meet with the second occupant of the Bishopric of Rennes, Cardinal Place. He was another member of the Dupanloup group. Having entered Holy Orders after a brief career as a lawyer and as an embassy attaché, he directed the Bishop of Orléan's Junior Seminary at Chapelle Saint Mesmin. In Brittany he dedicated a large part of his personal fortune to the founding of Catholic schools. In his own archiepiscopal city alone there were no less than 2,300 children in attendance at schools operated by Religious teachers. Open handed, he administered his diocese energetically. And deeply devout, he exercised a constant vigilance over the sanctification of his clerics. When he died on March 5, 1893, he would have left more people regretting his passing had not the frostiness of his receptions and the curtness of his commands upset many of his priests.[443]

Cardinal Thomas, Archbishop of Rouen, followed him rather quickly to the grave. No one was more in agreement with Leo XIII than this eloquent orator, ardent patriot and farseeing sociologist. Through his pastor letters, "The Pope and France", "The Church and Democracy", "Rich and Poor", "Owner and Worker" he strove to serve Papal policies and the cause of peace among citizens.[444]

A faithful people, seeking a way through morass and ambush, could not treat such guides lightly. Perhaps there were some simple souls who might have been perplexed by a man like Cardinal Meignan. Archbishop of Tours, tall, standing powerfully erect, irony glinted in his clear eyes; his slender lips were ever ready to let fly a jab. He was thought to have been a skeptic because he cherished few illusions about human nature. People were not unaware of his leanings which associated him with "Liberal Catholicism". But no one could doubt his religious devotion. He was indeed a scholar and a renowned exegete, but he was also assiduously prayerful. And conscientious about his duties as a pastor, he ruled over Touraine and supervised the religious needs of the region.[445]

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[440] Idem. ibid., pp. 102-105.

[441] Idem. ibid., pp. 113-116.

[442] Lacanuet, op. cit., pp. 73-77.

[443] Idem. ibid., pp. 25-27.

[444] Idem. ibid., pp. 11-12.

[445] Lacanuet, op. cit., pp. 33-38.

For those who require more accessible "Princes of the Church", more likely to win people over immediately, and indeed to inspire enthusiasm, we should have to speak of the Archbishops of Rheims and Bordeaux. Cardinal Langénieux had to his credit the outstanding projects that he had developed in St. Ambrose's parish in Paris, of which he had been pastor in the days of the Second Empire. And after that he had the assistance of Albert de Mun in the founding of the "Catholic Circles". Later on he conducted working men's pilgrimages to Rome. He became intensely interested in the working classes and succeeded in making contact with them in brilliant demonstrations where his eloquence flowed and his gesture of benediction grew broader. New churches arose in Rheims during the years of his episcopacy: one of them was dedicated to St. John Baptist de La Salle, whose canonization process in 1888 and 1900 Cardinal Langénieux celebrated with magnificence. He showed himself faithful not only to the memory but to the inspiration of the Brothers' Founder: through the prelate's labors the Brothers' schools, the young men's associations and the organizations of practicing Catholics in the parishes flourished.[446]

As for Cardinal Lecot, promoted to the See of Bordeaux in 1890, he formed part of Leo XIII's principal auxiliaries. He earned a reputation for his successful intervention in a building strike. He was never again to show such skill, wisdom and boldness. Nevertheless, his intelligence and zeal were undeniable. And it was thanks to him that, until the end of the century, the hub of Catholic Action was located in Bordeaux.[447]

Other figures were influential without having been illumined by reflections from "the Purple". There was Bishop Besson of Nîmes, an orator, a writer, an extraordinary character, energetic and a genuinely good nature. "Besson is a real man," the Pope had said. And the people in Nîmes professed their pride in a leader who breathed his own vitality into their undertakings, who spent himself tirelessly, and never faltered, when necessary, to risk everything in the defense of his priests or for the preservation of his schools.[448]

It is also important to point to the energetic Archbishop Gouthe-Soulard of Aix, "sculpted in the basalt of his native Forez Mountains,", curt, straightforward, thinking of nothing but the good that had to be realized as quickly as possible, venturesome perhaps in the political arena, but successful in achieving his goal when he undertook to obtain good teachers for the people in his diocese;[449] Fulbert Petit, Archbishop of Besancon after having been Bishop of Le Puy, "a serious nature, moderate, conciliatory and patient," whose initiatives were to contribute to the religious development of a man like Ferdinand Brunetiére;[450] Bishop Mignot who, with the assistance of his distinguished Vicar-general, Father Birot, restored order and confidence in the Albi region and supplied a section of the French clergy with intellectual guidance; Bishop Marchal, of an older generation and of a less well established authority, but with as much meritorious effort in the struggle with de-Christianization, in his programs of school and post-school organization, and in his Berry — unfortunately so depleted of people of strong faith![451]

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[446] Idem. ibid., pp. 15-17.

[447] Idem. ibid., pp. 50-52.

[448] Idem. ibid., pp. 99-101.

[449] Idem. ibid., pp. 107-109.

[450] Idem. ibid., pp. 87-29.

[451] Idem. ibid., 44-45 and pg. 112.

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We could extend this list. But a few outstanding names will be enough. And after an overall view, some general considerations and sketches of the most acclaimed or the most diligent representatives of the teaching Church, we need now to enter into some details.

Paris and its suburbs in 1879 had offered an immense field for secularization. Catholics of this great city had to mobilize their resources and pay with their lives in order to limit the effects of the Masonic offensive. Inspired by the Cardinal-Archbishop and his co-adjutor, a diocesan committee was set up; the common funds which it created and the investment of which it supervised would allow assistance to parishes that were too poor to open schools with their own capital. In a meeting that took place on March 16, 1880, Charles Chesnelong declared: "We shall not allow any of our schools to fail. If they are abolished as public schools, we shall immediately restore them as private schools. We shall found new ones anywhere the need arises...It's an easy task if men of faith, heart and resources share in it. By combining their sacrifices, they will draw up a budget that will be splendid in a double sense: splendid because contributions to it will be voluntary, and splendid also because its goal is the sacred. It will be a budget of Christian sacrifice for the redemption of the soul of a people."[452]

De La Salle's Institute was prepared. At that time twenty-four private schools were entrusted to it: eighteen in Paris, six in the suburbs, especially at Saint Denis, Neuilly and Sceaux. These had previously been Communal schools with a combined student population of 5,960 pupils; 4,514 children returned to them in their new organization. Like others, many of them were unable to reunite with their former teachers because of the lack of room. Frequently, the expulsion of the Religious teachers had been so abrupt and so heartless that the transfer of classes had to be effected under most difficult conditions. School materials and personnel, along with the largest number of young pupils had been assembled in chance quarters. The best renovations were obtained only after the purchase of rather vast parcels of land and after the construction of appropriate buildings. But if the search was not too demanding in the outskirts of the city — Choisy Avenue, Saint Ouen Avenue, Notre Dame de la Gare — where empty lots were not lacking, the scarcity of sites and the cost of building at the city's center created frustrating problems.[453]

The Brothers adapted. Their large Communities of the past could not be perpetuated: they were divided into teams that served parochial jurisdictions. Thus, the house on St. Martin's Square disappeared and the Brothers who dwelt in it took over the schools on Rues Béarn and Saint Denis and the ones near St. Elizabeth's and St. Jean-St. François churches.[454] Finally, sixty groups of Brothers would be formed to dispense instruction in ninety-five schools.

Some of the foundations assumed greater prominence; their operation recalled — and not without some superiority in the are of studies — the splendid institutions during Brother Philippe's time. Of such a character was the school center at St. Roch, which in 1886 included a parochial school, a choir, a commercial school and a young men's association. Brother Agilbert of Mary, a new Director at this time, was able to surmount a quantity of obstacles in order to bring people together, foster intellectual growth and even secure physical safety. It dispelled so many huge clouds that it was called "the sun" of St. Roch.[455]

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[452] Diocesan Charities for Private Christian Schools, report of the meeting for March 16, 1880.

[453] Meeting of March 16, 1880, Denys Cochin's report.

[454] Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes for January 1922, pg. 25.

[455] *Choix de notices nécrologiques*, Vol. III, pp. 563-564.

Another school flourished at 68 Rue d'Assas: this was the St. Sulpice parochial school. In 1900 it included eight classes and had at its disposal a large chapel. Its Community, with about ten Brothers, was intensely zealous and it enjoyed a broad influence on youth. It instructed the oldest and the best of its pupils in two courses of higher elementary school who had transferred from St. Clotilde's parish.[456]

Nearly everywhere in the Paris region the followers of St. John Baptist de La Salle were dedicated instruments of the purposes of the clergy and of the decisions of the diocesan authority. Their institutions served as headquarters for Catholic staff officers and were volunteered for the deployment of demonstrations and feasts. Each year a formal session was held at the resident school at Passy; a delegate of the Council for private elementary education presented his report; it was there also that were announced the names of pupils who, before officially constituted examining boards, had obtained a "studies certificate" which was prized by families as well as by Catholic employers. There followed the reading of a briefer list, but one that attracted greater interest: it was the list of youths who, after a competitive examination, had been admitted as scholarship pupils, to private commercial schools. Finally, there was the distribution of awards: the honorary prize, established by the Archbishop for the winner of the drawing competition which the Brothers has especially gotten up; awards, diplomas and honorable mentions conferred both upon other deserving artists and upon brilliant pupils in the higher classes. Three thousand youths and children, on this occasion, gathered around their Religious teachers.[457]

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Uno avulso, non deficit alter... The famous passage applies to the resurrection of the schools in Artois and in Flanders. By command of the civil authorities, a branch of Catholicism had been severed, but it grew back instantly. This frontier region, so frequently plundered and disrupted by struggles among nations discovered in these bloody exertions a fresh outburst of productivity; after devastation Arras, Dunkerque and Armentières rebuilt more splendidly their towers, steeples and facades. Similarly, the replanting of religious enterprises countered their uprooting.

We have described the secularization of Aire, Estaire, and Hazebrouck, all of them cities belonging to the District of St. Omer. The transfer of thousands of pupils from Communal schools, now become "neutral", to new Brothers' schools took place on the very day of the legal expulsion or, at the very latest, immediately after vacation. There were parallel closings and openings in Laventie, Dunkerque, Gravelines, Bourbourg, and Cassel in 1891 and in 1892 in Bergues, St. Valery, Malo, and Rosendaël. Nor was there anything temporary about these changes: as early as 1894 six comfortable classrooms were set up in St. Eloi's parish in Dunkerque; Brother Director Euphraise and his "right arm", Brother Edibe, pioneered the fame of the school's higher elementary program.

And people were not merely satisfied to save what was in danger of being lost. Without waiting to be compelled, so to speak, they exercised their options. The deeply Catholic village of Portel lead the way in 1879; all its inhabitants but especially the proprietors of fishing fleets cooperated in the founding of a school that Brother Fredebert, who had come from Desvres, put into sound and workable shape. In 1887 and again in 1888 the Bethune Mining Company invited Communities of Brothers to teach the sons of administrative personnel and of workers first in the "Brebis" region and thereafter to Mazingarbe Road and to Vermelles.

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456 *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for October 1926, pp. 347 et sq.

457 Eugene Rendu, *Sept ans de guerre, l'enseignement primaire libre à Paris* (1880-1886), preface.

In 1874 the District of Cambrai-Lille included 332 Brothers divided over thirty-five schools and teaching 12,500 pupils. Taking advantage of period of peace, its growth was constant and surprisingly rapid. Five years later the number of Christian Brothers rose to 441, the schools to fifty-one and the pupils to 14,600. Lower figures had to be expected once the period of secularization commenced. Nevertheless, the statistics continued to be satisfactory. Obviously, the curve representing student population showed decreases. In the beginning they were negligible, since, in 1882, there were still 13,000 youths attending the Christian Schools. A campaign of vilification — concerning which we shall deal in its place — frightened or confused the public. By 1900 the Brothers were teaching no more than 10,660 boys and youths. And in 1903 there were 11,300 boys in Nord being instructed by 437 of the Institute' teachers in the forty-one schools that had been preserved.[458]

As a consequence, it is inappropriate to talk about a downturn. The citadels had not capitulated, recruiting had been sustained and only those individuals had abandoned the field who had either lost faith or were constrained under the enemy yoke from among a population that was readying itself for the tasks of life.

Without trying to touch down everywhere, we shall visit a few principle locations. Cambrai, first of all, the stately, sober city of Prince/Archbishops, with its secluded squares, its manorial and bourgeois residences and its austere churches. As an ecclesiastical headquarters, it imposed its name on a Lasallian jurisdiction. However, it must be admitted that it showed less vitality than the Lille conglomerate. In Cambrai the Brothers had operated a residence school in buildings that belonged to the Commune; there in 1874 Brother Flour had succeeded the wise and well-beloved Brother Fuscian. A hostile city government deprived him of the school quarters in order to set up a public college. The residence school was obliged to close. But on Sisters of Charity Street sufficient space was found for the operation of a private school, where pupils paid tuition. It seemed extremely desireable to open a tuition-free school elsewhere. In 1882 "Cambrai-St. Joseph" was added for the poor to "Cambrai-Holy Cross" that had been set in motion two years earlier. Here, for the diversion and moral refinement of the very young the Cambrai journalist, M. Ernest Delloye devoted himself as a voluntary aide to the Brothers.[459]

During the Restoration and in the days of Louis Philippe, there was an excellent man in Douai, a "lay St. Vincent de Paul" and a model of generosity whose name was Deforest de Lewarde.[460] The school on Rue Jean de Gouy perpetuates the memory of this distinguished citizen of Douai. His professional classes, his employment agency and all the supports liberally conferred on former pupils earned him a medal of honor at the Chicago Exposition in 1893 and a gold medal in Paris at the 1900 Exposition. Over and above, three private schools flourished in the city: one, in St. Joseph's parish, another near Notre Dame, a neighborhood along the banks of the Scarpe, suffused in peace and unsullied fragility, and the third in the shadows of the collegiate church of St. Peter's which raised its huge and massive silhouette above the roofs that surrounded it. For twenty years beginning in 1884 the destiny of this collection of projects had been presided over by Brother Emilianus — an intelligent figure of a man in harmony with his surroundings, Douai itself presenting a sensitive and solemn appearance, a proud personality in which merged history and poetry, meditation and energy, patriotic devotion and a love of independence. In earlier times, English Catholics persecuted by Queen Elizabeth or William of Orange found refuge here and, in prayer and study, prepared for dangerous missions and eventual martyrdom. Doctrine, piety, magnanimity and triumphant courage, the Brothers, under the vault of the church of the Recollects, remembered a past which armed them

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458 District Archives.

459 Ibid., Historique de Cambrai.

460 See Vol. IV of the present work, pp. 456-457 and Vol. V, pg. 131.

for the task, the suffering and the struggle.[461]

A religious ancestor, and he not the least, had preceded them in this region: — Brother Barthélemy, the first Superior-general and first successor to St. John Baptist de La Salle. He had built up a posterity for himself among his fellow citizens. At the far limit of the French-speaking region, Armentières had provided a particularly numerous following. A courageous city which, within our own "Iron century", was able to rise up with a pristine freshness out of the ashes. Since the Middle Ages it eagerly cared for troubled children, as witnessed by the confraternity called "Noble Child" which at one time assumed responsibility for the education of backward and disadvantaged children.

Soon after the secularization laws of 1882, a funds drive was started with the view of providing Religious teachers with salaries and lodging; and only a few days were required in which to collect 45,000 francs. Residents lent a hand to move the Community into a building on the Great Square. For the Brothers it was the beginning of many involvements: in Armentières they were to operate schools in St. Charles, St. Vast, St. Joseph, St. Roch, and Sacred Heart. In 1893 these schools were teaching 1,200 pupils. Brother Anice was the Director of fifteen Brothers and eleven lay associates. Two years earlier he had receive his "Obedience" for this mission, and, good Lorrainian that he was, the kind and gentle Brother, along with his legendary bursar, Brother Fleury, identified with this northern region which they would both have to leave in 1906 as outlaws.[462]

A brief tack to the other end of the Department brings us to Valenciennes, where the Communal school had been secularized in 1891. Brother Fidelis who had directed it remained at the head of three private schools only one of which was tuition-free. His goodness, competence and graciousness won him universal respect.

We turn now to the genuine center of religious activity and education, to Lille, so as to give it the attention due it. Here one breathed a zealous atmosphere; it was a city whose glorious past had not stood in the way of accomplishing present tasks, nor tasks looking toward the future. Here majestic memories were not wanting: — the antique architecture of the Great Square, the triumphal gates and St. Catherine's church. But contemporary life spread out along its magnificent avenues with their buildings so very well adapted to their purposes. Alongside the heavy 19th century edifices there were the vertical lines of belfries, the Flemish style in red brick. Opulence, work and faith went hand in hand. The people of Lille planned big and realized boldly. They built palaces, a Communal headquarters that was anything but banal, and numerous churches. The cathedral, Notre Dame de la Treille, was a vast undertaking, the realization of which went on is spite of wars, disastrous invasions and the worst sort of financial difficulties. The tireless piety of powerful industrialists assembled stones, money and mosaics; and the apsidal chapel where the Virgin, so dear to the population, was enthroned exhibited a marvelously decorated reliquary.

We can imagine the efforts and the procedures of men like these to save Catholic education. Just as they would succeed in building a huge and vital Catholic University, they would also exert an attentive concern for the primary schools.

As we have said, the Brothers ceased to be Communal teachers after 1868. In order to retain them in Lille, a Committee, whose presidency devolved upon Senator Théry, opened a "five-year" drive for funds. Each year until 1873 it collected 40,000 francs. By adding school

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461 District Archives, Historique de Douai.

462 District Archives, Notes on Armentières. — Bulletin du noviciat d'Annappes, 1914. — Centenary Brochure of the Brothers at Armentières (1840-1940). — Brother Anice had the pleasure of welcoming to the Institute his nephew, Brother Francis de Sales, who is currently the Secretary-general of the Congregation.

tuitions to this sum, it became possible in the beginning to support seven private schools: St. Andrew, St. Stephen, St. Maurice, Holy Redeemer, The Madeleine, Sts. Peter and Paul and St. Vincent de Paul.

The list grew whether through suburban schools that had been quickly absorbed by "greater Lille" or through the addition of new foundations. Classes in St. Michael's, in particular, opened as early as 1871; later on, transported to the courtyard of this church, the school would gain a well deserved reputation under the guidance of Brother Edouardis, an educator of talented young men for commerce and a man who inspired priestly and Religious vocations.

The Brothers' general headquarters were located near Notre Dame de la Treille. There, on the site of the former *Monnaies Mansion*, Countesse Granville had a building put up intended for the use of a young men's club named after the Jesuit, Father Coeurdacier. The Brothers, called in 1861 to assist, four years later assumed complete control of the project. And in 1867 "Monnaie" through a gift became the property of the Institute.

The young men's club collected hundreds of youths and children; it attached evening classes and a musical group, the renown "Notre Dame Harmony". But during the last third of the century the institution became home to many more organizations: — St. Peter's residence school, in which was established the former semi-residence school of St. Eubert, the St. Aloysius Gonzaga Club, the St. Luke's school, the Catholic School of Commerce, a day school, a choir and normal courses for teachers. "Monnaie" served as the Brother Visitor's residence and provided quarters for the Treasurer of the District.

We will meet with it several times more along our way. But let us leave it now in order to return to the parochial schools, of which, in 1878, there were ten. At that time their financial situation was a little better than average; but funds had fallen off by considerably, while, needs had grown with the growth in population. A second five-year funds campaign after 1873 produced no more than 20,000-30,000 francs a year. The Committee was reduced to dipping into its very slim endowment.

There was no question of ill-will nor of stinginess. All that was needed was the involvement of someone with a firm hand and a good head. Providence spurred its faithful servant, Philibert Vrau, the saintly and wealthy man of Lille whose entire fortune had been translated into pious works and social foundations.

Vrau was an apostle who had the soul of a mystic and a mind that was both shrewd and calculating. He set out to arouse the dedication of other important persons in Lille, Feron Vrau Caulaincourt,[463] Jonglez de Ligne, Dubois-Legentil and Henry Bernard. He planned the establishment of "Parish Committees" co-ordinated with a central committee. Each of these individual groups, presided over by a dean or a pastor, was to take responsibility for its own schools. The Central Committee managed a sort of an insurance fund: after the books were examined, it made up for deficits as needed. He himself had to his credit not only the "school fund", henceforth the beneficiary of regular collections taken up among Catholics, but also a tenth of all the parochial contributions.

These arrangements were adopted on May 23, 1878. They were followed to the letter and all the more tenaciously as one entered more completely into the period of anticlericalism. To the threats, the attacks, the severe Republican thrusts Catholics in the Nord strove to put up a solid front. At their Congress in November of 1879 they reasserted this determination to resist. They listen to a Belgian, from the City of Gand, M. Verspeyen, tell them the way in which their neighbors managed the struggle against a "Liberal" government as it applied the "Odious Law."[464]

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[463] Philibert Vrau's brother-in-law.

[464] See above, pg. 233.

The Count de Mun pleaded the cause of Catholic education and emphasized the professional excellence of the Jesuits and the Brothers. M. Kolb-Bernard, a Senator, reviewed the complaints and the objections of his fellow-Catholics in a statement he read to five thousand citizens gathered together at an arena.

Funds began to pour into the treasury of the Central Committee. As early as the following December every parish in the city had a school at least in its rudimentary stages. It remained to build on the sites that had been purchased. In the beginning of the 1882 there were nearly 3,000 boys in schools operated by various Religious Congregations. Philibert Vrau was totally involved with these youths: — Welfare assistance, clothing drives, hygienic and medical services were only some of his "para-educational" accomplishments.

Habitually he pursued his prolific enterprises discretely, humbly and, so to speak, "in the corridors". The clergy continued to lead the various groups: — the presidency of the Central Committee belonged to Mgr. Lasne, Archpriest and Dean of St. Maurice. Nevertheless, there were laymen in important positions. Collecting school finances devolved upon M. Jonglez de Ligne. And a great deal of technical progress, asked for and received by members of the leadership, was supplied by M. Bernot, a former inspector in the public schools department who had become the inspector of all diocesan schools. His son, Canon Bernot, assisted him and subsequently replaced him.

In November of 1888, out of 10,000 boys of school age, more than 7,000 of them attended Catholic schools or, as apprentices who were not yet fourteen years of age, they were enrolled in evening courses prescribed by the law of March 28, 1882. And while the Brothers had in no intention of monopolizing private elementary education, on the other hand they freely assumed many additional tasks. They were the ones to whom appeal was made both to teach apprentices and to provide extra-curricular projects designed to protect Christian morality. As school teachers, professors in residence schools and directors of boys' clubs in 1896 they were serving about 2,700 of the youthful inhabitants of Lille.[465]

In Lille's two neighboring cities, Roubaix and Tourcoing, the zeal of the Brothers never faltered. In the former, beginning in 1882, their five Communities — Notre Dame, St. Joseph, St. Martin, Holy Redeemer and Bl. de La Salle — were established one after the other, and, in the end, were serving 1,900 pupils in forty-nine classes.

In 1877 Tourcoing became the site of a pay school on Leverrier Square, where, a few years later there was a Community of six Brothers under the direction of Brother Eberhard. Following the period of secularization, the Community was considerably enlarged. And in October of 1891, Brother Flour of Jesus presided over about twenty Brothers who taught in several quarters of the city. Within the institution itself there were commercial classes, meetings of religious associations and loyal "alumni". New apostolic centers had soon to be set up on Rues Ingres, Cloche and on Winoc-Choqueel. By 1896 the Brothers in Tourcoing counted 2,280 pupils in their eight schools or centers.

This growth speaks volumes for the reputation they enjoyed and the fondness with which they were regarded. There was one locality in that region which, perhaps more than the others, showed them greater appreciation and were more open to their influence: they had been invited to Wattrelos in 1869 by the Delnatte family which built St. Joseph's school. From 1876 to 1879 Brother Director Eubertus worked so hard that the school experienced a great variety of successes: priestly vocations, reputation for studies, and the respect of the city government which, until 1882, granted subsidies to this private school. Communal classes, set up in the Baillerie neighborhood were entrusted at that time to Brother Cyril who immediately won the

[465] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique général; Brother Edouardis' biographical ms. — Mgr. Baunard's Philibert Vrau et les OEuvres de Lille, 1907 ed., pp. 209-233. — Obituary of Brother Maurice Lucian, 1920.

friendship of the people in the community.

At St. Joseph's school Brother Eubertus had been replaced Brother Elemes, who exercised a tremendous influence both upon the Community and upon the children. The instructional level exceeded that of similar schools; and in 1884 seven pupils from Wattrelos had received flattering awards at the London International Exposition. On the religious level Brother Elemes backed up the work of a saintly priest, Father Lejeune who had been Dean and Pastor for a quarter of a century. A Christian mind had been preserved in this privileged region; and it gained new possibilities for expansion when an industrialist, M. Leclercq-Dupire, shouldered the total costs for a school consisting of five grades designed for the tuition-free education of the sons of workingmen. In 1890 such a gesture in a large measure compensated for the secularization of a school endured earlier by the village of Baillerie. Brother Elemes left Wattrelos in order to take charge of the St. Vincent de Paul school in Lille. Nevertheless, the stimulus he had provided continued and grew. In 1904 St. Joseph's had 185 pupils; the other school dedicated to St. Louis, however, was the leader with 277. In thirty years 18 of the Brothers pupils entered the major seminary and 14 were admitted to the novitiate in Annappes.[466].

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The eastern provinces do not present such abundant material. Rheims, however, occupies such a special place in the history of the Brothers' Congregation that it is impossible to ignore anything that has to do with the city where the Founder was born and the Institute had its origin. The day was coming when the Brothers were about to recover the actual site of its beginnings. Under a variety of circumstances, the city administration in Rheims — regardless of the political directions of the French government — was never very appreciative of the followers of its celebrated fellow-citizen. The city fathers at their meeting on October 6, 1879 found all sorts of past precedents when they decided against the use of the Brothers in the Communal schools. Conforming to the wishes of the city government, the Prefect of the Marne replaced the Brothers with lay teachers in March of 1880.

But almost at the same moment Cardinal Langénieux sent out an appeal to Catholics. A Committee was formed, presided over by a distinguished citizen and former mayor, M. Werlé. Money was collected, which paved the way for the purchase of some property; but, just at that moment, the buildings on Rue Contrai became available. It had been to that spot that John Baptist de La Salle, two centuries previously, had conveyed, set up and trained his tiny group of schoolteachers. In 1792 revolutionary expropriation had deprived the teaching Congregation of its "birthplace", and now, suddenly, the place was restored to it!

Furthermore, the event took place during the year Brother Irlide had designated for the celebration of the Institute's second centenary. The Superior-general's joy understandable, and he had no reluctance in greeting the civil authority's decision with a *Felix culpa*! Prescribing a novena in preparation for the commemoration, he described in broad strokes the early undertakings of the Founder, and they all seemed to come alive once again in their settings. To the official ingratitude, the head of the Church in Rheims, and along with him the descendants of the old families — the best qualified representatives of the local middle-class — made a superb and piquant response.

A circular, dated the 24th of May, 1880 stated: "It is to their initiative and bounty that, after eighty-eight years, the Institute owes the repossession of a building that has been consecrated by the prayers, the vigils, the mortifications, the work and the suffering of our venerable Father."

The Feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24 — the anniversary of De La Salle's move —was

466 Archives of the District of Cambrai, Historique général and Historique of Wattrelos

the date decided upon for the history-making inauguration. Brother Irlide entered into the family home following by the Community that was directed by Brother Amase Leo.

The honor was keenly felt by the latter, an excellent Religious who, having received his appointment twenty months earlier, had been exhausted by anxieties arising from the procedures of secularization. The worries would return — tomorrow. Indeed, there would be lack of the basic necessities, and the rooms would be without the ordinary conveniences. Classes would have to be reorganized and he would have to comply with the recommendations and injunctions of the Committee, solve sensitive problems, experience disappointment and keep quiet about it.

A friend of Brother Amase wrote after the death of his confrere in 1895: "The detailed account of the trials through which the Lord led his servant read like a page out of Canon Blain. It might be said that when the Brother tread the ground sanctified by the sacrifices of Blessed de La Salle, Providence had selected him to join the past to the present, to rekindle the mortified and penitential traditions of the Founder and his first disciples."[467]

These were some of the inevitable afflictions of the human condition. Accepted in a spirit of faith, they became meritorious, and they assured ultimate victory. This is what happened in Champagne — and not only in Rheims, but also in Val-des-Bois where Leo Harmel, the developer and intensely devout Christian asked for the Brothers' help in the moral and intellectual education of his employees and their children. Because of a certain vagueness in their contract with "the old man", the Brothers sometimes considered their burden heavy and their dependency "over-whelming". Brother Arbogaste, who was sub-Director in 1892 and thereafter Director was determined to specify his conditions more clearly. He obtained an interview and eradicate some particularly painful misunderstandings between good people devoted to the same charitable works.[468]

Since its beginnings the Institute had been especially esteemed in the inner Ardennes. In Rethel it was thought that the Brothers would leave; but, once they had become private school teachers, some people succeeded in lodging them, in a modest dwelling in Artois Square.[469] In order to keep the Brothers in Sedan, citizens set up a corporation, started a collection and built; by November of 1880 there were 240 pupils studying under Brother Alode. Their younger siblings experienced the robust guidance of Brother Abercius who, unfortunately, died at the very early age of forty-eight.[470]

Brother Abercius, who was from Lorraine, began teaching in Metz in 1852. The Germans drove him out in 1874. The annexation by the Reich of the greater part of the Department of the Moselle stripped the Institute of nine of its institutions: four schools in the capital (only St. Vincent's — cut down to two classes and eight pupils — remained), the Beauregard residence school and the schools at Bitche, Sarralbe, Sarreguemines and Thionville. "The Brothers are French to the core," declared Bismark when the *Kulturkampf* was proclaimed, "I would rather the kids run the streets than to think of them in the hands of people like that."[471]

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[467] Obituary, 1895. Brother Amase Leo was the brother of Bishop Lamze of Olympe, a missionary in central Oceanie. They had a nephew who was also a member of the Institute with the same name as his uncle.

[468] Brother Arbogaste's Obituary, 1908.

[469] M. Lefrancq's Notes on Rethel.

[470] Rouy, op. cit.

[471] Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute, note on the schools in the Department of the Moselle; the article in Lorrain for December 24, 1918.

St. Vincent's, under the protection of Bishop Dupont des Loges, lying on the French side of the frontier, constituted a sort of memory and a hope; while Lorraine, cut off on the other side, retained Brothers in Meurthe-and-Moselle, in the Meuse and in the Vosges. Nancy and Verdun had had Brothers' schools from a very early date. In "the city of the Dukes" what had existed prior to the Revolution had been restored. The Bishopric in the Meuse had introduced the Religious teachers in the Cathedral parish in 1836, and hovering over the region are the venerated features of Brother Abdias of Jesus who dwelt in Verdun from 1855 to 1903 and in 1878 became the first Director of St. Catherine's school, an extremely poor institution in the heart of the working class section of town — a field that was worked at the cost of stern labor and austere renunciation.[472]

On the Congregation's atlas the Department of the Vosges turned up as an altogether recent conquest. The region had entrusted its children to Lasallian schools before any other institution of this sort. The first one was in Épinal, which did not open until 1885. Inspired by the generosity of a prelate, Bishop Sucy, it owed its beginnings and its sources of growth to the ministrations of an organization of Catholics. At the outset a disagreement nearly developed between the founders and the Brothers, who continued to insist as far as possible on the rule of tuition-free instruction. The youngsters they were teaching, recruited from among the well-to-do classes, were scarcely prepared for a mixed pupil-population of middle-class and poor. The problem formed the topic of a letter written on October 8, 1885 by Brother Director Parmene Leo to his higher superior:

...Good families [understood in the sense then current, i.e. those people who had both a reputation for being honorable and as having some worldly goods] were the first ones to come to us; they were numerous and trusting, believing that we were an exclusively pay-school, that we were partially residential and that we taught German. Some of these families, learning that there would be tuition-free pupils, withdrew their sons, and among them several who were particularly instrumental in getting us to come to Épinal...Others have asked us to detach the paying pupils; and with the vague promise of such an eventual segregation they have decided for the moment to settle for a temporary solution...At first the poor did not believe they would be admitted. Gradually, the rumor spread that we were eager to accept them...Then they began to come in large numbers...As a consequence, the school is composed of sharply contrasting elements. What will be the outcome? Take your pick...

Brother Parmène suggested a solution that called for two pay classes and two tuition-free classes. It was an answer to which the Superior-general, Brother Joseph, became reconciled, but not without objections and qualifications, as emerges from the following letter to Bishop de Briey of Saint Dié:

"You are not unaware, Your Excellency, of the efforts we have always made to maintain tuition-free instruction; it has been our legacy for two-hundred years and, along with the teaching of religion, the distinctive character of our schools. But in these difficult times, necessity knows no laws; that is why Rome has decided to authorize the temporary dispensation from tuition-free education when a lack of financial resources obligate recourse to tuition. If Your Excellency, in your wisdom, finds the measure necessary for our school in Épinal, it shall be my duty to authorize our Brothers to maintain classes of paying pupils.

I cannot, however, completely stifle my apprehension: rather than dividing the pupils into a series of four ascending classes, we shall be obliged to arrange them into two groups of two classes each, which will result in a partial education and weakened courses.[473]

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[472] Obituary, 1903.

[473] Archives of the District of Besancon.

When there were no financial burdens, it was the weight of prejudice that tipped the scales. But the Superior-general and his Council realized that by yielding too easily they would compromise the very ground and justification of the Institute. By allowing only exceptions to tuition-free education, supporting it in principle, constantly emphasizing its importance and by restoring it when the occasion arose would become — in spite of local failures and the vehement currents of opinion — the permanent frame of mind of the successors of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

When, in 1883, the District of Besancon — to which Épinal was joined for administrative purposes — opened a higher level school in the capital of Franche-Comté, Brother Irlide refused to charge the pupils tuition. Nevertheless, it was a school for a specialized group of youths aspiring to remunerative careers and, as a consequence, with claims upon their parents for monetary sacrifices.

This institution, an undertaking of the Committee in Besancon, shows the extent to which the Catholics of the region and the reigning Archbishop Foulon were pleased with the education dispensed by the Brothers. A distinguished teacher, Brother Ramissarius, equipped with a battery of higher degrees, became the administrator and principal of the institution. He was joined by a group of Brothers who had been associated with the Community of St. John's.

Brother Joannes had been at the head of all the Brothers' schools in Besancon since 1856. Born in Belleville-sur-Saône on August 15, 1814, the native Lyonnais Joannes Boisson had adapted to the Franche-Comté after his thirtieth year. A late vocation, he made his novitiate in northern Italy in 1841. Teaching first in Turin and later in Nice, after seven years he left the Kingdom of Savoy to teach in the residence school in Dole. He was stationed for a while in Dijon, followed by a brief stay in Bourgogne. And then there was a final stage, a thirty-five year period in Besancon, until his death in 1891.

During the Second Empire the Brothers directed three Communal schools: Arsenal, the Madeleine and St. Jean's. With his eight associates Brother Joannes spent himself: there was an expenditure of action, of ingenuity and of dedication; and, beside, there was a complete expenditure of his personal fortune. He set up a class for soldiers, a program for apprentices and courses of adult education; and the industrial art instruction included in these courses trained painters, draftsmen and architects.

As secularization became rife, first Arsenal and then the Madeleine had to be abandoned. As we have seen,[474] St. Jean's preserved its public character beyond the conditions of the law. Although it lost its best pupils to "St. Joseph's" — the higher level school — it continued to be frequented by several hundreds of children. Its transformation into a private school took place without incident. Ten years previously Archbishop Foulon had inaugurated the school called "Chambrettes". Two years later, St. Madeleine's parish witnessed the restoration of the Brothers on Rue Battant.[475]

In the Departments included in the District — Doubs, Jura, Upper Saône, Côte-d'Or, Upper Marne, Vosges and the Belfort region — prior to 1904 some forty localities retained or invited the Brothers as private schoolteachers. Into the fragment of Alsace that had not been detached from the motherland, Father Humbrecht invited the Brothers; and by 1889 115 boys in Belfort came to be instructed by the new teachers. The school, promoted by M. Keller, the former Deputy of the Upper Rhine to the National Assembly and blessed by Archbishop Ducellier, took shape as a solid outpost where equally courageous souls, natives of Alsace and of Franche-Comté, did battle. These Brothers deserved the peoples' dedication and had a right to

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[474] See above, Part II, chap. III.

[475] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique. — Brother Joanes' Obituary and Monographie des Ecoles Frères à Besancon, by Father Suchet, pastor of St. John's.

the acclaim that Dijon had accorded one of their confreres, a southerner transplanted from Marseille to the Côte d'Or, Brother Ammonius; he had taught in Nolay prior of 1858 and was Director of the Notre Dame Community in Dijon between 1858 and 1891: he was called "a hero of charity and self-effacement, a model of faith and religious piety, but also a man of easy access and a mind remarkable for its delicacy and insight."[476]

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In a bird's-eye view of the Lyons regions, Savoy, and Provence one could get a glimpse of similar groupings clustered around members of the Institute, misunderstood, if not persecuted, by the world of politics. The Diocese of Lyons, with its hundreds of thousands of faithful, its 1,800 priests, its 700 parishes in the two Department of the Rhone and the Loire,[477] where Catholic generosity disposed of profuse wealth, was unable to dissociate itself from private education. Equipped with money and land, it used its property with skill. At the time, Religious Orders had huge numbers of its members in the region. The Brothers had not forgotten that, under the auspices of Cardinal Fesch, the people in Lyons had restored their congregation in France; they had remained rooted along the slopes of Fourvière and spread between the two rivers of the vast and tireless city. Their recruitment, which functioned practically automatically in the region of St. Étienne and had not been thwarted in the Lyons area, earned for their nearly century old presence a quasi-indigenous quality, although they were surrounded by Congregations more anciently and more exclusively local. Following Brother Philippe, who had come from the village of Forez, the Superior-general, Brother Joseph, was a product of a working-class family in St. Étienne; and he studied with a particularly attentive concern the institutions of which his compatriots were beneficiaries.

In Savoy, the flowering had withstood winds and savage storms. People weren't simply satisfied to open a private school wherever there had been a Catholic Communal school; rather, they planted the seed in new soil. They watched over its growth, which they sustained by adding the necessary nutrients. A bookseller in Chambéry, Andrew Perrin, in his activities as treasurer of the Catholic schools, made no small contribution to the success; and he met with all the essential components in the simply faith of the people and in the zeal of the teachers.

Brother Veran Michel was a good example of a Savoyard, who had been born in Megève and who had been appointed Director in Chambéry and invited, in 1886, to represent private education on the Departmental Council. Wisdom as an administrator, a flair for eloquence and a sound judgment insured influence among his colleagues as well as the most lasting stature with generations of pupils. The Catholic Club of which he was the founder testifies to this mastery.

In Cognin, in the suburbs of Chambéry, a school begun in 1844 by the Pastor, Father Victor François Fasy, flourished under the control of Brother Parasceve of Jesus (Jean-Pierre Ozier), a first rate teacher, a shrewd and inspiring leader of youth and a saintly man. In 1878 Brother Parasceve began an apostolate which bore a great deal of fruit and which he carried on courageously until 1919.

Annecy, like Chambéry, cherished the Brothers and saw them at prayer in the Cathedral, catechizing and instructing the youngsters in the choir. The popularity of these teachers was no less widespread in Thonon. From the principal cities and from the shores of Lake Geneva they

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[476] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique de Dijon-Notre Dame. In the center, Orléans, Bourges, Nevers, Moulins genrally utilized the Brothers' services in popular schools such as "St. Bonose" (Orléans), "Jacobins" (Bourges and Nevers) and the Moulins school on Rue Oiseau.

[477] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 73.

pushed forward into the mountains. The educational center, long established at Sallanches, had educated the minds of a very special class in the Upper Faucigny — a region which had once again become what it had been prior to the French Revolution and the upheavals in Savoy between 1792 and 1815: one of the best educated regions, the most civilized and the most Christian in the ancient Duchy. In a spirit of complete impartiality it is possible to say that the Brothers had become the skilled artisans of this renewal.

They labored in the same way in Tarentaise, where they were making their way toward the beginning of the episcopacy of Bishop Turinaz. In 1875 they came to Hauteluce and in 1877 to Fontcouverte. Under the French flag, as once long ago under the flag of Sardinia, they continued to be the patient pioneers of intellectual and moral education, of a resolutely Catholic and Roman faith, and of a thoroughly devoted patriotism.[478]

In Nice, which had also been annexed to France in 1860, their situation offered some similarities. They had been very well known to the people in Nice whom, in contrast with some Piedmont bureaucrats, they had supported in the preservation of their customs and language.[479] The transition from a national and political administration of ancient date to the acceptance of new directions was easily effected. But a change of national boundaries did not alter the basis, nor indeed the form, of education. Several of the Brothers in the Southeast had already received appointments to the western or eastern slopes of the Alps. In 1863 the Superiors sent Brother Pacomius Victor to Nice; he had made his novitiate in Lyons, but had been professed in Italy. For forty years this Brothers dispensed lessons in mathematics and physics to the children of the Mediterranean city. He left behind him a reputation for being a learned teacher and a skilful educator.

Nice, too, while complying with the laws of secularization, might have allowed the Brothers to depart. A committee for private education, without waiting for episcopal directives which were slow in appearing, adopted the wisest strategy. Its president, M. Jules Gilly, an alumnus of the Brothers' residence school in Béziers, was a man of superior ability who at one time — as the first municipal magistrate — had administered the City of Nice; he had retained the trust of a great number of his fellow-citizens. Under his auspices a building corporation of limited liability was formed. A beautiful structure was built for private schools in 1891 on the Bottero estate. The Brothers opened the St. Louis Institute that included a day-school and half-residence school. Their champion and protector, M. Gilly, died in the course of a pilgrimage to the Grande-Chartreuse, a death which brought to a worthy end a very noble life.[480]

On the other side of Cape Ferrat, with the Principal of Monaco, something of an interruption obtruded. Here, there was no such thing as secularization in the offing: the Brothers who had been invited from France were the official teachers. The realm of the Grimaldi's had, since 1868, been a land of patient labor for the team that Brother Philippe had supplied the Prince. It had become an oasis of security when the Third Republic set itself up as the enemy of Religious Congregations. The task, however, required new efforts: when Brother Thaddeus was appointed Director in 1880, there were four very well managed classes in Monaco; but, gradually, he had to open new ones. And, then, in 1890, he began a second school, in Monte Carlo. This was St. Charles' school, which won Albert I's special attention and inspired his generosity. There the sovereign loved to play the rôle of inspector of studies; and he had no

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[478] Bernard Secret, op. cit., pp. 69-73, 85-86, 108, 110.

[479] See Vol. VI of the present work, pg. 52.

[480] Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes for July 1935, pp. 212-213, 224-227.

qualms about making comments and criticisms. And so remarkable did the school's development appear to be that the Superior-general, Brother Joseph, did not hesitate to send Brother Thaddeus a larger number of associates. In 1896 St. Charles ceased to be an affiliate of the original institution; and a second Community of Brothers was introduced into Monte Carlo. The next year the heavily populated neighborhood called Condamine was given several teachers appointed by Brother Gabriel of Mary. The education of these young Monaco natives was to be pursued in the best circumstances of freedom, peace and tangible comfort.[481]

This was in striking contrast to Corsica where the Brothers after 1882 were too few not sufficiently free in their movements to maintain their former positions. They were resigned to preserve none but Ajaccio and Bastia. When Brother Troade Anselm, Director of the school in Bonifacio, informed the population that he would have to leave, there was general consternation. The city council sent several of its members to ask the Brother Visitor to withdraw a decision which was so painful and so damaging to the city. Unfortunately, the reasons for the decision were quite real. Bonifacio lost its Lasallian teachers in September of 1883.

Ajaccio was handled more gently. It was the principal city and had a name loaded with prestige; it was the episcopal seat, just as Bastia preserved its titles and its renown as the ancient capital. As long as the Brothers put in an appearance in these two cities, the past was not annulled, and hope persisted for a complete restoration. Brother Tiberius, landing in Corsica, quickly won over the islanders' sympathies. As Director of the school in Ajaccio, he skillfully combined administrative competence, tact, moderation and leadership. Thus, in 1892, there being a few vacant seats in the Communal Assembly, some prominent citizens urged the Brother to allow his name to appear on the ballot. He declined the honor; personally, he strove to stay clear of political debate; and, since in this country more so than elsewhere political discussion ran the risk of turning into a brawl, the Superiors did not fail to veto the most flattering offers made by the political parties.[482]

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Returning to the continent and running rapidly through Languedoc, we become aware in Nîmes of Bishop Besson's tireless concern and the bursts of generosity on the part of the people in his diocese. The Bishop preached on behalf of the Brothers' schools and collected gifts not only from the people in Nîmes whom he quickly involved but also from his Parisian audiences as well as from those in other large cities. Armed with these funds, he had a residence built for the Brothers who, as early as June of 1881 had opened classrooms in the Recollect Convent on Rue Aquitaine. In November as second school was opened on Bossuet Street. In 1883 there was a third school on Rue Agau. Later on, well after the Bishop's death, a fourth school was open on Rue Chassaintes.[483]

Bishop Cabrières was no less active in Montpellier. As soon as secularization was first announced, he sponsored the opening of St. Peter's parochial school. The Brothers, successively expelled from the public schools in St. Matthew, St. Roch and St. Denis, educational centers were again reconstituted. He rose to the occasion once more in 1886 and again in 1889.

A Bishop with far-reaching plans, he sought an autonomous agency that would communicate

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[481] Brother Thaddeus' Obituary, 1902. — Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes for October, 1934, pp. 361-364 and 371.

[482] Brother Troade Anselm's Obituary, 1907; Brother Tiberius' Obituary, 1897.

[483] Durand, op. cit., pp. 47-51.

a powerful thrust, regular movement and unremitting energy to the school system. He obtained this result in 1897. After a discussion in the episcopal offices, M. Elie Durand, President of the administrative Council of L'Éclair and M. Vicet, Editor of that newspaper, assembled groups of voluntary solicitors and launched a funds drive for the benefit of the private schools. M. Elie Durand assumed the presidency of a Committee intended to assemble and manage the funds; from this Committee a "permanent commission" was given authority to secure the proper operation of the private elementary schools and the recruitment of their teaching personnel. The Commissioners, with M. Solignac at their head, followed by M. Bouche and M. Bedos, inspected classes several times a year and questioned the pupils at the trimestrial examinations. This work of Catholic Action became especially valuable in the days immediately following the persecution of 1904.[484]

We have noted the settlement reached on December 31, 1888 in the case of the Brothers' schools in Toulouse.[485] While it was being negotiated between the city and the Brothers, an administrative Council for Christian Brothers' schools was put together to guarantee the moral and financial exercise of freedom. Its members included four pastor/deans and the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer of the Society of Former Pupils and Friends of the Institute, the Brother Visitor of the District and the Brother Director of the St. Aubin Community. Meetings were scheduled ever three months. In the intervals the Marquis Suffren, President of the alumni association, was empowered to mobilize — especially from among his aristocratic connections — whatever funds the schools needed.

This "resourceful and untiring" zeal was translated into the formation of new educational teams: — the St. Francis Community on January 1, 1891; the St. Jerome neighborhood in October of 1897; the St. Sylvia neighborhood in October of 1898. The Brothers, heavily supported in Toulouse, resumed positions that they had at one time abandoned. Their services and their successes warranted that on June 11, 1903 the centenary of their return to Toulouse became the occasion of a celebration.[486]

Throughout the region a large number of private schools replaced the former Communal schools that had been operated by members of Religious Congregations. Senator Chesnelong, writing to Brother Assistant Junian on September 22, 1884, entreated the latter not to yield to the offensive in favor of secularization, and rather to abandon the public schools over which the Institute still maintained a precarious authority in order to make religious teachers available to those institutions "which will be in the days ahead (he wrote) the sole strength of your Society."[487]

To the extent to which the numbers and the perseverance of vocations allowed, favorable replies were given to priests and benefactors who proposed to set up a teaching Community. Losses were thus diminished, if not totally neutralized. While Auch, Belpech, Castelnaudary, Seysses or Pamiers succeeded in retaining of recalling the Brothers, while Baziège, St. Jory or Samatan continued to enjoy the presence of older private schools, gains in new regions were registered elsewhere: — for example in Salies-du-Salat in 1888, in Montesquiou, in the Gers,

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[484] Le Très Cher Frère Anatole, ou quarante ans de vie religieuse à Montpellier (by his brother, the pastor of Fontès), 1932, pp. 98-108.

[485] See above, pp. 249-250.

[486] Archives of the District of Toulouse, Resumé historique.

[487] Ibid., Historique de Revel.

in 1889, in Prat in the Ariège in 1892 and in Verdun-sur-Garonne in 1893.[488]

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Bishop Bourret, around 1886, wrote to the pastors of the diocese of Rodez: "If you cannot obtain the necessary funds to keep the Christian Brothers, I will accept your resignation! I shall find other priests to do the job." This was a witness to the energy and the perseverance which presided over the reorganization of education in the Catholic parishes of the Aveyron.

The effort, furthermore, was extended to the entire District of Rodez. More so than in Toulouse the watchword was: no secularization without restitution!

Remarkable results were obtained, but not without difficulties, of course. The purchase and renovation of many buildings often absorbed initial capital. And then it became necessary to provide for teachers' salaries: Brother Visitor Gelosius wanted to set up in each locality a committee that would be responsible in this matter. Seven hundred francs a year assured each Lasallian teacher would facilitate a general application of the rule of gratuity.

Actually, in several places it was necessary to accept precarious conditions, to rely on a church petitioner, or to go begging from door to door, almost in the Franciscan manner.

In the rural parishes, it was necessary to change a lot of schools into residence schools: residents or "roomers" then supplied the institution with the means of existence.

Nevertheless, the Brothers in the Rouergue and the neighboring regions strove to preserved the essentials of their obligation to the poor. To country residence schools and country day schools they attached tuition-free classes. And while in the cities a committee demanded monthly tuition from the pupils, the Director pleaded the cause of families and defensible exceptions did not fail to be admitted.[489]

Rarely is it possible to meet with founders of schools who are as qualified to fulfill the task as M. Charles Coince in the Aveyron village of the Gua. He was a mining engineer and the head of Aubin Steel and he had been authorized by the Land Company to set aside huge financial resources for the education of children. Using plans drawn up by a M. Brune, a professor in the School of Fine Arts, a monumental building was constructed at the top of a hill; the school, courts and garden occupied nearly five acres. The entire arrangement fulfilled the expectations of the promoter. "Nothing flawed", he said, "should strike the gaze of our pupils. The sons of my fine employees will learn here, along with ideas of the good and the beautiful, habits of order and cleanliness, which will guarantee their health, their moral formation and their future well-being."[490]

In other places founders belonged to various social classes. Obviously, the nobility was interested in the work of the Brothers. In the Department of the Tarn, in Sémalens the Barons Reille, while they did not wholly endow the private school that was opened in 1868, they enthusiastically placed their not inconsiderable influence at the disposal of the Institute. Some members of this family presided over the celebrations that marked the end of the school year.

Count Gabriel Solages bought the land and paid for the building where the Labessonnié school opened on November 1, 1885.

In Espalion an agreement between Mayor Rieu and the Archpriest, Father Brévier guaranteed personally to the Brothers the first months' salaries after the secularization of 1887. A wealthy land-owner, M. Joseph Poulenc, then gave 50,000 francs for the construction

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488 Archives of the District of Toulouse, School Historiques.

489 Archives of the District of Rodez, monograph on the constituency.

490 Ibid., Gua school file; cf. Frère Isidorus-Marie by Brother Ildefonse Garbriel.

of a building to serve both for classrooms and for the residence of the Brothers.

Elsewhere the origins of a schools were more modest. Thus, the legacy of a post-mistress, Mlle. Barriol, was decisive in inducing the pastor of St. Amans des Cots to ask for the services of the Institute in 1890. The private school in Cajarc, in the Lot, owed its existence to humble sacrifices. Annette Pons, a generous serving woman who had lived for forty years in the same place, in 1891 contributed her life savings of 8,000 francs. And then learning that she was the principal heir to an inheritance of 15,000 francs she relinquished it in favor of the work of Christian education. The entire population strove to imitate this gesture. Impoverished women in retail trade, as they left the market-places, would dip into their slender daily income to contribute to the schools. Stones for the walls were quarried and transported without charge, and for the woodwork trees were felled and sawed on estates. This enthusiasm mastered the hesitancy of the pastor, Father Bousquet.

At about the same time the Brothers were succeeding the Marists in one of the regions of Aveyron, St. Georges de Luzencon. The school, which was twenty years old, was an *ex voto* offering of the Countess Antony du Bourg in recognition of her husband's, the Count's, escaping death during the battles of the Franco Prussian War. Dom du Bourg — a Benedictine after his wife's death — lived very far from St. Georges; but Countess Sambucy, his mother-in-law, was dedicated to the teachers.

The Brothers in Millau, after chaotic times,[491] found peace in the "Bellfroi House", inherited by Bishop Bourret from Miss Tauriac, and in the school building built by the pastor of Sacred Heart parish and by the pastor of St. Francis'.

Mayor Bernard Bancarel of Flavin and the pastor, Father Lafon invited the Brothers in 1892; one year later the gifts of Lady Carnac assured the residence and upkeep of the Vezins Community; and finally in Salle-la-Source, in 1899, among the benefactors was a Colonel, members of the clergy and a famous middle-class family.

So many linked efforts succeeded in cementing the dam thrown up against deChristianization. Education founded on the Credo was, following the demands of families, continued in Cahors as in Castres, in Brassac, La Bastide Rouairoux, Lacaune, Mazamet, Rabastens, as well as in Marcilac, in Mur de Barrez, Rignac, and in Villefranche-de-Rouergue. On the banks of the Lot, of the Tarn, and of the Aveyron, on the plateaus and the hillsides, the fires were rekindled.

There were sentries to see that they stay lighted. Servants of God who, "during the night, raised their hands toward the sanctuary."[492]Some prolonged their vigil year after year. Thus, in Gaillac, Brother Zoélus, Alexis Benedict Pagès who, born in 1830, in 1857 came to the city of Eugenie Guerin and Emily Vialar. And while he never achieved the universal renown of his adopted fellow-citizens, he quickly endeared himself to the people in Gaillac. His distinguished features — that we can view in the painting realized in 1882 on wood by Brother Isadore of Peluse — his dark eyes with the piercing look, his regular features framed in white hair, betray friendliness. He showed himself to be a discerning and prudent person, and he spread about him a rare goodness. When, on June 13, 1893, he met death while still hard at work, *La Semaine religieuse* of Albi eulogized him in the following terms: "Brother Zoélus' piety reflected from is every-smiling countenance. Affable and open to all he exercised a flawless tact in avoiding injury to anyone; and without diminishing the inflexible call to duty, he was able to practice that benign and patient charity that wins hearts and leads them to give what they might have at the outset harshly refused."

His funeral brought together the entire clergy of Gaillac and its environs and the host of his former pupils; several among the latter wore the priest's soutane or the same habit as their

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491 See above, pp. 252-252.

492 Ps. cxxxiii.

teacher; all, showing their emotion and their gratitude, spelling one another off in carrying the coffin.[493]

In the following generation there was an emulator: Brother Idiunet Jean lived in Lacaune for almost thirty years, twenty-two of them as Director. He began as the teacher in the highest class, roused a movement of faith among his youthful audience and, in expanding waves, it spread throughout the parish. Extraordinary vocation increased under Brother John's influence. Active, enterprising and optimistic, he gathered together — with the help of one of the Vicars — funds for the construction of a new school in 1895 and 1896. He the work ahead with ardor and took a personal hand in the digging. After the completion of a enormous, comprehensive structure, the Archbishop of Albi could quite justifiably congratulated the Brother Director.

For the Lacaune Community life was delightful, around a devoted leader who fostered joy and who watched over the health of the members as well as their fraternity. The children in the region were taught by an enlightened teacher and an educator faithful to the spirit of De La Salle.

In Cajarc between 1881 and 1915 was Brother Isinger Justian (Julian Bahu) animated by a profound faith and inspiring similar conviction in pupils and young people over whom he wielded an extraordinary moral authority.

In more modest surroundings, Brother Xiste (Martin Aussel) left behind him in Gramat memories of a half-century of goodness, dedication and marvelous religious behavior in his functions as teacher, bursar, and infirmarian. In this region people recalled the figure "of the old Rouergue oak", the patriarch with the powerful profile and the flowing beard.

It was to Brother Ildephorien (Bernard Alibert) that St. Affrique owed the beginnings and the final organization of its private education, guided by an unconquerable will and disseminated by a mind of exceptional quality.

There remain to mentioned, within the District of Rodez, many more teachers of similar origins — who had grown up in thoroughly Christian homes across the Averyon countryside — Religious of just a high a calibre, prepared to sacrifice every human gratification and, indeed, the most deep-seated consolations, in order to continue, through innumerable obstacles, the work of their Holy Founder: such as a Brother Ibartius (Joseph Bousquet) in Rignac, and Brother Itacian (Guillaume Gimalac) and a Brother Isaac of Jesus (Joseph Gastal) in St. Amans-des-Cots.

There is nothing surprising, then, if many souls, entrusted to the care of such men, expanded in the light. At St. Amans alone, between 1881 and the present, there have been nearly fifty priestly vocations and seventeen vocation to the Brothers' Institute. During an older but briefer period, between 1877 and 1887, the school in Rignac supplied five priestly and fourteen Religious vocations. In Gua between 1881 and 1886 four pupils entered the Brothers' novitiate and a fifth entered the Seminary of the Foreign Missions. Elsewhere, statistics extend over several generations; and we observe that in the 19th century that the Brothers in St. Geniez in Aveyron, a village of 3,000 inhabitants, directed eighty-eight of their pupils to the diocesan clergy, ninety-one to Catholic Orders or Congregations; the Brothers in Villefranche-de-Rouergue offer a chart, less impressive, but still eminently respectable showing thirty diocesan priests and forty Religious priests or teaching Brothers.

However, the application of the "secularization laws" rigorously pursued and orchestrated with threats and promises regarding certain categories of citizens was not without painful results for French Catholicism. Numerous rifts in tradition and discipline became fatally widened. In 1885 there were 10,872 pupils enrolled in the District's private schools; the figure was reduced

[493] Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes à Gaillac, by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, (a former pupil of Brother Zoélus), 1938, pp. 44-47, 128-131.

to 9,573 in 1890, to 8,436 in 1895 and to 7,676 in 1900. The decrease was particularly marked in the urban centers, where the rôle of governmental pressures was especially strong whether on bureaucrats or on poor families. It is also important to point out that a general diminution of the school population occurred during the final years of the century as the birthrate declined. We have no hesitation in concluding that the persevering effort that filled in the gaps was successful. Fifteen years of struggle resulted in a loss to private education of only 3,196 pupils. Faith and morals were preserved throughout the region where the Christian educators exercised their apostolate.[494]

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Velay and Gévaudan — in the Upper Loire and Lozère — vied in effort and generosity with the Rouergue, even if they did not surpass it. The Brothers in these austere regions testified in a very high degree to the virtues that the Founder especially prized and the legacy of which he had transmitted to his spiritual family: — uprightness and simplicity of heart, the habit of poverty, dedication to children and, in the first instance, to the sons of the lowly, and fidelity to the Rule. Here, teaching continued to be tuition-free. The withdrawal of a Brother from the Institute in the case of a professed Religious with final vows was always the rarest of exceptions. And among the Directors defections were unheard of. The reputation of the former teacher in Saugues — the one who one day would be called "Blessed Brother Benilde" — soundly founded there during his lifetime, began, twenty years after his death, to be propagated beyond the limits of the constituency; it reflected back upon his confreres and it goaded them on to avoid failure.

Thus, the people in critical circumstances, would show their allegiance to the Religious teachers. First of all, there was to be no hasty secularization. And, then, when the law of October 30 1886 was passed, the Communes attempted to take advantage of the delays that had been expressly provided. Members of the Institute were retained for as long as possible in the public schools.

Nevertheless, the inevitable moment came. The lay teacher took over the classroom and the house in which the Community had been living. The building, no doubt, seemed reserved for its original occupants; the benefactors or contributors envisioned no other beneficiaries than the Brothers or other educators with the same spirit; frequently for the remodeling or the renovation of the building the Superior-general and his Assistants had granted financial assistance. But who could have anticipated a Republic's bigotry? More or less rapidly, so as to unload the burden of taxation and maintenance costs, it was determined to hand over the school and its annexes to the city officials. Once it was entered among the city's possessions it never emerged unless there was a text of striking clarity — a will or a contract — that could be produced in a court of law. One had, therefore, to go to law; there was nothing else left to do. And the trial's outcome did not always correspond to expectations.

At that time the people moved heaven and earth to keep the Brothers. Every resource was mobilized. In this part of the world there were practically no large fortunes; and so small stashes opened up spontaneously. People tossed into the founding a new school the price of what were sometimes unbelievable sacrifices. The poorest signed up back-breaking labor. Laborers volunteered three or four days of work without pay. And from every hamlet, one after the other, carts brought construction materials to the village that provided the building site.

In this way the District's thirty schools were preserved. And between 1886 and 1902

[494] For this entire section on the District of Rodez, the information gathered by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel and filed by him in the archives of the Lasallian institution on Rue Sarrus, had been an indispensable help to us.

seventeen more were added. The Committee set up under the auspices of Father Fulbert Petit who, in 1888 was Bishop of the diocese, constructed the St. Michael's school in Le Puy. At nearly the same time the residence school of Notre Dame of France assumed the responsibility for supporting the teachers in the St. Joseph "neighborhood". In Mende the "Building Society for Christian Education" — uniting distinguished individuals from among the Clergy and the city — was formed as early as 1884; according to its bye-laws, its purpose was to acquire or lease buildings "in the best interests of Catholic elementary education".

Beginning in 1889 and lasting for thirteen years, foundations succeeded one after the other sometimes in Lozère, sometimes in the Upper Loire: — whether in Auroux, or Nasbinals or St. Julian de Chapteuil, or Araules. Father Edward Peyron, pastor of Vieil Brioude relates — in a pamphlet written in a rather barbed style — how he obtained the Brothers of Blessed de La Salle in November of 1896 and how he insured the finances of his school by publishing a poem on the marvels of Velay and some learned books about his parish.[495] Chateauneuf de Randon, St. Jeures, Loudes, St. Denis, Lantriac followed Vieil Brioude

In 1900 Le Puy included a third primary school operated by the Brothers, St. Pierre Carmelite; Tiranges, in the Upper Loire, Badaroux in Lozère belong to this more recent period. Once again in January 1902, in spite of the threatening dangers, the Congregation agreed to open a school in Brives in the Velvay region.

Generally school buildings in this District were good looking and suited to their purposes. Most of them were the product to the good judgment and architectural talents of a teacher in the residence school of Notre Dame, Brother Nestor Joseph. They were "very pretty cages", according to one Brother; "but it remains to be seen who will feed the birds." Money and labor were never lacking to do the building. But the support of the teachers demanded a constant renewal of effort. Apart from a sort of exhaustion that afflicts people of the best of intentions, scantiness of income created the real difficulty of the situation. Rather than disregard the rule governing tuition-free instruction, the Brothers sought the indispensable financial supplement in the system of "roomers" and in supervised studies. It was nevertheless necessary for Brother Exupérien, whose responsibility was the institutions in the Upper Loire and the Lozère, to collect abundant alms in Paris in order to rescue the courageous personnel of the District from distress and send them on their way.

In 1904, under the guidance of the Assistant and the Visitor, there were 409 Brothers teaching 6,536 pupils in forty- eight schools.[496] In the acceptance of daily difficulties, in the unfolding of an austere existence and — extremely important — in the harshness of the mountain climate, teachers and pupils grew in fortitude. Numerous vocations took root in supernaturally privileged soil. In 1887 Bas en Basset, one of the oldest schools, was able to list about fifty Brothers and ten Junior Novices who came from the Commune and its immediate vicinity. At that time about forty citizens of Bas had died as disciples of the Venerable de La Salle. Two Superiors-general in the 20th century, Brother Alais Charles and Adrian, who were blood-brothers and Brothers in Religion, had prepared themselves for their future in classrooms in this their native region. One of their neighbors and childhood friends, Hyacinth Chassagnon, the future Bishop of Autun spoke to the Brother Visitor of Le Puy in the following terms about his great teacher, Brother Damian, who died in 1916:

"I have just placed on Brother Damian's tomb the tribute of my respect and profound gratitude and my filial affection. Other people have touched my soul without leaving anything after them. But he, the humble and pious Brother, had, by his gentleness, his respect for his

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[495] L'Écoles des Frères du Vieil-Brioude by Father Peyron, Geneva, 1900.

[496] Including the Junior Novitiate in Vals that dated from 1885.

pupils and his lively and practical faith, which he transmitted to me, an influence over me, a ten year old kid, that has been both salutary and decisive."[497]

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The District of Clermont Ferrand drew its principle resources from the old province of Auvergne. But beyond the Departments of Le Puy de Dôme and of the Cantal, it spread over the Corrèze, the Creuse and the Upper Vienne. It was to remain one of the most important of the twenty-two District the Institute had in the France of the period around 1900. At this time there were 71 Communities in the constituency, 450 Brothers — 407 of whom were involved in teaching — sixty-eight schools plus three houses of formation, 244 classes with 8,000 pupils; and there were twenty-one Novices, thirty-two Scholastics and fifty-four Junior Novices on December 31, 1903, the last year prior to the diaspora.

The work of the Visitors and recruiters, the educational policies of the Directors and the teachers, the fidelity of Catholic parents and the encouragement of the clergy had promoted these results. Response to secularization had been set in motion throughout the sector. It had to be thought about rather quickly after the closure, unfortunately irrevocable, of the Bourganeuf school in the Creuse in 1879 and the school in Volvic in the Puy de Dôme in 1880. St. Flour and Maurs, Thiers and Ambert did not allow the Brothers to leave when they were banned from the Communal school buildings in the days that followed the declaration of the Masonic war.

In 1883 Clermont Ferrand assumed the leadership of the resistance. There, under the inspiration of Bishop Boyer a committee was organized. Contributions poured in. In agreement with Brother Visitor Cyrus, Mgr. Chardon, Vicar-general of the diocese, wrote a circular letter in which was announced the forthcoming opening of private schools on Jaude Square, on Delille Street and in Clermont Ferrand and in Montferrand.

Three-hundred-and-seven children rushed to "Jaude"; and an additional class had to be opened. The Notre Dame du Port School set up in the quarters of the Catholic Workmen's Club welcomed 240 schoolboys of the 250 who had at one time received instruction from the Brothers on St. Laurence Street. St. Eutrope school, opened in 1838 on Neuve St. Claire, retained 218 out of 230 after it had been transferred to Clermont Ferrand.[498] Classes in Montferrand had 192 pupils. Only twenty-two failed to show up, when an ordinary local inhabitant, a custom tailor, placed rather large rooms at the disposal of the Brothers. A few years later Brother Director Gamaliel Henry succeeded in building a structure intended for classroom purposes.

Under the administration of Brother Visitor Narcellian (1884-1894) new centers of Christian education were organized — in particular, at Murat, Aigueperse, Eymoutier, Mauriac, and Salers. The older private schools continued to prosper; thus in Thuret, the place where Bl. Brother Benilde was born. In 1891, at the end of the legal postponement, the required alteration were made at Felletin, Job, Dorat, Vollore Ville, Romagnat and Pontgibaud.

The appearance of the Auvergne District was marked throughout its entire map. There were numerous schools, an abundant school population that came from the working classes; there were nurseries for vocations in the Puy de Dôme and the Cantal; Ambert alone supplied about fifty candidates for the novitiate; and the generosity of Aigueperse and Salers was of the same order.

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[497] Letter dated August 30, 1916. Bishop Chassagnon was at the time Vicar-capitualry in the diocese of Lyons. — Archives of the District of Le Puy, school Historiques.

[498] In 1885 this school was better situated on St. Georges Square.

Throughout the territory of the Commune of Clermont thirteen Brothers'Communities deployed their religious activity. Brother Henry Gabriel in a marvelous way inspired the Cathedral school. Brother Gentian of Jesus, in 1896, presided over the beginnings of the St. Peter Minimes school. In a new neighborhood, St. Joseph's parish, shortly after its creation in 1880, was assured the Brothers' cooperation.[499]

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The Brothers in Bordeaux, in the happier days of Brother Alphonsus, composed an impressive group, influential and thoroughly respected in their house on Rue St. Charles. They lived there as in a magnificent monastery with its symmetrical facades, its splendid wooden panelling and its wrought iron dating from the 18th century. Under attack on the part of the municipal government, disruptions occurred; seven Communities replaced the large St. Charles Community; these operated as many parochial schools. Two other Brothers houses had existed prior to 1880; from one of these, called St. Seurin, there emerged three new teams, St. Seurin, St. Bruno and St. Ferdinand. From the other, St. Louis, came the teaching personnel for the schools of St. Louis and of St. Martial.

Ultimately the Bordeaux clergy, seconded by a Committee of Laymen, collected sufficient funds to be able to entrust the Brothers with fourteen elementary schools. Often enough material comforts were lacking; in some place renovations were sketchy, such as St. Eulalie's school on Pessac Street where classroom with wooden partitions lined the long courtyard bordered by plain trees. Chapels, like living quarters, were temporary. De La Salle's disciples were constantly realizing the wish of their Founder: that they embrace poverty in order to teach the poor.

Their unselfishness had its earthly reward in the success of their undertakings. The largest group of the teachers established on Candale Street in St. Elias' parish added to their primary teaching a class in higher elementary instruction. Brother Justinus supervised and counselled this elite group of teachers. In 1882 he moved with it to Rue Margaux to a building that had been previously occupied by the Jesuits. The school on Rue Margaux became the framework within which the reputation of the Director along with the quality of his educational system achieved their full development. Brother Justinus, called by Brother Joseph to Rue Oudinot, left Bordeaux in 1886. His worthy replacement was Brother Léobert.

At St. Paul's, St. Peter's or St. Nicholas' the teachers of the common people, with their lively minds and their inventive imaginations quick to grasp whatever was real, labored obscurely but effectively; the Brothers trained for the great commercial city living ingredients of its enduring prosperity. They entered into a partnership with priests to sustain souls above ephemeral covetousness; at the threshold of a new church such as the sanctuary dedicated to the Sacred Heart there arose the indispensable annex: — the school which, in its turn, would be solemnly blessed and whose enclosure would shelter the strenuous, praying life of a Congregation faithful to the Rule.

At St. Andrew's Cathedral the Brothers were the auxiliaries of the ecclesiastical director of the choir. Cardinal Donnet had entrusted this responsibility to them in 1869. For thirty-five years the training of the Cathedral altar boys had been completely theirs. And similarly they initiated the choir boys of Notre Dame parish into the ceremonies and the liturgical chants.[500]

A similar mission fell to them in Agen. Bishop Fonteneau created the choir school of St. Caprais during the days of his episcopacy in the See of Agen. At first he assigned the

[499] Archives of the District, Historiques and notes.

[500] Archives of the District of Bordeaux, Historique; and notes preserved in the St. Genes residence school.

responsibilities for it to Father Rumeau, the future Bishop of Angers. And then Canon Coeuret Varin, taking charge of the operation asked for Brothers from Bordeaux. Brother Liacim selected three, who were installed on February 14, 1880. From six pupils in the beginning the young group (which nonetheless continued to be selective) rose to sixty in number. Five years later, Bishop Coeuret Varin having become the head of the diocese, the choir school in Agen rendered the learned compositions of Joseph Schluty, the author of the coronation Mass. Under the joint direction of the Brothers and of Father Gallissaires, Master of the Chapel, the some 100 youngsters taught at St. Caprais' acquired a quite justifiable renown throughout the entire southwest of France.[501]

This was not the only Lasallian institution in this part of the world. Until 1905 the Brothers in Agen cared for a private school which had been opened after the secularization of 1881. A section had been added to the main institution. But, over all, there had never been more than about 300 pupils in the elementary classes, in pleasant surroundings, hospitable, but more fruitful in products of the earth than in large families.

The untroubled, middle-class Marmande, in the midst of its roofs with their slight overhang and its ancient streets, made room for a Community of teachers. On the initiative of a Vicount Drouilhet Ségalas, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, the Brothers came to the town in 1829. There, before a small statue that was venerated in their residence, they cultivated the Marian devotion of a city whose very beautiful church was dedicated to Our Lady. Evicted from these quarters in 1886, the Junior Seminary was the first place to welcome them. Then their work and their devout example — and in particular, the glow of Brother Julius' holiness — stood uneclipsed on an unclouded horizon. When the storm had passed over meadows and river, Marmande would remember once again the teachers in the white rabats and the wonder-worker whose prayer obtained "any favor" from the Mother of God.[502]

Of the forty-five Brothers' institutions that existed at the beginning of the 20th century in the District of Bordeaux and its 380 Religious, in St. Èmilion, in the Gironde, there was an historic house the Brothers occupied, the house belonging to Mrs. Bouquey, the sister of Guadet, the Deputy at the Convention; many proscribed Girodines took refuge there in 1793, and people still point out mine-shafts which provided them asylum. A sound liberalism inspired this city: at times Brothers' pupils were the beneficiaries to the municipal educational budget.

Blaye underwent secularization in 1890 but, under the protection of the law of 1850, retained its Lasallian teachers. For the latter and for the sons of Catholic families in the region, the St. Genes Building Society, the sponsor and support of private education, built a beautiful school; the Brothers' position continued to be strong in this city.

In 1875 the city of Paillet sought to confer a Communal character upon the school that had been founded by the Institute, but at the time Brother Irlide refused to consent. Such a large number of schoolboys frequented the Brothers' classes that the city government for a longtime postponed action on the vacated post of Director of the public school. Thus the Brothers in Paillet, without ever having exercised any official functions, enjoyed the confidence of citizens and public officials alike.

Arcachon had — with the exception of one class — a completely tuition-free day school. From St. Marie, where the M. H. Brother Joseph died, to St. Ange and on to St. Anne a number of changes took place which did not alter basic stability.

Floirac, in the suburbs of Bordeaux, on the right bank of the Garonne, did not have a

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501 *Chez nous*, bulletin of the Alumni Association of Brothers pupils of Agen and of the Felix Aunac Institute, third trimester, 1938.

502 See above, pg. 121.

Community of Brothers at the service of its population until 1888. M. Audinet, who had resolved to found a school, was a friend of the Catholic orator, James Piou whose intervention with the Superiors had the desired results.

The Dordogne also experienced a certain growth of private education after the enforcement of the neutrality and laicisation laws. Périgueux, Bergerac and Sarlat were not lost to the Brothers' Institute. The tiny village of Domme owed its Brothers' school to the last wishes of a Father Francis de La Salle, who believed that he was related to the holy Canon of Rheims; Father Delguel, pastor of the parish, undertook negotiations with Oudinot Street, and in 1893, he was given Brothers. Thiviers, in the same Department, five years later, was listed among the District's schools. And in the Charente, where the Brothers' had already been operating schools in Angoulême and in Cognac, the legacy of a Lady Lambert in 1900 enabled the inhabitants of Confolens to welcome a team of teachers who came to teach eighty boys in St. Bartholomew's parish.[503]

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Brittany calls for our attention and means to retain it for some time. Divided into two Districts, Nantes and Quimper, it constituted a powerful block in the Institute, a huge area which by and large overflowed the boundaries of the Province, since Nantes controls Anjou, Poitou, Aunis and Saintonge. Moreover, in these areas the Brothers of the Christian Schools shared the duties of the educational apostolate with the followers both of Father Deshayes and of the Venerable Jean-Marie de La Mennais: — the Brothers of St. Gabriel and the Brothers of Christian Instruction, called "the Ploërmel Brothers." The workers were not too numerous and their parallel efforts could not interfere with one another in a field in which the harvest was superb. It is impossible for us to pause at each of these groups of workers who aimed at the same results, exhibited the same valor, went through the same motions, certainly not routinely, but in the inevitable monotony of each day. From La Rochelle to St. Malo the entire operation merits admiration.

While, from the banks of the Garonne and the Charente, we hurry beyond the banks of the Loire, it is not because we favor some, to the detriment of the others. We have on several occasions paused to inspect the fruitful, truly Christian activities of the people in Nantes; and in no way do we minimize their importance. What we shall have to say in the future will substantiate this point. But in order to observe Brittany at close quarters we need now to make a journey through the District of Quimper. Morbihan, Finistére, Côtes du Nord and the western portion of Ille et Vilaine are areas which overlay the major part of Breton country. It supports a people with special qualities and practices, a breed that continues to be jealous of its independence, attached to its traditions and which, in order to elude external controls, effortlessly turns in upon itself and preserves its ancient and mysterious language.

A journey in the shape of a half-circle through the four Departments reveals how profoundly the work of St. John Baptist de La Salle is implanted here.

The seed planted in the 18th century propagated once again after the French Revolution. Flowers and fruits grew abundantly, and the superb soils never failed.

There was one, quite favorable to cultivation, in the pleasant town of Arradon, on the shores of the delightful waters of Morbihan Bay. Hector Bourruet Aubertot, a wealthy Parisian businessman, owner of the Gagne Petit department store on the Avenue of the Opera, moved to the city of Kerjaffré after 1870. As a practicing Catholic he became friendly with the Rector of the parish, Father Quilleré. Hector Bourruet had a genuinely apostolic heart, and he spread his charities among the poor. Help in money, help in kind, he manifested in acts of generosity

[503] Archives of the District of Bordeaux, Historiques.

both his wisdom and his style. Having assisted in the reconstruction of a Sisters' school, he then turned his attention to endowing Arradon with a school for the education of adolescent boys. On a field 5700 meters square, which was a section of his Bréche estate, he took a very active part in promoting the work of all the building trades. The structure was completed in the spring of 1880, at which time the Brothers took possession of it; and they opened their classes in September under the direction of Brother Cyril.

The death of the founder occurred all too quickly. M. Bourruet Aubertot died on January 2, 1882 at the age of forty- four years. His widow was unable to maintain totally the dimensions of his beneficence. Decreasing the number of annual payments and reducing them to 600 francs beginning in 1886, she placed the Institute in a position of contemplating the closing of the school. A financial contribution on the part of the Rector, Father Questel, enabled the school to survive a crisis. Arradon admitted day pupils and residents in a building that was of adequate size. Brothers of various Communities came during vacation, to meditate in the garden shade. And choice vocations were born on this site created by goodness and cultivated by prayer.

Arradon was the future. But in Hennebont, Lorient, Vannes, Muzillac, Questembert and then in La Roche Bernard, Auray and Guidel was the past that needed to be survived. It was necessary to restore as the politicians destroyed.

Bishop Bécel of Vannes worked to form a Committee for Catholic education; and he roused the zeal of the pastors in his episcopal city. On April 4, 1883 St. Patern's school was blessed; the teaching personnel was composed of two Christian Brothers, Crispin and Constant, and two lay teachers, M. Le Blay and M. Quintin, who agreed to don the harness in the service of the diocese; further, M. Le Blay, bearing the official title of Director, shouldered the legal responsibilities.

When St. Peter's school was secularized provisional classes were conducted in the Connétable Tower on Rue des Ramparts. It was a picturesque site but not a reliable arrangement. A building was located in the city which was placed under the patronage of St. Joseph and, on January 10, 1884, it was solemnly inaugurated by the Bishop, the Archpriest of the Cathedral, and Catholic dignitaries.

In Questembert, in 1888, the Mayor and his associates subscribed along with the pastor at the head of a list of contributors to a private school. A nun, a Daughter of St. Vincent de Paul, Sister Elizabeth Grayo of Kéravenan, provided the building site that was needed. At the end of April, 1889, the building, blessed, welcomed the children of a population which, as a group, had proclaimed its fidelity to the Brothers.

Ploemer, near Lorient, had a private school since 1862 which the pastor, Father Le Goff, had placed in the hands of the Brother Visitor in 1877. While in this modest suburb the work continued, a new era was opening up for the teachers in Lorient. Two men had been dedicating themselves to preventing the eradication of education based upon religious teaching: these were Brother Gimel Martyr and M. Charles Méry Le Beuve. The zeal of the former of these two was supported by the fortune and the action of the latter. Among all the schools that Lorient owed to Charles Méry, the classes operated on Rues Lycée and Scorff , and in the St. Vincent de Paul Club had Brother Gimel as their initiator and his Brothers in Religion as teachers. Thereupon there were built — on Rue Brizeux — two huge "St. Joseph's" buildings with facades of forty-two and thirty-seven meters wide in the interior courtyard, surrounded by a gallery: it was a superb achievement which, in 1901, provided Brother Donan Anselm with the means of combining a residence school with a tuition-free elementary school: — an operation destined for many vicissitudes after a history that was not without its successes and moments of glory.

Morbihan, overall, represented a splendid effort. It was especially aroused by a manifesto written by two priests: *L'École neutre en face de la théologie*. Published on February 22,

1889, its conclusion was addressed to pastors of parishes: "You must build private schools." A layman and a great apostle of Catholic education seized upon this conclusion; he was called Count Ludovic de la Villeboisnet, who had already been working in general for the success of the Brothers' schools in Vannes. "If you have to build, you can do it," he proposed to the religious leaders. He did not limit himself to words; he suggested practical means, he placed at the disposal of the clergy his own knowledge as a lawyer and his talent as an architect.

This active faith, propagated in every diocese, did not only translate into financial sacrifices and into administrative undertakings but also into priestly initiatives of a quite original character: between 1890 and 1903 each year young priests took courses in the Brothers' Scholasticate in Quimper; they then appeared before official boards in order to pass examinations for teaching diplomas. In so doing, thy earned the right to teach in elementary schools. In the end, several hundred priests obtained the diploma.

In this way a private school could be quickly opened and directed by the Vicar who was also a teacher. But since the care for souls remained the priest's primary ministry, it was important for the priest to turn the task over to professional educators. This is what a lot of Rectors tried to do. Such was the case at Kervignac where Canon Constantine Julé who, however, had anticipated his confreres along unchartered routes, since as early as 1869 he had entrusted the school children in the region to Father Taboureux. After the secularization laws were voted in he called upon Father Laventure to assume the duties of teaching; it was a temporary solution; very soon an appeal was sent out to the Brothers who arrived in Kervignac in October of 1890.[504].

Other Communities of Brothers took possession of new educational centers that had been instantaneous creations: in Baud in 1887 and in Melrand, the following year. The Faouët school was built in 1889 and, blessed on July 13, 1890 in a ceremony that included the resounding eloquence of Albert de Mun, Deputy for Pontify. Canon Douarin and his successor Father Ezano, seconded by the generosity of Count des Plas, succeeded in introducing the Brothers into Plouay at St. Owen's school in September of 1892.

At Roche Bernard and Guidel the Brothers, at one time the public school teachers, remained on the site. The Brothers in Roche Bernard, in the midst of a profoundly Catholic population, excited the determination of a large number of youths who embraced the route of their teachers; similar lessons and a similar example operated in Guidel where the three-cornered hat and the white rabat — set aside after 1904 — would always be respected.

Similar good will was no less in evidence in Catholic Finistére. In a letter dated August 12, 1880, addressed to the Archpriest Penfentenyo and read from the Chair in the Cathedral, Bishop Nouvel of Quimper asked for donations from the people of his diocese in order to protect the faith of Breton children. The response was instantaneous. St. Corentin school, at first sheltered in the residence school of Likès, was moved to a saw-mill compound. St. Matthew's school gathered its pupils together in a boys' club before obtaining a less makeshift shelter in a Jesuit residence.

In Quimperlé the Communal school was secularized in 1878. The reorganization of a popular school in the hands of the Brothers was effected in 1885. At the top of the list of benefactors, along with his family, was Count de la Villemarqueé, a member of the French Institute and President of the Archeological Society of Finistére.

In this region of Quimper, the learned and day laborers, the rich and the poor, nobility and middle-class, peasantry and sea-going people were all in full agreement that the Crucifix should hang above the teacher's desk. The Port of Concarneau in 1887 regained the teachers it had so much regretted losing; and Plonéour Lanvern obtained a similar group one year previously. The Mistress of Moustoir, Madame Dumarnay, built with her own funds the St.

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[504] Biographical account of Canon Julé, Rector of Kervignac, by Canon Le Clanche

Evarzec school, which was officially opened on September 2, 1894.

We turn now in the direction of Brest and its environs. Since 1887 Guivipas had recourse to freedom of education, and in 1891 there were Brothers in Plougastel Daoulas. On the other side of the Elorn, on the plateau that dominates the superb landscape of water, rocks and ships the Commune of St. Mark included among its inhabitants between 1897 and 1907 a handful of Brothers. In Lambézellec the private school that had opened in January of 1879 near the arsenal and the market-place, was moved to the "Red Cross" in April of 1880, admitted residents and broadened its programs of study. The institution, taken over by a civilian society, became the residence school of Notre Dame de Bon Nouvelle; in 1889 it employed twelve Brothers; hundreds of children and youths frequented it; the former were there equipped with an elementary education, while the latter went on to receive teaching diplomas and trained professionally in art school.

Moving to the south toward the big city of Brest and the harbor on the horizon, we pause at the Congregation's headquarters: St. George's school, control over which was assumed by Brother Damasius in 1881. It enjoyed the respect of the Navy; Admiral Cuverville had informed the Director that they would like to see a large number of youths in Brest train to become Fleet mechanics. The advise had its effect; and the Brothers guided their pupils along the lines suggested. On three occasions the top student in the graduating class had been a former pupil at St. George.

The Lasallian hive swarmed in a variety of directions. Just outside of Brest, at some distance along the coast, is Plouzané whose Mayor, Jean Lareur and his fellow-citizens in November of 1894 donated land and building materials, their labor, time and vehicles to erect a schoolhouse for the Brothers, which was immediately filled with young boys of school age. And having observed that a similar sort of project already existed in Conquet, the Brothers moved on to Ouessant.

In 1887, at the outset the entire city council of the island bid farewell to Brother Drouand Jean and Brother Cyrin Joseph whom the Prefect of Finistère had replaced with lay teachers. The people in Ouessant refused to accept a final "good-bye". Their chief magistrate, Jean Marie Malgorn, worked with their pastor, Father Le Roux, in order to reinstate the Community. The populace especially demanded the return of Brother Cyrin whom they had revered for twenty-four years and whom they referred to familiarly as "Old Brother Coz". In order to see him again and keep him with them they taxed themselves to the extreme limits of their financial resources.

They were promised "Brother Coz". Brother Domnin Martyr, selected as Director, came first to Ouessant. When lookouts announced the arrival of the boat that brought him, bells rang out and the clergy and people lined up in a procession to welcome the traveller and conduct him to the church where, from the pulpit, Father Le Roux, thanked God.

Some time later the, on June 26, 1888, the Bishop of Quimper came by to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Brother Cyrin and a third teacher, Brother Duvian, formed part of the episcopal party. A crowd surrounded "Brother Coz" wishing to speak with him and to shake his hand. The Bishop, informed of the reason for this attention, applauded the loyalty of the islanders. He blessed the private school on June 27 amid general elation. There were 150 pupils in two classes, while in the "neutral" school there remained only thirty boys, the sons of lower-level bureaucrats, people who had come from the mainland.

Northwest of the region of Léon, roads stretching between furze led to Ploudalmézeau, Lannilis and Plouguerneau, three large villages whose steeples rose above the plain not far from the sea, three strongholds of Catholic education which seemed to stand shoulder-to-shoulder to withstand the storm. The Brothers had been obliged to vacate their posts in Plouguerneau in 1886 on orders from the Departmental authorities. Nevertheless, the tenacious presence of the Director and one of his associates, who were guests of the pastor,

gave rise to the hope of a not-too-distant restoration. In fact, there soon was the announcement of the opening of a private school. The site selected provisionally gave the inspector of primary education the pretext for a hostile report. Once the obstacle was removed, the parish set out toward the realization of an enduring achievement. The stone quarries in the vicinity supplied abundant building materials; and those who owned them did not shrink from leaving them at the disposal of the pastor of Plouguerneau. He was in charge of the enterprize and, each Sunday in his sermon, he named the farmers who, during the course of the week, would do service as draymen, which was a jealously sought out distinction. On the day the building was blessed — September 8, 1887 — there were in attendance a Senator, two Deputies, the general Counsellors, the Mayor and the entire Communal assembly. The crucifixes destined for the classrooms figured in the solemn procession, and sixty members of the clergy escorted them.
The school population that would occupy the concerns of the teachers included, from the outset, 180 boys from the village and the surrounding countryside. They seemed a little on the rough side, a little unkempt, but no less attractive for all that. And while their minds may have awakened more slowly, their faces, innocent and gentle, endured candidly the gaze of their teachers; it took a great deal of heart for these youngsters who, coming from some small hamlet, some isolated thatched-roof cottage, walked for a whole hour to assist daily at classes and who, at midday had nothing more to eat than a piece of bread and the soup doled out by the school or some hospitable family. As for the results of schooling, they would have been clearer had not too many families, eager for gain and sometimes, perhaps, burdened with work, summoned back to the cultivation of the soil or the attendance of animals a son who had only just learned to read, write and calculate.

The observance of Catholic traditions and of the Ten Commandments were intensified in the region. Father Grall, appointed pastor/dean of Ploudalmézeau in 1888 unfavorably impressed by the lack of discipline on the part of the children and their wretched behavior in church. He decided immediately to invite the Brothers into his parish. The new establishment ran serious competition with the public school; as early as October of 1889, Brother Director Corbré of Mary had 214 schoolboys under his tutelage. A residence school was opened that became an instant success. In the devout atmosphere people began to change; and from year to year the residents of Ploudalmézeau showed such an increasing fervor that they became models in the diocese of Quimper. And as the public school teachers themselves began to adapt their thought and behavior to the faith of the Breton milieu, some pastors in the region no longer saw any need to send youngsters to the small resident school operated by the Brothers.

In Lannilis Canon Ollivier followed another line of thinking. He had come into this Deanery in 1893 and heard the people speak their satisfaction with the education given by the Director of the Communal school, a M. Le Bars, a former student in the Normal School in Quimper when the Brothers were instructing student-teachers. Twelve years earlier M. Le Bars had been favorably recognized in Léon; and there were very few people who would have believed that the day would come when the post would change occupants and that the newcomer would revise his views. Father Ollivier wanted to provide for the future, and announced that he would open a private school. As he might have expected, objections and protests built up. He ignored them. After having consulted with his confreres, he purchased land, built a school and then negotiated with the Superior-general, Brother Joseph. St. Antony's school began unpretentiously on October 21, 1895. The day before only about a dozen persons attend the blessing of the premises. Fifty-four pupils showed up for the first day of classes.

Before the school-year ended that number had doubled, and by 1897 a third class had to be opened. The circle of active allies grew steadily; and in 1897 when Father Ollivier stopped paying the three salaries as he had contracted to do, there were other benefactors to assume his obligations. Furthermore, resident pupils brought in funds. Ten years had not yet passed when the Brothers in Lannilis were teaching 195 pupils, fifty-five of whom were residents. The

institution, soundly constituted and deeply rooted was in a position to face the tempest.

Once the Brothers' dedication had been experienced, parents and pupils remained faithful to them. In Landivisiau in 1882 a rather curious spectacle unfolded: country people, learning that the civil power was dispensing with the services of the teaching Congregation, determined to bring home the sons who up to then had been in residence in the school in the village. On November 8, a fair day, a long line of wagons filled the streets of Landivisau; but instead of farm products and animals to be sold that morning, the carts were carrying luggage and bedding fetched from the school. Fifteen months later shares bought at 500 francs were subscribed to in sufficient quantity that the Brothers' work — here, as in Faouët in Morbihan, especially supported by Count de Mun — began all over again under a similar appearance but in new circumstances.

In an easterly sector of the Department two private schools were entrusted to the disciples of De La Salle — St. Thégonnec in 1885 and Plougonven in 1888.

When the Brothers had gotten to Pletin les Grèves, where the founding of the school dated from 1879, they had reached to boundary between Finistère and Côtes du Nord. And by way of Bégard, in operation since 1893, they moved toward Paimpol where under the Brothers, beginning in 1891, future sailors studied diligently the skills necessary for their trade. On the opposite side of the bay there arose, at about the same time, the Erquy school.

For the people in St.Brieuc who had the Brothers among them since the 18th century, the situation — restored in 1818 — endured until September of 1890. At that time, Mme. Largentaye yielded a part of a building she owned on Rue Vicairie in order to set up four classes there; the Marist Fathers placed their financial support at the Brothers' disposal and two other classes began to operate on the same site. A seventh teacher held class in the "Workers' quarter" in a room donated by M. Clésieux whose family had earlier built the Community's chapel dedicated to St. Augustine and in memory of a young captain mortally wounded in the course of the Franco-Prussian war.[505]

The division of pupils in various site could only be temporary. A Building Society espoused the project of readying a spacious, intelligently laid out residence for the Brothers. This turned out to be a house on Du Parc Street. After a contract drawn up between representatives of the Society and the M. H. Brother Joseph, the Brothers in St. Brieuc took possession of the building on June 23, 1891. From that day until September 1, 1904 they were buoyantly to pass through one of the most fascinating stages of their long history in the chief city of Côtes du Nord.

In Ille et Vilaine, while Rennes and its elementary schools depended on the District of Nantes, the Brothers under the Visitor of Quimper were teaching in Pleurtuit since 1892; they had replaced the Brothers of De La Mennais at St. Meloir in 1877 and retained their apostolate in that Commune in 1888 after secularization. But their favorite spot continued to be in St. Malo.

The Mlles. Garnier-Kerruault, descendants of a wealthy family in St. Malo, in 1883 purchased a building within the ramparts of the old city, that had a splendid ground-floor used as a store and huge basement space. They asked their architect to transform the site and to raise the walls so as to achieve a perfectly habitable unit as well a suited to the needs and tasks of a group.

It was a strategy to avoid being caught off guard when the inevitable secularization struck. In 1887 when the Prefectural decree was issued, the parochial clergy, in accordance with the wishes of the Mlles Garnier, assumed the responsibility for opening a private school. There remained a number of improvements that had to be made and funds had to be collected to

[505] Augustine Clésieux was buried in this chapel. A statue on the tomb represents him in a recumbent position.

maintain the building and provide salaries for the teachers. Distinguished Catholics made their contributions; a public drive for funds was completely subscribed. And since the Departmental administration had insisted that the opening of the Brothers' school not delay the start of the school year, much dispatch was employed in bringing preparations to a successful conclusion.

A wave of 418 schoolboys thronged to the welcoming haven. Almost immediately the classrooms were too small; the teachers' study hall had to be appropriated; meanwhile in order to prepare their lessons they were given a part of the chapel, the remainder of which continued to be an unassuming oratory. The religious services which the pupils attended took place a hundred yards away in the former chapel of the Catholic Club.

Five years later the school and the Community had to relocate to another locale, which had also been equipped by the Garnier-Kerruault family and other equally generous persons. The institution was placed under the protection of the Immaculate Conception.

In 1889 an indemnification of 20,000 francs was obtained from the city counsel for buildings which, during the First Empire, had been given to the Bishop of Rennes by a sea-Captain named Bichat and which the Brothers had occupied until 1822. The legislators in St. Malo also granted satisfaction to Brother Director Collian who had laid claim to back-interest on three government bonds.

In an atmosphere which was, on the whole, favorable, the teaching Congregation pursued its task during the final quarter of the 19th century. Brother Divitian's jubilee in 1898 presented public opinion with an opportunity to reveal itself; the teacher that so many people wished to honor had come to St. Malo at the beginning of the Second Republic and had achieved a well-deserved popularity. In 1878 he received an official medal for his faithful service. Loved and acclaimed, the old man did not part company with his many former pupils until the closing of the school in 1904.[506]

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Normandy offers us one of the most convincing proofs of the close and trusting cooperation between the faithful and the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In order rapidly to complete this bird-eye view which now takes us into the west, there are a large number of schools that we can only mention: Coutances, Cherbourg, Avranches, Mortain, Valognes, St. Lo, Sainte Sauveur le Vicomte in the Manche Department; Caen, Vire, Bayeux, Falaise, Honfleur in Calvados; Darnétal, Rouen, Dieppe, Le Havre, Bolbec, Fécamp, Yvetot, Forges les Eaux, Sotteville in the Lower Seine; Èvreux, Gisors, Bernay, Louviers, Vernon in the Eure; and centers included in the District outside the boundaries of Normandy: Noyon, Compiégne, and Senlis in the Oise. In all there were about forty schools, several of which, including those that had enjoyed a very long history, were preserved or revived after secularization was enforced; six were started up between 1886 and 1900.

We mean simply by way of example to point to St. John d'Elbeuf which had existed uninterruptedly since 1844 and which toward the end of the century possessed in the person of Brother Aubin Xavier a Director of extraordinary accomplishments. A former student at the Polytechnic Institute and a naval officer during the Crimean War, Brother Aubin presided over his pupils with military discipline and directness, lead them at a lively pace along the paths of duty, and in this way formed perceptive consciences and energetic conviction. He had been professed for twenty-three years when he died, in his seventies, at Saint Sauveur le Vicomte in 1900.

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[506] This entire section on Brittany was written with the help of documents from the District of Quimper. — Moreover, as regards St. Malo, we have made use of an article by J. Diquero, published by L'Écho de chez nous, the bulletin of the Alumni Association of Private Schools, the issue for November, 1932.

We have already sketched the portrait of the popular classes in Chantilly.[507] We shall not quit them until we have mentioned the efforts of a Sister of St. Joseph of Cluny to reopen a Brothers' school. After the Brothers' departure in 1868 Sister Clemence Fontaine visited princes and princesses dwelling in the Condé mansion, men of letters, judges, soldiers, industrialists, business men and craftsmen. The drive she inspired was unstoppable. A fund of 100,000 francs, collected gradually, promoted the purchase of a beautiful site on which ended, in 1892, the realization of so many tireless solicitations, so many persevering efforts.[508]

It remains only to point out certain admirable persons in Lisieux. When Brother Isméon died in 1875 after directing the school in Lisieux for thirty-one years, the citizens raised money to erect a monument to him in the cemetery. Their affection for the living matched their gratitude to the dead. Thus the secularization decree, passed in spite of the contrary view of a majority of the city counsellors, was immediately followed by the creation of a public corporation intended to provide the Religious teachers with new quarters. The initiator of this project was Louis Lemaignen. "He was a man of prayer and of action", one of his aides said of him,[509] "he has honored our city in an uncommon way by the luster of his virtue and the indefatigable activity of his apostolate."

An industrialist, journalist, for sixteen years a city counsellor, for a while administrator of the almshouse and, for a greater length of time, President of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference in the diocese, member and secretary of the Consultative Chamber for arts and crafts, Louis Lemaignen compelled the admiration of his countrymen; his lively and versatile mind, his sure judgment and his refined civility guaranteed him a select position among polemicists. Henry Chéron who was his political adversary paid him a marvelous tribute; when M. Lemaignen dies in 1902, the former wrote in *Le Progrès lexovien*:[510]

"The editor of Le Normand brought to his activities an ardent faith which knew no compromise. But, in his writing, he was able to replace needless violence with a genuine spirit. He contributed generously to that reciprocal tolerance of people and ideas that makes Lisieux an enviable place to live."

To the picture thus sketched Henry Chéron added further touches: "Modest and simple in his way of life, generous and friendly to all, Louis Lemaignen, abundantly as well as discerningly, sowed good all about him."

Various contemporary witnesses contribute similar expressions of praise: "Everything about him was friendly...Fundamentally a good man, he helped a lot of people with the wisdom of his counsel and the assistance of his benefactions ... With firmness, which with him went hand-in-hand with moderation, he defended both freedom and charity."[511]

Since, fortuitously, we have at our disposition ways of making known the man who has been described as "the founder and inspirer" (in Normandy)[512] of the Brothers' private schools, we have not hesitated to elaborate somewhat concerning him. A man like Lemaignen exhibited the human qualities and the Christian virtues which accounts for the power, the constancy and the

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[507] See above, pp. 243-244.

[508] Historique of the schools in Normandy, Vols. I and II.

[509] G. Boislaurent, in the talk he gave on October 30, 1927 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Brothers' arrival in Lisieux.

[510] Article for January 25, 1902.

[511] Articles published in *Le Normand* for January, 1902 and *Le Lexovien* for January 25, 1902.

[512] Talk, cited, by G. Boislaurent

success of the work that was realized in order to prevent atheism from spreading its devastation. He deserves to be point out and to be studied as an example and, indeed, because of his profound faith and his fortitude in the face of painful trials, as a prototype of French Catholicism of a half-century ago.

It would be unjust, however, to neglect recalling that he had help. "He brought about twenty of us together," says a local historian, "and explained to us his program of renewal." This group of highly motivated people never disbanded; without it the Committee and the Civil Corporation could not have been constituted; the drive for funds would never have gotten started nor would it have succeeded, and the former "Deanery" built in 1769 by Le Bois du Fresne, would never have become the handsome home of the Brothers in Lisieux, who, under the direction of Brother Andelin began teaching their classes there on September 24, 1884. On November 5 Bishop Hugonin of Bayeux and Lisieux blessed the chapel and two groups of buildings — the John Baptist de La Salle day school and St. Joseph's tuition-free school. At the same time the Association of Friends was organized under the auspices of M. Lemaignen, M. Guérin and M. Martin. The third of these three, who lived at the "Buissonnets", was the father of Teresa, the future Carmelite Nun and saint.[513]

A former well-known Deputy of the National Assembly of 1851, M. Target and a highly respected physician, Dr. Notta, were to continue and consolidate the work of their friend, Lemaignen. They, too, were representatives of the upper middle-class, and the former was deliberately aloof and brusque, with a harsh exterior, although both were sensitive men, with very understanding minds.[514] By making good their authority and supporting private schools with their own money, these men, belonging to traditional French society, refused to let themselves be controlled by self-interest or ambition or by the mean-minded expectations of electoral vengeance; believing in or, at least, committed to national traditions, they hoped that the people would preserve a culture that was inseparable from the Gospel, and that the nation would avoid the tragedy which materialism induces. Even though they showed very little appetite for bold reforms or changes which would later on appear necessary and inevitable, they and those who modelled themselves upon them — throughout the whole of France — deserve no less gratitude at the hands of the public; using their rights as free citizens, they paved the way for the final victory of social order and the truth.

[513] Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute, Rue de Sèvres.

[514] Boislaurent, op. cit.,; and District Archives, Historique of the school in Lisieux.

CHAPTER TWO

The Resident Schools

To teach catechism and the groundwork of human knowledge to the children of the people — such is the duty primarily enjoined upon the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle. We have just seen that the Brothers have in no way evaded that responsibility. Wherever the Church or French Catholics have striven to re-establish an educational project disturbed or ravaged by the politicians the Institute has responded positively.

But its mission is not confined to "grammar schools". This is an historical fact concerning which our preceding volumes supply both explanation and justification. In what follows we intend no more than to add a few details to an account that is already quite long.[515] We have observed the residence schools develop in the course of the 18th century, disappear during the revolutionary period, revive after a period of indecision and expectation and regain their earlier vitality in the climate created by the legislation of 1850. Passy functioned as a model for Victor Duruy's educational innovations. Devising "special education", Napoleon III's Minister thought, while paying tribute to the Brothers, to promote stiff competition to them. He did not catch them napping. Paralleling public institutions, the Congregation's schools focused and broadened their programs; the Religious teachers adapted themselves to regional demands and directed their pupils toward careers entry into which did not require the classical baccalaureate. Meanwhile, the Brothers put themselves in a position to match their lay colleagues not only in the form and substance of their courses but also when they appeared before examining boards.

A Normal School intended for future teachers in special education had been opened by the civil authorities in the buildings of the former Cluny Abbey. It continued in existence from 1866 to 1891. The best candidates left the institution, after a competitive examination held in Paris, with the certificate of "associate". But, off the beaten track as it were, the Ministry of Public Education created a diploma that teachers who did not attend "Cluny" could aspire to and which in fact several Brothers obtained.

Duruy tried particularly to propagate an education in science that was more concrete than the one pursued in the colleges; to give a great deal of importance to practical exercises, to graphic layouts and experimentation. As for foreign languages he advocated the direct method, the naming of objects, conversation and open book reading. Finally, he insisted that manual work have its place in educational institutions; especially higher elementary school were all to be furnished with a workshop.[516]

These guidelines fitted all too well the methods initiated by the resourceful creator of St. Yon for his heirs in the 19th century to fail to preserve their lead in an arena in which public education chose to compete. Beginning in 1874 the pupils in the Passy residence school successfully submitted to examinations in the Sorbonne that were drawn up for students enrolled in special education.[517] Their teachers — and almost as diligently the other Brothers in the schools of the District — had contributed to the growth of the educational system.

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[515] Nobody can be surprised if we do not report on all the residence schools. The story of several of them has already been told in our preceding volumes.

[516] Ferdinand Buisson, *Nouveau Dictionnaire de Pédagogie*, article on Cluny by J. M. Baudoin and René Leblanc.

[517] *Un religieux éducateur*, Frère Auguste-Hubert, by Brother Paul Joseph, 1923, pg. 69.

Special education, experience with which had revealed its good results as well as its imperfections and its empty stretches, continued to preoccupy the technicians. It appeared to suit a democratic state, a society in which the popular classes exhibited a desire to ascend the social scale and in which science and industrial work constantly effected one another. This is why the leaders of the Third Republic were particularly partial to reforming the foundations and to a general extension of Duruy's endeavors.

The decree of August 4, 1881 had endorsed "special" studies by granting them a bachelor's degree. On March 31, 1886 René Goblet, at the time Headmaster of the Public School System, assembled a Committee on which, along with bureaucrats and teachers, representatives of industry and commerce sat. The members of this group outlined their view in the following language: "The new education should be organized so as to respond to the new needs of modern society and to attract to French secondary studies young people who have neither the taste nor the leisure to spend on the study of the classical languages."

They were therefore looking forward to a novel form of "secondary" education. One of the Minister's talks delivered on May 1, 1886 included the following statement: "We are not talking about destroying the current classical education, but of setting up alongside it, a parallel program — equally classical, i.e., in a general way — literary as well as scientific in which the time spent in other schools on Greek and Latin would be employed in more modern studies, more usable practically, especially for a knowledge of our own language and of foreign languages...It's a problem of assuring a liberal education to young people who, every day more and more, move in the direction of careers that men of action find extremely attractive.

French Classical Education was the name that the author of this manifesto endorsed. The Higher Council of Public Education wished to reserve for the old "humanities" their traditional designation. It concluded by opting in favor of the qualifier that opposed the present and the future to the past; special education became — a manoeuvre that was not only verbal but descriptive — "modern secondary education". The series of courses were carefully modelled on the traditional schedule of classical studies, with German and English absorbing the time which had previously been given to Latin. The only thing missing was the year given to "Rhetoric". In the first year the history of civilization, political economy and law in some sense absorbed philosophy. Mathematics, physics, chemistry, biological sciences, drawing, and bookkeeping were among the essential subject matters of the program.

The decision of June 4, 1891 adjusted the sequence of this assortment and from the top down systematized a baccalaureate that bore a striking analogy to the classical bachelor's degree. The examination was divided into two separate parts, as did its counterpart, by the interval of a school year. The second part climaxed the studies, at the term of this class which here was designated by nothing more than the first number of the series. Two sections were offered the pupils: — the literary and the scientific. And when examinations came around, the candidate could opt for the test in "literature-philosophy", "literature-science" or "literature-mathematics".

This arrangement represented a stage along the road to a closer fusion of all forms of secondary education, which it was the object of the decree of May 31, 1902 to proclaim. Henceforth, pupils finishing elementary school would be faced with two routes: — the "Latin way" and the non-Latin. They would choose, or their parents and teachers would choose for them. And then for four years they would make their way through this first "cycle". During the first two years permission could be obtained by anyone who wished among the "Latin" pupils to pursue elementary Greek grammar. The second cycle began with the second grade; at this crossroads direction would quite obviously be determined by aptitude and achieved skills: "Latin-Greek", "Latin-Modern languages", "Latin-science" and "Science-Modern languages" — each of these four sectors, at the end of two or three years of work, lead the most deserving or the most successful of the pupils to tests — varied according programs — for one and the

same bachelor's degree; and all those who obtained the baccalaureate enjoyed equal rights to access to departments of higher education.[518] Long after this evolution had ceased the Brothers' residence schools had not exploited the entire range of possibilities contained in the decree of 1902. They remained persistently "modern" for as long as a Papal order had not enjoined upon them the surrender of an article of the Rule that proscribed the employment and the teaching of Latin. Positioning their development in harmony with governmental decisions and achieving or surpassing the standards set by both public and private secondary colleges, until the beginning of the 20th century the Brothers encountered fewer difficulties than their rivals or their adversaries in a field that they had for a long time known the sound foundations, the complexities and the snares along pathways that on their own initiative they had explored and cleared.

This success was a reward for complete fidelity to the Institute's traditions. The French residence schools, which in those prosperous times earned them such jealousy and inexpiable enmity continued in the tradition of institutions founded prior to 1789. There God was the first to be served, and worry about examinations ordinarily proved harmful to the piety of neither pupils nor teachers. Knowledge did not contribute to pride nor did in corrupt the purity or simplicity of hearts.

Brother Superior-general Gabriel-Marie, ever on guard against abuses and against whatever infractions of De La Salle's commandments, praised the great institutions that he had visited during the first year of his administration in the following terms: "The residence school in Lyons is very dear to us because this institution has never, either directly or indirectly, conspired with corruption: — classical secondary education. The same thing is true of most of the other schools dedicated to the same sort of work, especially of those in Marseille and Avignon, where they have been able to resist the temptation to multiply diplomas at the expense of the Rule.[519]

Obediently and, ultimately, without difficulty or displeasure Directors and teachers responsible for special education respected the prohibitions re-enforced by the recent Chapter.[520].

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We shall now have to introduce faces and background into the framework that we have just described. The first images emerge from Passy.[521].In 1879 Brother Libanos yielded the practical direction to his associate, Brother Albert of Mary whose powerful energy, after thirty years of prolific administration, was assailed by illness and old-age. For such a dauntless organizer, and optimist, his was a particularly harsh ordeal; he was prey to harassing melancholy and anxiety that no amount of argument or prayer could dispel. And in this twilight he died on September 3, 1883, not to be restored to the light this side of the threshold of eternity.

His assistant succeeded him to the leadership of the residence school. Less brilliant and less outgoing, Brother Albert of Mary, however, proved equal to the task. His entire strength resided within; he was virtuous to the point of holiness; he was quite simply and quite unobtrusively, a good man and an exemplary Religious. And it was in this fashion that he produced a profound impact; so much so that a renewal of fervor was noted in the huge

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[518] Ferdinand Biisson op. cit., article on *Goblet* by Maurice Pellisson, and article on *Lycées et collèges* by T. Steeg.

[519] Circular dated July 7, 1897.

[520] Ninth Decree of the General Chapter of 1897

[521] Cf. Passy's Centenary Yearbook

institution, a complex population of children, youths and young men come from Paris, near and distant provinces and from several foreign countries — in all 850 pupils during the last days of Brother Libanos. But the later, and before him, Brother Theoticus, had established such policies and created such a warm climate of confidence and friendliness that the task of all those holding positions of responsibility was remarkably eased. Peace reigned at Passy, where, without ever being relaxed, discipline was paternal; feastdays were celebrated solemnly and joyfully; and studies were pursued with uncommon ardor.

The faculty enjoyed a deservedly lofty reputation. Since 1839 eminent teachers had been trained in this school. In the Councils of the Superiors-general the attitude persisted of considering the Community of this distinguished residence school as a training-ground for future leaders.

Brother Aventine-Marie, a teacher at Passy beginning in 1848, was called to direct St. Pierre's in Dreux; he then guided Clapham College in London until he became Visitor of England until 1885 when we meet with him once again in France at the head of the residence school in Rouen.

Another member of the Parisian staff, Brother Thomas, in 1887 became the distinguished educator of the youth of Normandy. He had previously been a departmental head in Passy, where he was called "the good Brother Thomas". He was easily accessible and wore a perpetual smile, which was something more than a mere surface friendliness. He strongly influenced along the lines of their duty those who were charmed by him; and as a dedicated aide of one of the chaplains, Father Caussignac, he introduced him into the associations set up for various age groups of devout children and gifted youths. Extremely influential, he left his mark on several generations of pupils.

A quite typical and altogether appealing figure was Brother Albert of the Angels who was appointed sub-Director in 1886. He was a talented musician, choir director and organist whom we have already glimpsed.[522] His two Masses for Sundays and his Mass of the Nativity, based on ancient Christmas carols, are noble, passionate and moving works that deserve a place in the liturgical repertory. It reflects the spirit of the composer who was a man of flawless sensitivity, enormous rectitude and enthusiasm. He illumined and he consoled; and combined prudence with absolute dedication.

It is still rather enticing to associate this portrait with the figure of Brother Adeolian — the Alsatian with the will of iron. As a boy in Soufflenheim, in the diocese of Strasbourg, he was orphaned at the age of thirteen years; he determined to carve out a future for himself singlehandedly. In 1859, when he was only seventeen, he left on foot for Austria. Arriving in Vienna, he set himself up among several families as a teacher of French; meanwhile, he learned German in a purer form than that in use in his own region. He then turned up in Mayence where he was befriended by a priest who had asked him for French lessons. Returning to his native land, he took lodgings in Paris and sought employment with the Marianists at Stanislaus College. Welcomed and temporarily associated with Father Chaminade's Congregation, he continued to teach. Meanwhile, he heard the call to arms: the Pope, threatened by the Piedmonteses, needed soldiers to defend him. The Alsatian enlisted under the leadership of General Charette. A splendid looking non-commissioned officer, he was given the opportunity of meeting with Brother Simeon, the Director of the French College in Rome. The encounter was the beginning of a vocation: the Papal Zouave became a Brother of the Christian Schools. The day came when, in his military uniform, he put in an appearance at the Motherhouse on Rue Oudinot. From the outset he attracted the attention and, rapidly, the affection of Brother Exupérien who, in 1869, placed him in the hands of Brother Libanos. Brother Adeolian had finally found a permanent residence. For thirty-five years Passy became home for the Religious

[522] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 520.

who never ceased being martial and punctual in the fashion the good soldier, a tireless worker and a man of conscience and determination whom no difficulty disturbed nor any obstacle thwarted.[523]

No doubt he did not belong among the principals of the cast; nevertheless his novelty and distinctiveness insured that he would not be passed over in silence. Brother Jean-Marie, on the other hand, who no less impressive in appearance, played a major role. Born in Fabriano, Italy, he left his native land in 1868 to enter the Brothers' novitiate in Marseille. Normally, he would have been destined for a position on the other side of the Alps; and he had been given the name "Giovanni di Maria". But his extraordinary talents as a mathematician were to alter the course of his existence. In 1883 he was appointed to Passy. That was it: he was to remain in France for rest of his life; and the famous residence school would owe to him a portion of its fame.

After 1873 about twenty pupils completed their course of studies in a special mathematics class, which, after having been merely a section of the final year, at this time had become wholly autonomous. A teacher was needed to dedicate himself exclusively to the these young people. Brother John of Mary turned out to be the man long sought after. Once his knowledge of the subject had been tested, in 1886 he was assigned to the "Special" class. For a quarter of a century he trained candidates for the Central School of Arts and Manufactures. He possessed both the science and the art of communicating it; and he worked hammer-and-tongs at his task. His influence, his evenhandedness, his blunt candor conquered his audiences. He was the acknowledge king of the arena within which he taught; he forthrightly laid claim to his domain; people in high places recognized it and got out of his way. And, furthermore, the results he obtained proclaimed his mastery. On five occasions — in 1887, 1890, 1893, 1898 and 1899 — one of Brother John's former pupils stood at the head of his graduating class. In the view of most families Passy was the gateway to "Central", and as a consequence there was a continuous and growing surge of students to the school on rue Raynouard. The special class opened to thirty-two young men in October of 1891, forty-seven in 1899 and fifty-nine in 1901. Over eighty percent of those registered in the program completed it successfully. After the transfer of the school to Belgium Brother Jean of Mary continued his work. "The new Passy", at Froyennes, profited from the master's instruction, and at his death in 1912, retained his methods so as not to lose their advantages.[524]

Literature was also fostered under the guidance of people like Brother Libanos and Brother Albert of Mary. In 1882 the new "Academy", whose pupils were recruited from among the older boys, was prospering. Brother August Hubert, in his capacity as Counsellor-Director, was in charge of the program. He contributed an enlightened zeal to the selection of themes, and set up literary competition between classes. His guidelines, comments and criticisms testified to his intelligence and good taste. In place of the pompous and shallow rhetoric of recent stories and fiction he substituted psychological and moral essays, occasionally efforts at versification as well as translations of texts. He encouraged the performance of scenes from the classical theatre in which memory and judgment both found unrivaled mutual support. But his breadth of mind and his desire to open the most varied horizons to his "Academics" induced him to propose for study the works of English and German playwrights; they were performed in their original languages followed by a French translation provided for the audience.

In 1891, Brother August Hubert became Pro-Director of the school. Three years later he replaced as Director Brother Albert-Marie who died at his post on December 19, 1895.

It is at this juncture that we must introduce the "Religious Educator,"[525] the genuinely

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[523] Obituary, 1905.

[524] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April 1914, pp. 151-154. — And Centenary Yearbook, 1939.

[525] The title of a biography of Brother Hubert written by Brother Paul Joseph in 1923. See also his Obituary dated 1908.

"masterly" teacher and diligent heir to the mantle of Brother Libanos: — Brother Leo August Hubert Gerard who was born in Poissons in the Upper Marne on June 17, 1845, the son of a gardener, and a pupil of the Brothers in the region of his birth, a Junior Novice in Paris at the age of thirteen years, a Novice in 1861 under the guidance of Brother Exupérien and, in the following year, an associate in the Community at Passy.

He worked continuously until his death in 1908 for the prosperity, the reputation and the spiritual vitality of the residence school. He it was who — once the winds of persecution had stirred — shouldered the risks and accomplished the magnificent feat that was the move to Froyennes.

Gradually he advanced toward the supreme command. Once his probation had been completed, Brother Libanos utilized him depending upon classroom demands; and thereafter Brother August Hubert's talents assumed a much wider scope.

Between 1871 and 1879 the older pupils found him to be a teacher of quasi-encyclopedic capacities: — literature, history, geography, psychology and metaphysics were the domains into which the teacher with knowledge and wisdom, methodically and enthusiastically, conducted the minds and hearts of his pupils.

And between 1879 and 1891 he performed the sensitive, engrossing and essential functions of head of his division. It was his task to coordinate the work of the Brothers in the higher classes, to promote and guide the activities of the resident pupil and to train these young men for the duties and perils that awaited them in the world.[526]

It was a role that matched his stature. His morning announcements at the beginning of prayer remained especially unforgettable. His bearing, the sound of his voice and his facial features were impressive. Even at the physical level he had the gifts of a pace-setter — willowy and sometimes as nimble as fire. Light shone from his blue eyes, large and naturally gentle, but then suddenly they would light up animatedly and with a startling clarity. His lips were now smiling, now "arched tautly" as he hurled out a brief command; and occasionally they were known to assume ironic contours — but never obstinately. All of these astonishingly mobile features revealed a soul of tremendous energy and tenacity of purpose.

Brother August Hubert was made to command. "We felt like a conquered people," wrote one of his former pupils. An astute observer, a totally frank conversationalist, a sympathetic counsellor, dynamic, easily enthused, spontaneous, and extremely sensitive, even the excesses and vulnerable aspects of his nature, explained the man's influence and appeal. "His intellectual energy and his virile warmth enfolded us," writes the witness whom we have just quoted.[527]

As the assistant to the Director, Brother Albert-Marie, the head of the upper division, in 1881, drew up programs for candidates for the new bachelor's degree in special studies. There followed a serious program of student recruitment and a superb reorganization of the

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[526] The role of Inspector [or head of division] was varied and sensitive," writes Brother Adolph Joseph in his biography of the M. H. Brother Allais Charles, pp. 47-58. "A heavy responsibility was imposed upon him...He had within his power all the levers of control and he exercised, in dependence upon the Brother Director, an authority that touched teachers and pupils alike. Responsible for the direction of studies, he assigned themes and reviewed their results. As Prefect of discipline he presided over all activities, supervised the pupils in the dining rooms, the dormitories, on their recreation and outings. He had to correct violations of the regulation, exert constant vigilance, be present everywhere, maintain order and silence, and promote study and enforce the dress code. If a pupil were ill, he had to see that the boy was admitted to the infirmary, since he was just as much responsible for physical health as he was for moral well-being. In brief, his was a task of initiating, coordinating and supervising...The performance of such functions required tact, patience and a great deal of the self-effacement. It was a school in which leaders were trained."

[527] According to Brother Paul Joseph, op. cit., pp. 45 and 160.

"Academy". At the religious level there was the same clarity of views, the same zeal and the same success; in 1887 retreats for pupils who had completed their studies were begun at Athis Mons where Brother August Hubert, as the mover behind this program, led the young men.

Thus, he showed that he was worthy of respect and confidence. And, gradually, authority passed smoothly and without a hitch from Brother Albert-Marie's hands to the Pro-director. Later on we shall return to some of the aspects of the educational philosophy practiced at Passy. For the moment we would like to underscore the pertinent remarks of one of the beneficiaries of this sort of education. In a note (used by Brother Hubert's biographer[528] recalling the modest origins of both Leo August Gerard and many of his confreres in the residence school, an alumnus, otherwise anonymous, wrote twenty-five years ago:

"Religious, the sons of the common people, by their example and their teaching, transformed into social activists children of the middle class who, while they possessed potentially the qualities of their ancestors, were far from being uncontaminated by egoism, intransigence, narrowness and who had naturally a tendency to misconceive both the obligation of personal labor as well as the duties of justice and charity. In a way that incites useful meditation, the sons of very ordinary people became the master-teachers — and how well informed they were! — of youths born screened from want, unconcerned with distress that they did not even suspect existed, of those future chiefs of industry, those wealthy landowners whose influence could extend very far indeed."

It was certainly a mission that conformed to what their evangelical Founder, John Baptist de La Salle had wanted for the members of his teaching Congregation: ostensibly a school for the well-to-do, in whose favor Passy was developed, the poor occupied a central place. Not only because of the immediate funds that the residence school was in a position to supply to the popular schools; but also because of the solidarity that the Brothers strove to establish among their pupils from various social classes, who were instructed in the same truths, according to the same methods and in the same atmosphere of faith and prayer; and finally because Lasallian education, in its representatives as well as in its principles and its goals, witnesses to the importance of the poor for Christianity, that it reserved a special attentiveness for them and that it committed to them the fortune, the intelligence and the influence of those who were better off.[529]

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[528] Brother Paul Joseph, op. cit., pg. 47.

[529] Of the generations of Passy alumni of whom we may here speak, Émile Montargis may be cited as a typical example. He was born in 1836 on Rue Lavandières Ruence school. Between his thirteenth and sixteenth years, he was employed by an major textile firm. He gained experience in his profession in Lisieux where, in 1868, he married. His position in the business world gave him prominence: he fulfilled liquidation functions for the World's Fair of 1878; and he became the textile expert for the Ministry of War, for Public Assistance and for the Customs Office. A prominently wealthy man, he exerted himself in favor of his friends of earlier days; in 1880 he was a member of an information committee to promote an Association of Friends; in 1882, he was a member of the administrative committee, and in 1892, he was president of the Association, to which he contributed an outstanding financial organization; he rendered spectacular service to alumni, whom he counselled in useful ways, whom he assisted and for whom he found reliable and well-compensated employment. Not satisfied to expend his energies in these ways, he showed his gratitude to the Brothers' Institute by taking part, with his friends Housset and Achilles Varin, in the Society of St. Nicolas and by accepting an administrative role in the Athis Mons Building Society. His long and active life came to an end on May 15, 1912 in Lisieux.

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From the balcony of the "Valentine House" whence, literally and figuratively, such beautiful vistas stood revealed we take our leave for the provinces. In order to simplify our itinerary we shall classify the schools to be visited into several groups: the West and the Southwest, the Midlands, and the group in the North and East, and then the group in the Southeast and the South. By proceeding thus in clusters we shall, perhaps, achieve the appearance of being a somewhat less exhausting and monotonous guide.

In the neighborhood of Paris, which we have just departed, in the Eure and Loir, we come across St. Pierre's in Dreux.[530] Its Director between 1873 and 1878, Brother Aventine of Mary, marked the fifth anniversary of his administration with construction. One of the younger teachers in the residence school succeeded him in 1879: Brother Leo of Jesus who was thirty-six years of age at the time. We got a glimpse of his aristocratic features when we recounted details of Brother Philippe's regime.[531] He deserves a closer look.

Leo Tissot, who was born on May 28, 1843, was the son of a notary in Annecy. His was a highly esteemed family: — "one of the leaders" among the local middle class. It was a thoroughly Catholic family; Leo's brother, Joseph, became the Superior-general of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. Religious vocations took root and flourished unopposed in such environments.

Léon, entrusted to the Brothers in a communal school, partly residential, asked to enet the Institute. Is parents agreed, Mme. Tissot herself writing May 30 1857 to the Brother Superior for his admission to the Juniorate. He came three months later. His whole behaviour as a religious was one of complete sacrifice.

Commendable virtue and a spiraling holiness that colleagues and pupils alike might long for did not suffocate native gifts. Brother Leo of Jesus, in his childhood home, lived among highly talented people. He was open to art in all its manifestations; and he handled a pencil and a paint brush skillfully; and he knew how to write appealingly in both verse and prose. Above all he cultivated music "with delight". In Dreux his reputation spread beyond the walls of the residence school. People came to listen to him play the organ. And his gifts as a composer and that he could express himself in agreeable hymns did not go unnoticed.

He won pupils over by gracious persuasion. The Director possessed that kind of attentiveness that, if anyone was able to take refuge in an obscure corner of St. Pierre's, Brother Leo could encourage effort, halt failure, and render uneasy a bad conscience. His apostolate had no fear of bold, thoroughly vital projects. One of Brother Leo's "Reports" made in the course of the Second Novitiate in November of 1887 at Athis received a great deal of attention: it had to do with "St. Vincent de Paul Societies" in the Congregation's educational institutions. An educator must use Frederick Ozanam's splendid innovation; no other means seemed better suited to his purposes; the young "member" of a St. Vincent de Paul group, in its weekly meetings and in their visits to the poor, practices Christian charity, learns to recognize and heal physical and moral suffering, exercises his zeal by word and work, expands his capacity for the supernatural life by avoiding selfishness, laziness and the pursuit of pleasure. Such, in summary, was the burden of the paper which had been vigorously presented. Through repeated acts which easily assume the quality of virtue and sacrifice, a young man discovers within the "group" the makings of activity and dedication along with vast possibilities wherein his enthusiastic nature takes flight, better, perhaps, than in a Confraternity, a delegation of which may very well possess all other advantages.

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[530] For the origins of the residence school in Dreux see Vol. V of the present work, pp. 397-398.

[531] Ibid., pg. 398.

Who would not be touched by such an argument, uttered by a man of prayer and penance, obedience and humility, by a man who could write the very personal and moving *The Religious Educator's Stations of the Cross*? Reappointed from St. Pierre's the year after his Second Novitiate, 1887, to take over a particularly thankless post at St. Joseph's College in Rome, Brother Leo was to conclude his ascent toward God in suffering.[532]

He left his assistant and friend, Brother Adolph of Mary behind him at Dreux. Between 1872 and 1887 both of them had inspired piety, love of work, a taste for beauty and the truth and a spirit of dependable and joyful brotherhood among the boys who came to them from Paris, the Beauce and from Perche. Head of section in 1878, Brother Adolph of Mary became Director when Brother Leo departed for Italy. Once again, a young man had assumed command; at thirty-seven years of age, Adolph Relaut, who had entered the Institute in 1866, was at the height of his physical and moral energy. A big man, well-built and still rather slim, his presence and the proud dignity of his bearing might have intimidated people had not the cordiality of his voice, the directness of his behavior, the ingenuity of his conversation, strewn with striking and colorful language, quickly put new-comers at their ease. His lively and straightforward look had a magnetic effect; while goodness shone in his eyes and his well shaped brow bespoke energy.

He seemed to spread the force of his own life about him. The people he had won over by his tone of authority and his deep conviction he retained by his graciousness and friendliness which he had a way of making irresistible — but especially by his fidelity. In this way was explained his amazing hold on a large number of pupils, several of whom were docile to the point of following their master in the ways of the Lasallian Congregation — all — Religious and laymen alike — preserved the memory of their happy years and their spiritual formation in "Druid" country.

To back him up, Brother Adolph had uncovered an ideal Sub-Director: Brother Aberce of Jesus (Jean Romeyer), "a model of unsung but steady dedication"; he was gentle and modest, in the manner of Brother Leo, with whom he had served between 1869 and 1887 and by whom he was guided; and like him, he accepted self-effacement, neglect and misunderstanding so long as happiness and peace reigned in the institution.

And while we cannot deal with a great number of teachers at St. Pierre's, we must at least allude to the presence — still a child at the time — of a favorite son — Charles Collier, known in the Institute as Brother Adolph Joseph whose youth and vocation had been placed under the twofold auspices of the Director of Dreux and of the Superior-general, the M. H. Brother Joseph.

After Charles had finished his studies at the residence school in the Eure and Loire, he remained for five years as a lay-teacher of science in the same institution. It was a test imposed by circumstances and by discerning counsellors on one who wished to dedicate himself to God. Admitted to the novitiate at Rancher in 1894, Brother Adolph Joseph returned to Dreux at the end of his year's probation. Until 1904 courageously and with total success he shouldered a task that would have crushed a less resolute man and exhausted one whose mind was less amply equipped. Alone he taught all subjects in the preparatory class for the second half of the modern baccalaureate program, which included mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural history, literature, philosophy, history, and geography. As a teacher he neglected nothing: a thinker and a man of letters, he had no hesitation in his preference for the teaching of morality, commenting on the major classical writers and dwelling, in the manner of Bosuet, on the effect of Providence over the centuries; and, in fact, he directed the minds of his pupils in the ways of

[532] Among Brother Leo's former pupils who had become priests we should mention Father Bellamy, Salesian and immediate associate of Don Bosco, and a Brazilian, Bishop Antonio Albano of St. Louis de Maranhao.

analysis and synthesis, and in his history classes presented "fascinating" accounts. In religious instruction he gave the best of himself: — a heart penetrated with divine love, a faith which had matured its beliefs with reading, patient study and daily meditation. Nevertheless, his teaching preserved the same intensity when he dealt with the sciences founded upon reason or upon experience. In these he especially sought intellectual discipline for his students. He wanted to train, not merely "encyclopedic" brains, but excellent minds that would be in a position to resolve arithmetical problems, to demonstrate a theorem as well as to take pleasure in a poem or to gather the abstract truths of philosophy. Twenty years of teaching testified to his power as an educator. And these were but a preface to the generous, painful and magnificent work of his mature years.[533]

As Dreux vanished in the turmoil, Rouen became the refuge for the banished. Our account must conclude at the threshold of that future. It encompasses, however, the history of the beginnings of the residence school in Rouen.

While, since the Revolution of the 18th century, the capitol of Normandy reclaimed the Brothers, who, besides their elementary schools, directed the Department's Normal School, it was unable to restore the St. Yon of the time of the Founder. Nevertheless, Catholics sought the opening of a residence school. To this end, a committee, sponsored by Archbishop Bonnechose of Rouen, was established in 1873. Brother Jean-Olympe, sounded out during the following year, decided in favor of the project; at about the same time he had been thinking about transferring to Normandy the personnel of the Beauregard school in Lorraine that had been closed by the Germans. The people in the east, however, did not want to lose the Brothers; and the Community that Bismarck had evicted merely fell back on Longuyon.

In order to keep the promise made to the people in Rouen, the Superior-general sent them Brother Amborsine. From the diocese of Langre, like Brother August Hubert, Ambrose Bournot had belonged to the Congregation since 1852. And like his younger countryman, he had been a member of the teaching staff at Passy. "Big and imposing", with a broad face, an austere mouth, an air of gravity and solemnity in his entire person and great courtesy in his language and manner, at the outset he did not seem to extend his educational ambitions much beyond immediate goals and to aim especially at good order.

The committee had gathered funds to purchase a piece of property on Rue Chaine. With Brother Ambrosine's arrival the renovations began. The Director and his associates opened classes on October 20, 1874. Except for rare exceptions, only children between the ages of six and twelve were admitted to the "Notre Dame Residence School". It was a tactful policy which safeguarded the health of the teachers, facilitated discipline and the creation of a family spirit among very young people.

But the sixty pupils of the first days quickly became 108 and thereafter over 200. The site was no longer viable. But it could be replaced only on condition of promising to maintain in the parish a day school which would preserve the name "Notre Dame". More spacious quarters were found available on rue St. Gervais: — a factory, stores, an office and a residence building in a neighborhood close by the railroad tracks, for which 350,000 francs were paid.[534] The Brothers took possession of the complex on September 24, 1880, and on October 4, 350 pupils showed up for classes; it was an inroad that was both too large and too varied in its make-up. This shortcoming in the selection of pupils was to have consequences from which the residence

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[533] Vie du Frère Léon-de-Jésus, 1933. — Brother Albert Valentine, Le Pensionnat de Saint-Pierre de Dreux, 1914; and by the same author, biography of Brother Adolph Joseph, 1942. — On Brother Adolph of Mary, see also *Choix de notices nécrologiques*, Vol. III, pp. 235-255.

[534] Supplied by a private society.

school would long suffer.

Exhausted by fatigue, Brother Ambrosine asked for a change. We shall meet him presently along the banks of the Loire in Tours. But he would return to die, on December 2, 1899, in the school he founded, which he continued to love and that remained faithful to him.[535]

The administrations of Brothers Benedict and Aventine of Mary did not last at all long. However, Brother Aventine had the distinction of laying the cornerstone for the chapel. The event needs to be explicitly noted, since the building was to serve as the reliquary for the remains of John Baptist de La Salle.

Since 1835 these precious remains, exhumed from St. Yon, rested in a vault behind the altar set aside for religious services in the Normal School of the Lower Seine. When Brother Irlide withdrew the Brothers from the Department, the Community on rue Beauvoisine provided the future relics with a temporary haven.

It was already possible to anticipate the beatification. The residence school in Rouen, acquiring the ancient inheritance of the institution in St. Sauver was — and quite correctly — to be placed under the special patronage of the founder of modern education. De La Salle's mortal remains were therefore entrusted to it. And the Superiors decided on the construction of a monument that was to reflect that function. The architect who had been selected, M. Barthélemy, understood the mind of the Institute. He drew up a frugal and balanced plan which was to be executed quite successfully in stone. This Romanesque jewel, which is the chapel on rue St. Gervais, stood forth in all its cool beauty on the occasion of the celebration in honor of the new Blessed.

Brother Thomas arrived to assume the responsibilities of Director. From Passy he brought with him the best principles of educational philosophy; and to adapt them to the Norman environment, he combined long experience with a great deal of tact, clearsightedness and an immense love of souls. The institution was going through a crisis, from which it emerged, thanks to its Director. Supported by talented assistants with a broad scientific background, such as the very energetic Brother Honest and Brother Aucte, the new Director propelled the "John Baptist de La Salle Residence School" into a period of prosperity.[536]

Similar times were promised for the sister-institution, the St. Joseph's residence school in Caen. It had begun humbly on rue Geôle in October of 1870 and, then, a few months later on rue St. Giles. It was subsequently reestablished on rue Caumont under the direction of Brother Abre, but in physical conditions that were still so inadequate that on three different occasion Brother Irlide had pronounced its closure. Bishop Hugonin of Bayeux and his Vicar-general, Father Reverony, insisting that it remain open, wrung stays of execution.

In 1884, a new Superior-general gave permission for the imperative reorganization of the project. Two lines of action combined to penetrate the road to the future: there was the Director, Brother Arthaud and there was Father Garnier, the chaplain, brimming over with zeal and inspired in the highest degree with a religious and a social sense, and working in complete understanding with the members of the Congregation. The Brother and the priest wanted to endow the principal city of Calvados with a school that would train sturdy Catholics. But first they had to find a setting: a piece of land situated on rue Rosiers was available for the construction of spacious buildings; and a few friends assumed responsibility for signing a deed of purchase. And, then, without breaking stride, a Corporation was set up which launched an

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[535] A bust of Brother Ambrosine was dedicated at the residence school in Rouen in 1925.

[536] Archives of the District of Caen, Historique of the schools in Normandy, Vol. II. — An account of the schools in Rouen (by Brother Adolph Joseph), 1913. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for October 1925, pg. 335. — Armand Le Lièvre, Frère Aucte, by Brother Albert Valentine, 1931.

appeal for funds, assembled a sufficient number of subscribers and was then in a position to realize the plan of the architect Lamotte. The cornerstone was laid on April 14, 1885; and on October 22, two weeks after the pupils had begun their courses of study, Bishop Hugonin blessed the buildings.

Father Garnier dedicated himself to the residence school until 1888. It was at that time that his apostolic labors throughout France completely absorbed him. Brother Arthaud stayed on, with his optimism intact and his somewhat coarse way of dealing with his people and of directing his bark. Around him there were teachers at the height of their powers, among them was Brother Albertis of Jesus (Edward Victor Decorde). Born in 1851 in Darnetal of a working-class family, a Junior Novice in Paris under the direction of Brother Pierre Celestine, his initiation as a teacher was prior to the Franco-Prussian War. Having on several occasions changed teaching posts, he arrived at the residence school on Rue Rosiers in October of 1886 and did not leave it until — temporarily — 1902. By this time he was an experienced teacher, and taught pupils in the highest classes. In 1894, Brother Albertis, as Sub-Director, became the column upon which the entire institution rested. His fidelity, distinction and sensitivity won him universal respect and, as he advanced in age, the warmest veneration. He owed his most enduring influence to his religious virtues, the signs of which emerge from the letters he wrote to his brother, a priest. He was committed to monastic regularity; and his prayer was suffused with a vibrant piety and an open docility to divine Providence. At crucial moments the extent of his dedication became a matter of record.[537] To "John Baptist de La Salle" in Rouen and "St. Joseph" in Caen, gems in the ducal crown of Normandy, in Catholic Brittny there corresponded "Likès" in Quimper and "Bel Air" in Nantes, both of them much earlier foundations.[538] The great builder of Likés was Brother Dagobert who died in November of 1879. After him came Brother Cyril of Jesus and Brother Cyril of the Angels. The second of these particularly, in his fourteen years of direction, left his mark on the school. And while, immediately after the death of M. Olive and in spite of the withdrawal of Departmental subsidies, he preserved the courses in agriculture, he ascribed chief importance to general instruction in the technical courses taught by the new head of the program. On the other hand, the industrial section, begun prior to 1887, was rapidly expanded; it opened up possibilities to Breton youths in that function of the Navy in which it applied technology to armaments and ship management. It was another attempt — on the whole, successful — that the Director had undertaken when he established the administrative and commercial section of the school. He had for a longtime been preoccupied with the task of finding a satisfactory and stable formula for school programs — a thing that he did not achieve without experimentation and revision. His goal had been the complete adaptation of the Brothers' teaching to the ways the region made its living; and that might have been considered accomplished when in 1895 the school admitted 798 pupils. Thereafter, the numbers fell off, but never below a mean of 600.

The influence of the residence school in the region endured. This was felt at the political level: in 1899 Finistère had seventy-four mayors, ninety-seven vice-mayors, ten country counsellors and two general counsellors all of whom were former pupils in the agricultural section of the residence school. Loyalty was maintained by the creation of an "Alumni Association" under the guidance of Brother Cyril; the faith, that had been fortified by the instruction of the Brothers, was exhibited in the chapel, a graceful work designed by the

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[537] Under his civilian name, Edward Decorde took over the direction of the residence school in Caen after the law of 1904. Until the very end of his vigorous old age, in the eyes of his pupils and his fellow-citizens, he was identified with the heart of that school. — Obituary, 1940; and the complete biography by Brother Albert Valentine, 1948.

[538] ,[538]Since the Founder had become the patron of many other schools in the Institute, the name "St. Gervais" obtained currency For the beginnings of these schools see Vol. V of the present work, pp. 260-265 adn 388-390

priest-architect Abgrall, built between 1896 and 1898.[539]

St. Joseph's in Bel Air proudly represented a distinguished class of people in Nantes, well-educated, prosperous and adherents of the laws of God and of the Church; among them were precursors and founders of the Catholic Association of French Youth, disciples of Father Garreau, the chaplain of the residence school and founder of the "Leo XIII Conference" dedicated to the study of the Papal social teachings. In this fervent environment vocations to the priesthood were not lacking. There were two, in particular, that were the pride of the celebrated school: there was Father Dorgère, a missionary in Dahomey who, after his return from Africa, died in the diocese of Fréjus, the victim of his heroic dedication; and the Equidorian, Emmanual Polit who had come to France at the age of ten years, a devout and brilliant pupil of Brother Idelphus. Having returned to his native land, the young man at first was intended for the law; from the bar he went on to become a member of Parliament in the South American republic. But soon forsaking the conquests of judicial and political oratory, he went to Rome to study theology and was then admitted to St. Sulpice as a seminarian; in December of 1894 he was ordained a priest in Paris. The former president of the "Youth Academy" at Bel Air henceforth had an important mission to accomplish: the Ecuadorian Church claimed the service of his example, his knowledge and his zeal. After have been a teacher in the Seminary in Quito and Vicar-general, Emmanual Polit, in 1907, occupied the Episcopal See of Cuenca. In 1918 he became Archbishop of Quito and, until his last days in 1932, he was the venerated pastor of his flock, an extraordinary leader of a Catholic people in his native land and always, at the depths of his heart, the grateful disciple of the Brothers of Brittany.

At the head of the Community in Nantes between 1880 and 1892 stood Brother Cesar. An Angevin by birth, originally from Doué la Fontaine, Felix Foyer spent his entire Religious life on the banks of the Loire. As a very young Brother in 1852, he received an appointment for the residence school that had been begun by Brother Lambert. Ten years later he was teaching mathematics to the most advanced pupils. Subsequently, he became Prefect of studies and Sub-director. His firmly founded popularity continued to thrive. As Director, the friendships with which he was surrounded enabled him, in 1884, to found the St. Joseph's Alumni Association. He died at the age of fifty-six: — a sudden and premature passing that inspired genuine public mourning. Brother Cesar's funeral assumed the aspects of a triumph. At his grave in "Mercy" cemetery a monument was erected bearing a portrait of the lamented teacher with an accompanying verse by a local poet:

His robe was of sackcloth, but his heart was of gold.

Bel Air felt the full effect of this loss. But far from declining, the school grew in reputation well beyond the walls of the city or the limits of the diocese. It experienced academic successes that it had at one time considered superfluous. It enhanced its physical appearance: in 1900 the architect Devorsine drew up a splendid reception hall whose lines and decorations called to mind Charles Garnier's Opera. Unfortunately the bigots in 1904 drove this revered and very successful enterprize to irrevocable destruction.[540]

Less spectacularly, St. Martin's residence school supplied basic education and foundational instruction to the sons of wine-makers and small proprietors in Toulouse. The beginnings of this school go back to 1860, to the time of Brother Erasmus, who had at first located the school temporarily. In 1870 the Archbishop of Tours relinquished to the Brothers the buildings belonging to St. Louis College. From that point on the future became rather clear. In 1879

[539] Archives of the District of Quimper; and Centenaire de l'École Sainte-Marie (Likès), 1938.

[540] Account of Bel-Air; Prizes, Lequidy residence school, 1932-1933, 1933-1934.

when Brother Alphonsus replaced Brother Erasmus — stricken by an incurable illness — he had the supervision of 240 pupils; and by 1883 there were nearly 300.

But it was Brother Ambrosine, come from Rouen, who — between 1884 and 1899 —would secure unequivocal growth. And it was here that the administrator and educator who, in Normandy, had had successes mixed with a number of setbacks, would demonstrate his real talent. He worked out a system of studies capable of satisfying the most serious and ambitious public at St. Martin's. Toward the end of 1886 the program was brought to focus: it included an expansion of foreign language teaching, the opening of a course in commercial law and complete preparation for the modern bachelor's degree. Furthermore, physical education was promoted at the residence school; and on holidays there were exhibitions in the major sports.

The Director, regal and a little rigid, inspired a certain amount of fear. He did not seem to entertain fatherly feelings for anybody until they had been launched into their adult lives. But with these he abandoned his posture of domination and sympathized with their problems and dispensed encouragement and advice. Thus, by 1887, he had succeeded in bringing together his friends in Tours in an Alumni Association.

He included in his Community teachers of distinguished quality and undeniable prestige: there was Brother Dionas whose clear, energetic mind and vast learning exercised its control over the candidates for the bachelor's degree and certificate; there was Brother Dacian, witty, enigmatic, smitten with the philosophy of his countryman Ernest Hello and a friend of Léon Bloy, who wrote him about twenty letters and who had a special respect for the judgment of his correspondent.

Toward the end of the century, Brother Cadelian, who had taught mathematics at the school in Tours between 1869 and 1876 and thereafter was Prefect of studies for another four years, succeeded Brother Ambrosine. He completed a reform of teaching methods, and satisfied families who wished to see their sons' education crowned by the reception of a diploma. The sudden ruthlessness of the closure on July 10, 1904 dashed these hopes.[541]

We would observe the same efforts and analogous results collapsing in the same catastrophe at the residence school in Poitiers, for twenty years directed by Brother Carolius, and — in more restricted precincts — in the residence schools in Angoulême, Périgueux and Bergerac. But it is essential for us to turn our attention without further ado to "St. Genes" in Bordeaux.

This school owed its existence to Brother Irlide. Recently the founder of an excellent residence school in Bayonne,[542] the future Superior-general was able to anticipate as well as to accomplish. In 1873, as one of Brother Philippe's Assistants and responsible for the District of Guyenne, he believed that it was necessary to open a school for the commercial and rural middle class in the principal city of the Southwest. He ignored Brother Alphonsus' objections. The Marianists were trying to sell their St. Anne's estate on rue St.Genes, and the Brother Assistant fixed his choice on this vast property in an open, quiet neighborhood.

For the time being, the shabby looking buildings were retained; and classes opened on January 3, 1874: there were twenty-eight pupils the first day, but by August there were about 100. During vacation the M. H. Brother Jean-Olympe came to Bordeaux and examined the architect's plans. The John Baptist de La Salle Residence School — here for the first time the Founder's name was given to a major educational institution — comprised two wings of five stories constructed over very deep basements; a balcony was to bring these monumental

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[541] Albert Brault, Le Pensionnat Saint-Martin de Tours, 1930.

[542] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 399-400. St. Bernard's continued to grow; it was thriving among its Franco-Spanish public when the persecution under Combe forced it to resettle on the other side of the frontier. In our times it has returned to the city of its origin; but not to its original site (now occupied by a hugh department store, called the "French Ladies") but to a very beautiful domain surrounded by greenery.

structures together and form a facade overlooking the street. Brother Irlide placed the cornerstone on the left wing in December. This section of the work progressed quite rapidly. But the entire complex was never completed in the massive proportions in which it had been conceived.

Between 1885 and 1888 the right wing, which included the chapel, arose. A Building Society, headed by one of Bordeaux's leading business men, assumed responsibility for the finances. Since it was dedicated to "St. Genes", the name of the martyr succeeded, in current parlance, in supplanting the holy Founder's, to whom the residence school and its chapel remained officially dedicated.

Catholics in Bordeaux showed a great deal of confidence in the new foundation. As early as 1875 the school's population had reached 300 pupils. Moral unity, however, was long in appearing; there were a variety of strains that were rather juxtaposed than fused. What was being sought was superior talent and genuine stamina that would be able to organize initiative and obtain full intellectual effect.

Meanwhile, a somewhat fastidious concern hovered nervously over a creature that had scarcely seen the light of day. An effort was made to employ external supervision to supply the place of what was a psychological failure. Harsh discipline kept order in a body whose movements needed to be coordinated by some internal principle.

Brother Irlide found such a man and, with an imperious gesture, sent him to the Girond. We have already met him: he was Brother Vigbert Louis, the Savoyard who at this time in 1883 was busy writing a philosophy textbook. "Do you want to direct something"? the Superior asked, satisfied with the Brother's words of obedience. Humble and docile, Brother Louis didn't think much of his administrative abilities. Besides, he wanted as far as possible to preserve his freedom to write. "Very well, so be it, you are to be Sub-director and Prefect of studies".

Brother Iblasius, whom, earlier, Brother Leotherician seconded, and who for a year had been holding the reins of government, without the suggestion of jealousy welcomed the associate appointed by the Superior of the Institute. In fact he had petitioned Brother Irlide to send "someone", and significantly he had underscored the word.

Among the two Brothers who were prepared to work together for the salvation of souls tasks were easily shared. The Director was to continue his work as builder, and he was to remain the Congregation's representative with the parents of the pupils. Under his guidance the residence school gradually came to flourish; and pupils came not only from Southwest France but from Spain, Africa and America.

Brother Louis became dean for literature, the sciences and philosophy. Anything that had to do with the educational ministry gradually came under his control. During a period in which Brother Iblasius was finally overwhelmed by fatigue and illness, the person of the Sub-director became the embodiment of the institution.

The influence of such a vigorous educator was especially felt by the young teachers. He put them on their guard against both presumption and discouragement. He habituated them to personal work, to reading, the analysis of texts, to recitations from memory and to everything that restored the intellectual forces that had been enfeebled by inevitable routine. French composition and, of course, experiments in poetry, were all submitted for Brother Louis' judgment.

Classes were kept on the alert by the Sub-director's inspections, "dictations", exhortations and commentaries. His ascendancy at Bordeaux coincided with the development of special educational programs: St. Genes put its pupils in position to answer to the requirements of the Department of Public Education.

Clear ideas and creative principles directed religious and moral education. Brother Louis repeated endlessly: "We make children good by making them happy; and we make them happy

by making them good." Excessive punitive assignments and detention were worthless: appeal had to be made to the affections, to reason and to conscience; it is equally important to study individual characters and to observe and make use of the reactions of each nature. Woe betide schools whose educational system is a mere matter of punishment and an external respect for discipline!

Equally unfortunate were those institutions in which religion is nothing more than a facade. Brother Louis, in complete agreement with the chaplain, Father Lafaye, initiated a genuine community of Christian youth. "Indeed!" exclaimed the priest and the Brother, "God is with us; people possess natural and supernatural talents; our activity relies on prayer, the Sacraments and Grace makes it fruitful; how can anybody claim that the triumph of the good runs up against unbeatable odds?" Inspired by a lofty ardor and a doughty optimism, the two men, through their youth-groups, trained leaders who influenced the masses.

The Sub-director spoke the same language to the Brothers, his disciples. He admonished them to develop all their talents. God had selected them for a magnificent mission: they must respond to that choice by redoubling their efforts at perfection at both the human and the religious levels. "Without work, piety is ineffectual; and without work there is no virtue." By broadening our intellectual horizons, we stimulate the will, force it to raise itself to new heights.

Among his listeners Brother Louis met with a man from Languedoc, in the neighborhood of Castres, Jean-Augustine Blattes, Brother Israel who, in 1883, taught the highest class at St. Genes. He had the reputation for being an excellent teacher. He radiated that southern warmth that captivated and cheered and which he tempered with a calm gentleness and an unwavering civility. As a youth, without breaking stride, he had gone from the Brothers' school to the novitiate. As teacher in the house of formation at Rodez immediately after his first vows, he was able to dispel the homesickness of some of the postulants and graciously and without pretense introduce young people to Community life. With his generous nature, upright soul, docile and delicate, his entire being predisposed him for the friendship which, in the country of La Boétie and Montaigne, was struck up between himself and the Brother from Savoy.

Called from the Rouergue to Guyenne, Brother Israel's life would merge with that of the residence school in Bordeaux. Brother Louis' alter ego and joining him in his decisions and his enthusiasm, and indeed in his personal projects, Brother Israel would continue the work once Brother Louis had departed St. Genes.

At the beginning of 1891 Brother Iblasius died, and he was succeeded by the authoritative figure of Brother Jules. It was the judgment of the Superiors to appoint Brother Louis to St. Stephen's in Forez. Jean-Augustine Blattes became the Prefect of the upper classes at the school in the Gironde and also Sub-Director. In 1897 he became the leader of the institution, a position he held until 1904. And after that fateful date, he remained inseparably a part of the teaching body; and although "secularized", his ever powerful influence was felt by his colleagues, his pupils and the legions of "alumni" who included so many generous and distinguished persons whose worth was well known in Bordeaux — the Salles, the Guyots, the Beydts, the Colsons, the Grenié's, the Chevalier's and the Chassaing's.

Brothers Louis and Israel, through their basic intellectual concurrence, together and then the younger man after the older one, guaranteed the unity of inspiration and direction and the academic thrust of the residence school in the great city for more than half a century. And they transmitted that inheritance to a group of men who had been instructed by their efforts. It was a striking example of the results that can be obtained by a teaching Congregation, faithful to its principles, coherent in its membership and persevering in its purposes.[543]

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[543] Archives of the St. Genes Residence School. — G. Rigault, *Le Frère Louis de Savoie*, 1928.

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Another journey takes us from the central Loire region and Allier to the Upper Loire where we take the route to the Massif Central and drop down to Aveyron. Our stop-overs will be at Orléans, Le Puy, Clermont-Ferrand and Rodez.

Since the era when Brother Irenée assured his native diocese of the cooperation of the Brothers, they had never left Orléans. In civilian clothes, Brother Clair (Citizen Stephen Benoist) and Brother Liberius (Citizen Cendre) at the height of the Revolution taught young people in Orléans. The grammar schools thrived in every town and large village of the Department. At a slightly higher level of instruction, Our Lady of Nazareth School, in part an orphanage and in part the beginnings of a residence school, had also been opened.[544]

Of the two co-existent projects only the residence school would survive. But it suffocated in the "hole in the ground" that housed it: — in the most antiquated recess of the city, the lower section called "St. Pierre le Pullier" squeezed up against a hillside adjoining the river. A bright and enterprising Alsatian, Brother Aglibert of Mary, had been directing "Nazareth" since 1885; and he had been seeking to achieve the best solutions possible for the institution.

Bishop Coullié offered him St. Euvertus, the former Abbey of the Genovefains monastery situated at the eastern end of the city complex; here there were splendid expanses, huge trees, the regal dwellings of the Canons Regular prior to 1792, and an immense church in which the contributions of seven centuries coalesced in spectacular harmony. The Fathers of Mercy —missionaries founded by Father Rauzan to evangelize the French people — occupied the compound; but they had announced that they were on the point of withdrawing from it.

Brother Aglibert was prepared to negotiate. But he met with the Superior-general's objections: Brother Irlide feared the ineffectual expenditure of a great deal of money. In the end he was persuaded by the importance of St. Euvertus for the future both of private education and of the Institute. He signed a contract on February 2, 1879: the Brothers leased — from the Fathers of Mercy — the main building, with an option to buy. They quickly modified it in accordance with their needs; and the church was restored in those places where it was threatening to collapse.

"Nazareth" was abandoned and sold to Dessaux, a wholesale vinegar producer; and the abbey was occupied on October 15, 1880. It was the dawning of days abounding in projects and blessings. Brother Aglibert lived to experience this new light, but he received no other reward on earth. The inauguration was scarcely over when a letter from Brother Assistant Joseph told Bishop Coulié that the Director had been transferred. Three years later, the Brother who had been removed in this fashion from Orléans died, surrounded by the Superiors at Rue Oudinot, died in his fifties.

Under the leadership of his replacement, Brother Eusebius, there was formed the "Hope Society" which effected the purchase of all the buildings clustered around the old church. Henceforth the property belonged to the stockholders. The renting was legally granted to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The successive heads of the Community, the Prefects of studies, and the tenured teachers, apart from the conscientious preparation for official examinations, were employed in catechetical instruction. The minds they strove to form were not unruly; rather they were compliant youngsters from the Beauce countryside seated alongside the sons — more cosmopolitan if not more persistent — of city dwellers, business men, liberal professionals and army officers. Many parents entrusted to the Brothers their very young sons who, often enough, continued their studies in ecclesiastical secondary schools, for which St. Euvertus provided a

[544] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 398-399, along with the references.

very sound foundation.

Nevertheless, the school retained for the entire course of study many pupils who proved to be a credit to their teachers of French, science, foreign languages and history. For some of its members the teaching personnel deserved more than simple respect: witness — to speak only of the dead — the eloquent and astute moralist, Brother Honoré Victor, the future Director of the College in Smyrna and the brilliant mathematician, Brother Heli Samuel whom we shall meet with again in Orléans, involved quite successfully in practical matters.

Surrounded by vigilant Religious and cultivated by attentive, devoted and fatherly chaplains,[545]notable vocations sprung up in this region, where they developed without needing to be transplanted. For candidates for the priesthood instruction in Latin, obtained outside of the school preceded seminary training. And while vocations to the Institute appeared less numerous, there were still generous souls who were guided very far indeed along the road to a career in education.

Orléans and Moulins, belonging to the same District, had on a number of occasions interchanged teachers. The city on the banks of the Allier was in fact the twin of the city on the Loire. There were the same stretches of delightful greenery and of capricious water, by turns sluggish and wild, the same tile roofs, the same architecture in brick and stone, the same memories of a royal people under a fragile, shaded sky. Anyone who had to live at times in the Orléans region and at other times in the Bourbonais at no time every experienced the feelings of exile.

St. Giles in Moulins was nearly the contemporary of the Brothers' "Nazareth" in the Loiret.[546] But the former remained unaltered on the estate of the old Pierre Bourbon workhouse. Its name bound it forever with its past history in the work of Christian charity in service to the poor and the sick: officially, until 1870, the residence school was called "St. Joseph's". The Director at the time, Brother Gélosius, had to bow to the obstinacy of the people in Moulins who refused to acknowledge any name but "St. Giles."

The buildings, whose ownership Bishop Dreux-Bréezé retained, were only too reminiscent of their antique history: dilapidated, dark, cramped, poorly planed, to be torn down nothing more was needed than that the Congregation be given freedom of action.

Teachers and pupils filled these mournful surroundings with spirited activities, classes, games and prayer. In the days of Brother Asclepiades instruction did not go beyond the junior high school level. If it gave access to employment in the Tax Offices, Roads and Bridges, the Post Office or as an industrial foreman, the most avid ambition asked for nothing better. However, the school principal, a learned man, author on a great variety of subjects, who had recently been at the head of the "Academy" at Passy and who, in a few years, was to become the Archivist at the Motherhouse, laid the groundwork for the future: he secured a library for St. Giles, a coin and medal collection and an embryonic museum.

During the administrations of Brothers Gélosius, Gervais, Godfrey of the Angels, Imier of Jesus and Victor study programs were expanded and directed toward secondary education.

The powerful figure of Brother Imier, a future Superior-general — during his Moulins period — took on an impressive prominence. In 1886, at the age of thirty-one, he came to St. Giles to teach physics and natural history. By that time the fame of the residence school had spread throughout the whole of Bourbon and as far as Nivernais and Berry; it was lauded for its good spirit and the religious fervor of its pupils; the learning of its teachers — of Brother Adelphin, of Brother Honeste, etc. — was acclaimed. Brother Imier of Jesus followed the lead of these distinguished men; and he maintained instruction at the level to which his predecessors had brought it.

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[545] Here we would like to mention the name of the very friendly and remarkable Father Paul Barbier.

[546] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 395.

One of his former pupils has spoken of the "unbelievable influence" he exercised. "His moral authority expanded to its full professional stature. No printed text could replace his very clear and fascinating explanations. A lesson he gave was lesson learned and retained."

When Brother Godfrey was sent to Egypt in 1893, general opinion supported the Superiors' choice that put Brother Imier at the head of the institution. The school was rebuilt: after the establishment in 1891 of a corporation which became the legal owner of the property, Brother Godfrey drew up plans for a new St. Giles. His successor, with the support of Bishop Dubourg and the authorization of the Regime, began to build. Gradually the residence school emerged from the old workhouse, like a chrysalis from its shell. The Director himself supervised the workplace without slackening in the least his religious responsibilities, his concern for his pupils or the forward progress (in the teeth of obstacles) that he urged upon his associates at every level.[547]

The impression Brother Gabriel-Marie — also a future Superior-general — left at Moulins he bequeathed as well to the Community at Le Puy, after nine years of guiding the Notre Dame of France residence school. The institution rested on solid foundations; Brother Hugolin, its celebrated founder, had planned its future.[548] Beginning in 1873 and continuing on to 1882, Brother Gabriel-Marie expended the full intensity of his character to obtain the best results as well as consistent and genuine effort in the regularity of his Brothers and the discipline of their pupils. Not very talkative, he was able to get results with brief commands. To him was due the beginnings of a literary "Academy" which was both a witness to, and the crowning point of, the expansion of studies. In all of this piety was not lost from view, something that was demonstrated most forcibly in the Marian Confraternity.

Brothers Néonile of Mary and Nicet Ernest thereafter assumed the helm and exhibited their fidelity to such a lofty tradition. Among the men who supported them they were fortunate enough to have as Sub-director the very influential Brother Nestor of Bithnya, and the scholar, archaeologist and botanist, Brother Nicanor who also worked successfully in the cause of the beatification of Brother Benilde.

During the administration of Brother Nicet Ernest the chapel, a huge Romanesque repository, sober, indeed austere, in its lines, was constructed according to plans drawn up by Brother Nestor Joseph, and, on September 19, 1901, consecrated by Bishop Pélacot of Troyes. In the 20th century it provided a place of worship to dedicated youths, surrounded by remarkable teachers, who inspire a Catholic Action movement and spread the faith by means of a Liturgical renewal.[549]

Clermont-Ferrand had at one time possessed Le Puy as a dependency. The capitol of Auvergne, under the patronage of the Virgin Mary, had been in no way inferior, in matters of Christian education, to its former affiliate in the Velay, the center of an ancient devotion to Our Lady. The residence school opened in the neighborhood of Clermont's basilica entered, on April 22, 1862, upon a period of prominence: for forty years it had the advantage of Brother Annet's guidance.[550]

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[547] M. H. Brother Imier of Jesus' Obituary, 1929. — Yearbook, St. Giles of Moulins, 1932-1933. — Archives of the Secretary-general, Rue de Sèvres.

[548] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 396-397.

[549] M. H. Brother Gabriel of Mary's Obituary, 1917. — Archives of the Notre Dame of France Residence School. — In the same District, the residence school in Mende was begun in 1880 under the patronage of St. Privat. A building society called "Christian Education" assumed charge in 1884 of the necessary construction. In 1904, the residence school and the private school attached to it included 300 pupils taught by nineteen Brothers.

[550] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 333, 390, and 525-527.

Shortly after the distinguished Brother's death Father Sertillanges declared: "If Brother Annet had been called upon to occupy an extremely important public post in the State, he would have filled it with the highest distinction. If Providence had placed him on the throne, he would have made a great kind; there was something of Louis XIV in his majestic presence and in his natural splendor which combined friendliness with nobility."[551]

But these were only the most superficial, external and apparent qualities of the man. However, a former pupil like Father Sertillanges went further by revealing to us the reasons for his assertion:

"I admit that I owe Brother Annet what only eternity can repay him for, since under his supervision and influence I felt the white robe and the cappa of the Order of Preachers fall upon my shoulders. Obviously, I can attribute to none but God the sudden grace of my vocation; but the Brother helped me — as he had helped many others — to manage and cultivate that grace. He questioned, he clarified and he forced me to examine the problem...He especially got me involved in prayer; and I recall the fresh impression, every morning since then, that his deep voice had on me as, from the back of the chapel, it arose like a stroke of a censer spilling recollection over us as it sped praise Heaven-ward."[552]

In these lines we sense something that goes to the heart of the matter. We glimpse the educator in his more than human rôle, in his search for and counselling of souls. Between 1865 and 1887 Brother Annet had as a confrere another of God's auxiliaries, an apostle whose influence functioned more unbrokenly and more compellingly: Brother Gabriel of the Cross.[553] Another Dominican, Father Mandonnet, a professor at the University of Fribourg, in 1913 evoked the image that had dwelt — for over twenty-five years — in his memory: "He was a bony figure of a man, full of character and the evidences of asceticism; he had dark hair, deeply marked facial features and a high forehead; overall there shone his eyes that seemed filled with lofty visions and a set of the mouth that spoke of kindliness...His pathetic, spare body was lost in a robe that was sometimes threadbare but always clean."[554]

Brother Gabriel's posture and the cast of his face moved his pupils and lead them to reflect as much, perhaps, as his classes and as his words of wisdom or the say he said his prayers, in which they perceived something of his spiritual life. The results were especially witnessed by the Brothers of the residence school and the young people to whom, for over ten years, the saintly Religious dedicated himself, to rouse their devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin, to inspire them with an active charity, a firm determination to preserve moral integrity, and a will to provide good example.

There was a third prominent personality: Brother Heli, Brother Annet's assistant and successor. He was born in 1845 and died in 1908, operating under his civilian name of "M. Chanson", which he had to resume in order to keep the "Godfrey de Bouillon Residence School" opened. A monument was erected to his memory in 1930 at the entrance to the institution; it is a bronze bust standing opposite one commemorating Brother Annet. It is possible to read the character of the leader on the broad forehead, the strong mouth punctuated at the corners and the energetic, commanding chin. The eyes appear to question, seeking honest answers. On the cheeks there are wrinkles that suggest worrisome concerns. However, the

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551 Quote by Leo Prugnard, *Historique du pensionnat Godefroy-de-Bouillon*, pp. 9-10.

552 Brother Annet's Obituary, 1902.

553 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 483-484.

554 Quote by Brother Paul Joseph, biography of Brother Gabriel of the Cross, pg. 100.

general impression of one who dwells for any length of time on this face retains less of the unobtrusive suffering and the austere appearance than the reflection of serenity, of sensitive and tempered kindliness and of supernatural peace.

After this rather somber excursion through the "Jacobin" region of old Auvergne, the ascent that brings us to St. Joseph's in Rodez takes place in the broad light of day. On a promontory that we have already described[555] buildings dating from various times stood in order: the east wing was built in 1860 and the west wing between 1872 and 1874. The chapel cornerstone was laid on May 8, 1870; and the work, interrupted by the war, was brought to a successful termination in 1875; on July 13 Bishop Bourret consecrated the edifice with the single nave, the robust proportions and the walls indented with niches in the fashion of the Italian churches. The residence school, as well as the adjoining house of formation and the retreat house had undergone remodeling and expansion. On the whole, the people of the Rouergue felt at home between walls which, while laying no claim to architectural beauty, displayed nothing wild and in open spaces where the winds swirled. The Rodez cathedral rose on the horizon: it had the facade of a fortress, gables and buttresses marked with religious majesty, and a steeple topped by a statue of the Virgin that had been sculpted by goldsmiths. As Francis Fabié writes in one of his poems "the sons of the Causse in the tall, waving wheat", "of the Segala where the furze flourishes...of the Vallon where the grapes ripen", "of the Mountain...where the cattle low", all, having climbed the rugged road to Rodez's acropolis received "Our Lady's" maternal welcome. Residence pupils under her watchful eye could feel no homesickness: the tutelary church took its place as "the symbol" of "the old Rouergue."[556]

Not far from it plucky kids were at work. There was a time, prior to anti-religious politics, when the Education Department commended them. On June 24 1875 M. Gaillard, Educational Inspector, presided over a celebration in the course of which nine youths of the residence school received diplomas awarded by a jury of the Vienna World's Fair for work in linear and imitative drawing. At the time, the level of instruction provided at the school was "higher elementary". From 1877 to 1883 a special secondary education was substituted in its place, only to be presently returned to the earlier program. The final conversion of St. Joseph's in Rodez to a modern secondary school was effected in November of 1895. At the time there were five hundred pupils in attendance — more than a half of whom were residence.[557]

François-Joseph Burguière, Brother Inglevert, the Director in 1859, resumed guidance during the years 1877 to 1879. Casimir Boulouis, a former pupils of the Brothers' schools, succeeded him as Brother Ismeon of Mary. But the man whom the grateful memory of the people of the Rouergue never disassociated from local history was Brother Idineal (Edward Segonzac), who for nineteen years in his Religious garb had been at the helm and then, with resolute heart and ever eager hand, for five years in secular dress.

His administration — between 1885 to 1909 — marked St. Joseph's high point. The Community included, Francis Fabié's friend, Brother Ildefonse, Brother Isodorus of Mary, teacher of French and history, Brothers Isaac of Spoleto and Isidor of Peluse, of whose artistic talents we have already spoken,[558] Brother Koska of Mary, who drew Cardinal Bourret's applause for the importance he attached to studies in religion and philosophy, Brother Xenophon Joseph, a contagiously joyful man and a particularly skillful teacher and, finally, Brother Irlide Bernard, a future Director of the school and Visitor of the District.

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555 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 400-402 and 524-525.

556 Francis Fabié, *La Terre et les Paysans*, selected poems, 1923, pg. 46.

557 Between 1873 and 1904 residence fee were not more than 500 francs a year. Tuition for the day pupils remained around eighty francs for the three trimesters.

558 See above, pp. 151-152.

Among their pupils, who came from rural areas, there were a certain number destined for business careers and situations in government. This tendency can be accounted for without charging the Brothers with subverting agriculture. People in the Aveyron could not guarantee a future for all their children on land that was neither very productive nor very rewarding to farm. Other ways of making a livlihood had to be examined. Between 1886 and 1894 fifty-six graduates of St. Joseph's had been admitted to the Schools of Arts and Trades in Aix and in Angers. During the period that preceded there was a surge to jobs in Roads and Bridges, Post and Telegraph, and the Tax Offices. Noteworthy also were the successes in examinations for the Railways and the Mines in Alès, for the School of Veterinary medicine and for positions requiring expert geometricians.

Thus, technical education was highly regarded in Rodez and continued to grow, with support coming from a great number of teaching aids. Perhaps, in all of this, formation of the spirit was neglected? It doesn't appear so, if we scan the register of the "Literary Society", lead by Brother Israël around 1875 and the "Society of Arts and Sciences" organized as early as 1872 by Brothers Idulphin and Idinaël of Mary, whose reports are lively, judicious and extremely interesting. After months of repose between 1878 and 1879, the two Societies were combined and set in motion. The old "Academy" in which the youthful reputation of François Fabié had earned its wings was restored to life in 1883. And the voluntary contributors, recruited from among the Brothers as much, it appears, as from among resident pupils, perpetuated a chronicle of school events in a "newspaper" that in the beginning was called *L'Ami de l'Enfance* and subsequently *Foi et Science.*

A reading of them throws light on the way in which the Brothers perceived education: — they made themselves available to their pupils, were involved in the least classroom detail and knew how, at the right moment, to slip a relaxing remark into a lesson or a moral instruction; and when festivals, games and spectacles were the order of the day, they gave every celebration and familial character.

There was a Society of St. Cecilia for musicians. Later on a "Montalembert Circle" was founded for the devotee of public speaking and an "Ozanam Circle" that made its appeal to pupils interested in social questions and was opened only to members of the Confraternity of St. Vincent de Paul.

As for the Society of St. Gabriel, which bore both the Baptismal name of Blessed Perboyre, the Vincentian martyr, and the Religious name of Edmond Brunhes, Brother Gabriel-Marie (who took part in the early phases of the club's inauguration), it owed its origins to the accidents of events. Since the private elementary school could not be maintained for the lack of funds and a sufficient number of pupils, Brother Visitor Gelosius proposed to the head of the diocese, Bishop Grimardias, to transfer the residence school in Puy l'Évêque to Cahors. An agreement was reached on May 10, 1889. After the expensive work of remodelling had been completed the school opened its doors in October of 1890. In a few years it added agricultural classes to elementary instruction.[559]

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Prospecting in the North and the East, we meet with a number of veins, some of them already uncovered and generally amenable to the labors of professionals but very far indeed from appearing exhausted; and others, more or less recently discovered and subjected to early, experimental labors, gave rise to hopes that, with greater depth, there would come genuine

[559] .[559]Archives of the Rodez Residence School. — Historique du pensionnat by M. Albagnac (Brother Irlide Bernard). — Le Frère Isidorus-Marie by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, 1939. Archives of the Distric of Rodez, HIstorique of Millau and of Cahors.

wealth.

The residence school in Lille held forth promises of this sort. Alone in the region, it went beyond the level of the elementary education. Special secondary instruction was introduced there and completed immediately after 1870. In May of 1889 Brother Benedict Constant took charge of a major relocation: the new buildings on Tourcoing Square were to serve a school preparatory to a Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts. The project had to be abandoned when the Jesuits took over the I.C.A.M.[560] Nevertheless the Brothers' school had been set in motion under the patronage of St. Pierre; it included nearly 400 pupils in 1895. It was snuffed out in 1904, but, in our own time, it has re-emerged in all its vigor.

Tourcoing also had a residence school under the patronage of St. Michel, to which Brother Messian consecrated a personal fortune that he had received as an inheritance. The results did not correspond to the sacrifice. Nevertheless, the project — without the residence school — lasted for thirty years; the publicity promoted by the pious Brother Florian and the Alumni Association of St. Michel's encouraged the most active an undiluted Catholicism among many families.

The St. Louis school exercised an analogous influence in Roubaix. From 1878 to 1885, the semi-residence school of "the Immaculate Conception" admitted the sons of employees, foremen and factory bosses. Its suppression caused concern among Catholics. All segments of society particularly affected wished to profit once again from the Brothers' instruction. In 1891 St. Louis school, now a non-residence institution, brought them some initial satisfaction. At the end of two years it was admitting more than 200 pupils. In April of 1895 the creation of a Building Society funded the purchase of several acres of land on College Street. And the semi-residence school of St. Louis, completed on March 19, 1896, had, in October of 1897, an enrollment of 325 youngsters from Roubaix entrusted to the care of a Community of eighteen Brothers.[561]

In brief, during the period the Lille region was an area in which the disciples of Blessed La Salle practiced an essentially popular apostolate; and not without purpose, since to the very bottom the masses there, still attached to their faith, were troubled by inequality and social injustice, and frequently tested by poverty, and, in these trying conditions, were inclined to listen to the prophets of materialism and revolution.

The same thing was not wholly the case for the educational system in Picardy and Artois. While a semi-residential school operated in Boulogne, and while in Amiens Brother Amable's modest institution grew rapidly and, beginning in 1896, expanded into the estate purchase from Baron de la Motte,[562] the residence school in St. Omer, resurrected in 1854,[563] proved worthy of its ancient traditions.

Since 1865 it possessed a teacher who, at the outset devoted to the youth in St. Omer, gradually dedicated his life to "St. Joseph's" school.

Pierre-Ghilain Auberlique, son of a landed proprietor was born on September 2, 1848 at Villers au Flos, in the Department of Pas de Calais. Taught by the Brothers at Haplincourt, he entered the St. Omer novitiate on August 31, 1863, where he received the name of Brother Evaristus Abel. The residence school directed by Brother Fidelis was soon to have the young

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[560] Initials for: *Institut Catholique d'Arts et Métiers* Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts.

[561] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historiques des établissements. After the proscriptions of 1904, the excellent educational operation at Roubaix was translated to Estaimpuis in Belgium.

[562] Archives of the District of St. Omer, Historiques.

[563] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 395-396.

teacher: he was seventeen years of age, physically refined and handsome, with a gaze, behind half-open eyelids, that was intelligent, gracious and cordial, with lips that were an added attraction, and his is large forehead wore the signs of wise and clear thought.

He was eager, resolute and tenacious, and had such an appetite for work that "in order to be ready to face the most difficult situations", Brother Evaristus Abel won a whole series of diplomas: the higher diploma, the Cluny diploma and the certificate of educational capacity. Besides, he was also making his way toward positions of responsibility: — promotions which he accepted without pride, on the contrary, with a high sense of duty. In 1878 was the teacher in the most advanced class, and in 1884, he was Sub-director. At first over the older pupils and then over the entire residence school the authority of the educator prevailed. Such an influence had to be utilized to its fullest: —something the Superiors understood. At forty years of age Brother Evaristus Abel became Director of the institution. He was to remain in France until laws were passed outlawing the Brothers; and even after that he would remain at the helm when the emigration to Holland took place.

This distinguished educator turned out to be both an administrator and a builder. Extending Brother Fidelis' work, he initiated important undertakings. The most recent additions at Tanneurs Wharf dated from 1864 and 1875. In 1890 and 1897 there were new construction campaigns. There followed the beginning of the expansion which would make St. Joseph's the name of being the most beautiful school in the region. The dismantling of the ancient fort opened up some striking views; and under the umbrella of the Artois-Lille Society the Brother Director had rights to the preemptive purchase of the old fortifications. The land that was acquired allowed for the construction of a square-shaped quarters, a series of classrooms and a reception hall. A handsome wrought-iron gate controlled the entrance to the new avenue. It was a prosperous period during which neither taste for studies nor eagerness for religious devotion and charity slow down. The St. Vincent de Paul Society, founded years before by Philibert Vrau, beginning in 1893 was reorganized and experienced a renewal of activity.[564]

A great leader has a marvelous magnifying effect. We envision what he can do when he intensifies the dedication of his followers and sweeps along an excellent Community of men in the performance of its duty. So it was in Rheims, under Brother Bajulian and his successor, Brother Victor Nicholas. The school on Rue Venice[565] not only realized in increase in the number of pupils — there were 500 of them in 1874 — but it won from these young men religious and intellectual results of the highest quality. Brother Victor's twelve years of leadership continue to be conspicuous. He possessed an almost magnetic gift with words: naturally enthusiastic, he charmed people and mastered them. At the same time, with him good resolutions and first efforts were not without long-term results: his effect was on the will as well as the mind. As a young teacher prior to 1883, he turned out to be an important auxiliary to Brother Bajulian; and he himself found splendid support from Brother Arèse Casimir.[566]

Archbishop Langénieux sustained a school that was so astutely managed. Very quickly, after his transfer from Tarbes to the "See of St. Remi", he demonstrated his appreciation for it; and in 1876 he consecrated its new chapel; and he like to preside over the meetings of the school's Alumni Association that had been established in 1877.[567] The neighboring diocese of Soissons witnessed the Brothers exert themselves, sometimes toiling arduously, in their difficult and

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564 Archives of the District of St. Omer. — Biography of Brother Evaristus Abel, 1941.

565 See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 388.

566 Future "Vicar-general" of the Institute (from 1940-1946).

567 Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes for January, 1907, pp. 18-19.

cramped operations at St. Michael and Château Thierry.

The foundation at Longuyon had other consequences. It had become necessary because of the closing of the residence school in Beauregard.[568] A favorable site was found at the confluence of the Chiers and the Crusne, about thirty miles from the school that had to be abandoned. The cornerstone of the school was laid on September 8, 1874, and the children arrived on November 23. But, of course, they had to be satisfied at first with temporary quarters in a mansion that had belonged to the late Countess Hofflize. Many buildings arose and numerous reconstructions and remodellings were sketched, planned and built by an excellent architect by the name of Brother Amé Leonce.

Longuyon reached its height in 1900. At that time it comprised a pleasing collection of buildings against a background of forests, meadows and rivers. There hundreds of pupils were soundly, vigorously inspired by Brother Leonce, Brother Arator Joseph and Brother Arnold of Mary. They came mainly from the regions of Thionville, Metz and Lorraine that had annexed by the German Reich. Indeed, they exhibited a degree of patriotism that was no less ardent than their religious faith; and their teachers encourage this love for the Church and for France. Like their pupils, the teachers' origins were in the Eastern provinces; many of them were from Lorraine that had been separated from the mother-country since 1871; among them was Brother Arnold of Mary, who, as Paul Hypolite, was born in St. Privat in 1856 and had been a pupil in Beauregard. He continued Brother Athanasius' traditions, which he transplanted to Longuyon, to where obedience had brought him as a very young Brother upon emerging from the novitiate in Thillois in May of 1875. We can imagine the jolt he experienced on July 15, 1904 when the French government ventured to pronounce the death-sentence on the residence school that had been waving like a flag on the frontier.[569]

St. Joseph's in Dijon, since 1869, had been personified by Brother Pol Leon,[570] who had gotten access to the Clos Muteau estate. He called it "St. Joseph's Compound", and, after the construction of the first building he transferred to the site the classes and resident pupils who had previously been accommodated on Rue Berbisey. Gradually a solid structure, with a classical facade, stone stairway, attached workshops and an interior corridor decorated with paintings was built in the middle of the 200,000 sq. ft preserve. In April of 1890, with the advice and support of Brother Procurator-general Dominatoris and under the presidency of M. Poupon,[571] "the St. Joseph's Estate" Building Society was formed, which became the school's legal owner and financially accountable for it.

Today a bust of Brother Pol Leon occupies a place of honor in the institution. Charles François Badoz, born in Comté and a novice in Lyons in 1842, has every right to the title of citizen of Dijon. He lived for more than sixty years in this capital of Bourgogne, where, with his dynamic, friendly qualities, his eyes sparkling with intelligence, and his vigorous presence, he was recognized by everyone. The native Bourguignians could not disown him; because he had taken on their traits.

He had gained admittance to their souls, where he found the object of his indulgence. There is

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[568] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 366, 397, 537,; Vol. VI, pg. 210, and above, pg. 291.

[569] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April, 1939, pg. 122. — Brother Arnold of Mary's biography. — Brother Ariste Leonce's biography by Brother Artheme.

[570] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 393-394.

[571] Father of the former and lamented President-general of Alumni Associations of Private Education, M. Henry Poupon See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 393-394.

a passage that he wrote in his old age which he called “the Côte d’Or’s children”; it reads as follows: “Overall, they are gifted with remarkable skills and qualities. They succeed in literature, science, the liberal arts and mechanics, in agriculture, commerce and industry...and sports! Nothing daunts them; they take to study and to work cheerfully, perseveringly, tenaciously. Witty and reflective, they grasp things quickly and swiftly absorb what they are taught.”

“Possessed of tremendous generosity, warm, straight-forward of manner, unwearyingly sincere, they can get carried away by a genuine and deep-flowing affection. They revere a virtuous, learned and dedicated teacher; but woe betide anyone who mislead them! They become skeptical and contemptuous. They never forgive injustice and even less, betrayal.”

“When faced with a new teacher, they bide their time, they study him, and never stop until they know his deep-down strengths and weaknesses.”

“Youngsters in Bourgogne love the fine arts...Liturgical worship, the Church’s chant and its high feastdays delight them. Their loftiness of mind, the nobility of their feelings and their upright natural judgment inspire them with a horror for vice...Instinctively, they have an appetite for prayer..., and they are capable of sacrifice...Among themselves, thanks to their joyous good humor and their excellence of character, there is never any strife. You hear people talking about children in other regions, where a trifle, a pen, a marble, an elbow extended a little too much on to a neighbor’s desk, provokes a quarrel. There is none of that at St. Joseph’s in Dijon: “These are your marbles? — Yes —Take them!” and enough said!
Physically skillful, they delight in boisterous games ... For their reading and writing compositions they prefer war stories and accounts of armed struggles...Courageously patriotic deeds arouse them emotionally, especially their admiration. “

We can understand how the Director would proclaim his elation at having brought up such a noble people “to knowledge and virtue” and that he would conclude this eloquent encomium with the vast hope that “former students at St. Joseph’s be my guard in the eternal ranks!”[572]

Meanwhile, here on earth, within the framework of a city rich in treasures of architecture and sculpture, of a glorious past, of men famous in the annals of Catholicism and national history, Brother Pol Leon’s pupils fixed their gaze on what would sustain their inner strength.

No dream about the future was forbidden to them. Nevertheless, when it began, the program of studies betrayed no lavish ambitions. Until the 1873-1874 school year it did not go very much beyond the higher elementary level and included geometry, algebra, chemistry, physics, literature and introductory philosophy.

In the course of a journey, the Sub-director, Brother Narcellian saw a great deal of importance being given to studies in preparation for the diploma in special education in the schools at Moulins, Clermont and Toulouse. As an enterprising educator, no less than a zealous Religious, he proposed an experiment to his Director from which the people in Dijon might benefit. Brother Pol Leon asked nothing more than to assume the leadership; and the Assistant, Brother Jean-Olympe, supported him in the Regime. In August of 1874 the entire upper class of nine pupils submitted to examinations; all nine passed.

Emboldened, the teachers in the residence school persuaded the same young men to study for the examination for the bachelor of science degree the following year. True, some Latin became necessary: it was believed that a series of lessons given outside the confines of the school would not be a violation of the Rule. Results answered to hopes. Henceforth, the second class studied for the diploma in special education, and the first class for the diploma of bachelor in science.

While, at this period, the Motherhouse raised no objections, the Department of Education, on

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[572] Dated June 11, 1907. — Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique of Dijon, File D.

the other hand, became violently hostile. Even as early as the Second Empire, the Director, Brother Namphase had weathered a storm: the Minister of Education wanted to reduced the Brothers to the level of the elementary certificate.[573] Bureaucrats in the Third Republic were following in the same footsteps. The Rector and the Inspector of the School District brought suit against Brother Pol Leon in 1882. Their complaint came to this: there were advanced programs of studies that were not authorized by the category of the school; and there was an illegal introduction of the teaching of Latin.

M. Ally, President of the Lawyers Association of the Dijon Bar, was responsible for the defense: he proved to the court that the specialized "Duruy Diploma" and the diploma for the bachelor of science degree are contained in the education given by Departmental normal schools. But the examination that future teachers take is nothing other than the higher certificate which had long since — and, in the end, without controversy — been the objective pursued in a large number of Brothers' schools. Actually, St. Joseph's in Dijon was introducing no innovations; its students, quite legitimately, were using their education for careers that required the diploma as a condition for employment. And if they had to add a little Latin to their general education, they were exercising a personal right when they got instruction in this language, just as every student has the right, by making application, outside one's school, to whatever teacher or tutor one pleases.

The acquittal obtained on December 16, 1882 was confirmed by the Court of Appeals on February 21, 1883. A petition to the Supreme Court drafted by the public minister made way for M. Sabatier to exert his full talents in the service of the Institute: the judges in the Superior court rejected the petitioner's appeal on August 7, 1884.

It was crucial for us to dwell on this length process because of the importance of the interests at stake. If, in fact, the Department of the Education and the government's Attorney had won their case, not only was the residence school in Dijon in danger of closing, but the entire Congregation would have been forced to return the best of its schools to primary education.[574].

The Decree of 1891 simplified the situation by creating the modern bachelor's degree without Latin. Henceforth it would be possible to forego courses taken outside the school with their obvious inconveniences. St. Joseph's students, untrammeled, advanced steadily; four of them were major-generals at the School of Mines in St. Etienne; and in 1889 one of them Eugene Rousselot, came out first in the Borda competition.[575].

Another St. Joseph's residence school, much less distinguished, existed between 1886 and 1904 at the headquarters of the District, in Besancon. Brother Rufin directed the one in Semur, which also remained at the level of elementary education. In order to meet with exceptional vitality in this sort of school, we need to go to Dole du Jura where Brother Neopolus, in 1865, was authorized to reopen a small residence school closed on orders from Brother Philippe five years earlier. He presided over it with total mastery until 1898. Peter Jean-Paul Terrasson, from St. Péray in the Ardeche, a novice in Lyons in 1847, recalled — they said — in his bluntness, his commanding will and his physical appearance the young general Bonaparte: he was tanned, had brilliant dark eyes and a delicate mouth; and his strong, metallic voice immediately compelled assent. At the school in Dole the Director got the name of "Father Abbot"; or one only had to utter the words, "The authority" for everybody to know who was being referred to. Brothers Visitor sent Brother Neopolus young Brothers to be trained as teachers; and they picked out the ones who were intelligent, courageous and docile...Hands such as his delighted

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[573] See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 394.

[574] Archives of the District of Besancon

[575] This young naval officer, whose prospects were so promising, died at the hands of an assassin in Vladivostoc in 1891

in modelling a work of high quality, provided the material did not resist, whether by way stubborn resistance or the power of inertia.

It did not take long for the Director to surround himself with an excellent teaching staff. He quickly detected the skills of his men and set them to their appropriate tasks. When the Superior-general, Brother Joseph, in 1886 paid a visit to the Brothers in the ancient city in Comté, he found a Community of fourteen Brothers and a flourishing residence school that had 156 pupils. A large number of these boys began under the guidance of Brother Neopolus to receive a basic instruction before taking on the classical humanities program in the Jesuit college. The high quality of the educator and his associates in educational circles was never in doubt; and he was equally well thought of among the clergy and the local middle class. The Director possessed so completely the respect of his peers that he took his place on the Departmental Counsel for Public Education as the representative of the teachers in private education. He had not, however, solicited this position; and he never tried to draw attention to himself. This very energetic man was also shy. He had a detestation for any sort of clamor that might intrude upon the accomplishment of good things. He was not an effusive person. But at Dole, where for several generations the appearance of the Brothers had become familiar, people congratulated themselves for having been able to secure this valiant Religious within the landscape of its halls of government, its monasteries and its church of Our Lady.[576]

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The Lyons region, Savoy, the Dauphiné and the Provencal and Languedoc sections of the South represent our last group of schools. They were not the most recent in the Institute; and since the origin and arrangements of most of these institutions are known to us, we shall dwell on only a few of them.

We shall have to go back to 1838 to get a glimpse of the beginnings of the residence school in Lyons that was called "The Vincentian". Elsewhere we have explained the reason for this name.[577] And we have already sketched the external appearance of the estate on the side of the hallowed hill of "Fourvière". Later on we met Brother Paphnucius who, a humble workman, a novice at the age of twenty, a young teacher, became Prefect of studies and whose reputation as a grammarian brought him — too soon for the prosperity and success of the residence school — to the attention of Brother Philippe.[578] The school had passed through difficult times.

By 1874 it was emerging from the shadows although it had not set off again in the clear light until 1880. Shortly thereafter, Brother Rimer arrived from St. Joseph's in Dijon. He taught chemistry in a masterly fashion and was equally competent in French. At that period the Brothers in the Lyons school were authorized to teach nothing higher than the upper elementary grades. But once the modern bachelor's degree was established, they obtained a new statute from the public authorities: several of their classes became henceforth dedicated to secondary education. Brother Rimer's expertise destined him to become head of this section. It was in this way that "The Vincentian" on St. Bartholomew's hill took a turn onto a road on which success awaited them.[579]

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[576] Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique of Dole. — Brother Neopolus' obituary, 1906. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes,* for July 1927, pp. 205-221. — The same publication, in its number for January 1928 provides some notes on the small residence school in Chalon sur Saône.

[577] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 178-179 and 258.

[578] Ibid., pg. 497.

[579] *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April 1938, pg. 121. — Brother Rimer's Obituary, 1910.

In the second largest city of the diocese, St. Etienne en Forez, such roads opened generously to the remarkable team at the St. Louis residence school.[580] Here, too, one man especially assumed the dimensions of a conquering hero: Brother Rodolfo.

He had been Italy's gift to France. Jean-Achille Sogno was born in Biella on February 2, 1841. He began his studies with the Brothers in his native city and continued them under the men who had begun the San Primitivo College in Turin. However, in 1858 when the young Piedmont native decided to join the disciples of the Canon of Rheims, he was sent across the Alps to the novitiate in Caluire. Having received the habit and the name of Brother Rodolfo, he was asked for by Brother Papyle, the Director of the community in St. Etienne. Along with his superior he moved, in 1864, from the house on Rue Chappes to the buildings on Rue Désiré. Very quickly his reputation as a mathematician was established: at the age of twenty-one he was already the teacher of oldest boys who were studying to be admitted to the School of Arts and Crafts. But he had higher ambitions for his pupils: quite resolutely he directed them toward the School of Mines, and he equipped them with whatever science they needed for that purpose.

St. Louis was on its way to looking like the lobby of the Engineering Institute in the Department of the Loire. And it might be said that Brother Rodolfo controlled the key to the front door. In 1873 he helped eight of his pupils to gain entry. And in a quarter of century about 300 were admitted, a number that included twenty-two who stood at the head of their graduating class. One of these brilliant candidates was Régis Pialat who was to become Brother Régis.[581]

The Directors of the School of Mines had a great respect for the man who had so vigorously equipped the minds of their future students. "Brother Rodolfo," wrote M. Tauzin, "is foremost in ranks of those to whom the School in St. Etienne owes its reputation."[582] M. Henri Gonthier regarded him as his friend; and the Brother's suggestions, made to the administrator in 1887, were not without their influence on the development of plans for entrance examinations.

The "Miners", after graduating, knew that their former teacher had not lost sight of them. In order to provide them with most important services and especially to secure employment for them, Achille Sogno sustained a huge correspondence that extended beyond the French frontiers. Frequently, some personal gesture added to the weight of a letter of recommendation. In his rare moments of freedom he travelled in order to knock at the door of a man who controlled some promising employment. Effortlessly he obtained favorable responses — either because indebtedness was involved or because influence was all that was needed. Indeed, "this humble man...wielded important and persistent weight among distinguished minds, famous scholars, engineers, industrialists, steel manufacturers, managers of factories and mining companies..."[583]

At the St. Louis residence school Brother Rodolfo was absolutely unequaled. In 1896 he succeeded Brother Pantalus Martyr as the Director-general of the institution, and thereafter everything fell into line according to his wishes. And he did not waste any time in coming to influence and control those around him. Someone very close to him describes him as "cool, tiny, a sing-song voice, wide-awake, present everywhere, seeing everything with his piercing,

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[580] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 403-404.

[581] See above, pg. 157.

[582] Quoted by Father George, in his biography of Brother Rodolfo, pg. 53.

[583] Bishop Hyacinth Chassagnon's Preface to Father George's book, Achille Sogno, en religion Frère Rodolfo, 1925, pg. 9.

searching eyes, inquiring into everything...[584]He had ascetic features, a face deeply furrowed, an austere mouth, and a bald head whose immense arch gave evidence of the powerful brain. His unquestionable kindliness was hidden under a chilly exterior. His warmth "was expressed by a sentence that scarcely ever varied;" and authority was asserted "by a few brief, clear words, which never altered."[585]

However, he did not cancel out his colleagues. Brother Papyle had selected them for him from among the very best: there were geometricians, mathematicians and chemists, such as Brother Paramon, Brother Narcellian and Brother Glastian Joseph. And later on there were two former pupils who had been attracted to the Institute: Brother Régis and Brother Camillus.

In some sense on the perimeter, but not completely in an inferior position, there was Brother Vigbert Louis, who had already taught French at St. Etienne during the school-year 1881-1882. The M. H. Brother Joseph, who was a native of the city, was delighted to present as a gift to his townspeople the former Sub-director at St. Genes in Bordeaux. For thirteen years the witty, colorful, buoyant teacher was able to fascinate a talented audience by the breadth of his learning and solid construction of his discourse.

An alumnus of St. Louis, an officer in the Engineers during World War I, described the Savoyard teacher's classes: "Their principles had a bearing well beyond preparing us for entrance examinations...They were principles — to which he returned repeatedly — that one would have to describe as being at the foundation of engineering: — the focusing of thought, the analysis of a problem into its components, clarity in its presentation and succinctness in its expression. As a consequence, a lecture, which, during a period of profound mathematical formation, might appear to be beside the point, was actually fundamental..."

A sower and a mover of ideas, Brother Louis never ceased to influence conscience. In this sense, his appeal penetrated throughout the school. In company with Brother Camillus, he established a Marian Association. "Culture and refinement of thought, for this unforgettable monk, combined with uncommon virtue."

Bishop Chassagnon, who made this statement, had every claim to do so not only on the strength of the fact that he was a witness, but also as being the promoter of the religious life of the residence school, where he fulfilled the mission of chaplain before becoming the auxiliary of the Archbishop of Lyons and subsequently successor to Cardinal Perraud in the See of Autun. Responsible for the religious guidance of future "Miners", his friendly words and his apostolic heart exercised a magnificent influence. Father Chassagnon understood and loved the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who were his very earliest teachers in Bas en Basset. Cooperating fully with the educative work of men like Brother Rodolfo, and Brother Louis, he was one of those Churchmen who had no difficulty in cultivating Lasallian vocations as well as vocations to the priesthood.

Time and his work at St. Etienne consoled Brother Louis for having had to depart Bordeaux and for his exile far from Savoy. Besides, in 1869 and again in 1900 he visited the residence school in Thonon where, as a child, he was taught by Brother Alman, and where, between 1869 and 1881, he himself taught literature, philosophy and religion. The Brothers who worked together with him and for whom he did not spare his advice maintained on the right course the well-fitted barque that had once been piloted by Francis Fillion from the hamlet of Lyaud in Chablais.[586]

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[584] Bishop Chassagnon, Ibid., pg. 7.

[585] Ibid., loc. cit.

[586] For the residence school in Thonon, see Vol. V of the present work, pg. 258 and our biography of Brother Louis, chaps. i, iii and iv.

At La Motte Servolex, the youthful beginner of 1856, now verging on his 'sixties,[587]would rediscover, still vibrant, his earliest recollections. A lane under the shade of its chestnut trees lead to the great courtyard of the Pingon House. Gigantic trees encircled the vast expanse of the building that had been shrewdly accommodated to its educational purposes. Two hundred resident pupils, and thirty-five Brothers inhabited these rustic quarters. The horizon, beneath the high Alps, extended from the towers of Montmayeur and Chignin as far as Chautagne and Culoz. And as vacation began and a school took in again, the tiny village of La Motte saw pass by the joyful troop of its guests, in the valley of Leysse, along the road that joins Chambéry to Lake Bourget.

The school still welcomed many sons of distinguished families as it did in the days of Brother Libanos and Brother Calix. But it could not persevere in the lofty ambitions that, prior to 1848, King Charles Albert had had for it.[588] Wisely Brother Ptolemy, Director between 1874 and 1887, had guided studies the professions in commerce and industry.[589]

The proximity of Savoy did not prevent the Dauphiné from seeking out the services of a Community of Brothers in the College of St. Michael's in Grenoble, where it was labeled "Aigle College" because in 1888 the school — at the time called "La Salle Residence School" — was a brand-new construction in the Aigle quarter of the city. Its legal origins went back some forty years. An orphanage directed by the Brothers, "St. Joseph's Charity School" functioned — during the days of the July Monarchy — on the outskirts of the city. In 1845 twelve youngsters from well-to-do families were admitted to that institution as resident pupils. These wealthy children paid twenty-five francs a month; they were not obliged, as were their orphaned friends, to sweep out the classrooms or serve in the dining room, nor — adds the house Historique — "attend funerals, except on solemn occasions".

Such an education arrangement — no doubt, scarcely a model — endured until 1870. The Superior-general ordered Brother Rémézide, who was Director at the time, to separate the two categories of pupil. Nevertheless the same building continue to house both; and when classes resumed in 1872 there were 135 "paying pupils" (both residents and day-pupils). "St. Joseph's Charity" needed more room.

The reputation of the Religious teachers and the successes earned in the pursuit of the certificate of studies and the examination for the diploma brought about a constant increase in the pupil population. The residence school had to find other quarters. Brother Rémézide, with the assistance of Canon Méresse, obtained a handsome subsidy of 100,000 francs from the monks at the Grande Chartreuse. He set up a Building Society and drew up construction plans; in 1886 there was purchased a piece of land measuring 10,764 sq. yds. situated between the railroad tracks and Rues Lesdiguières and Mallifaud. Two years later Bishop Fava of Grenoble dedicated a beautiful building to which the splendor of the countryside, the surrounding greenery and the mountains on the horizon contributed additional enchantment. In 1898 another gift from the monks of Chartreux enabled the Director, Brother Odilardus, to build a chapel and a reception hall. Grenoble had occupied an important place in the life of Blessed de La Salle, with his pilgrimage to Chartreuse and his retreats on the hillside of Parmenie; the Brothers were delighted to be able to remind the city of their Founder's name. The citizens did justice to the zeal of the teachers: 220 children filled the classrooms from opening day; and by 1904 growing numbers demanded the services of twenty-four Brothers.[590]

"St. Charles" in Marseille, "Immaculate Conception" in Béziers, "St. Joseph's" in Toulouse

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587 Brother Louis, cf. Vol. V of the present work, pg. 259, and the biography referred to, pp. 43-45.

588 See Vol. V of the present work, pg. 259.

589 B. Secret, op. cit., pp. 56-57 and 107.

590 Notes contributed by the Brother Director of the residence school in Aigle.

carried off honors and place special emphasis upon religious training according to tradition which, in Provence, went back for more than a century and which, in Languedoc, were inscribed in the earliest draughts of the modern history of the Institute.[591] The school in Béziers quite correctly retained its rights to the title as the "mother-hive" and first model of residence schools. It had supplied Paris and Rome with Directors and teachers, and later on it provided Spain with them. Its distinguished founder, Brother Leufroy, died on November 2, 1868 surrounded by the affectionate admiration of his friends in Béziers. After a solemn funeral in St. Aphrodias', his body reposed in the school at Fonseranes.

His mind had inspired Brother Theoctene, the one of his disciples who had succeeded him. He had a group of 695 pupils whom he had to guide in 1876, in the ninth year of his directorship. Among them were numerous sons of landowning winemakers: they came to spend two or three years at "Immaculate Conception"; their parents, who found wine sales a prospering enterprise, thought it was a good idea "to send them off", i.e., to entrust them to the Brothers in the principal city of the region in order to get the polish of at least a portion of secondary education on a foundation-layer of the elements that had been imparted by some village schoolmaster.

The curricula at Bézier were provided accordingly. The fourth class was generally the last to retain a large number of pupils: so much so that there had to be three sections of it in order not to over-burden the teachers and boost the pupils' output. The first sequence of courses was capped by a review program.

The higher sequence included two series of courses; the first ended after a brief period of time with a diploma of special education. The other lead up to an examination for the "volunteer", a rudimentary test taken by the young sons of many business or middle-class families, in order to reduce the length of their military service to a single year.[592]

A more ample curriculum was introduced by Brother Louis of Poissy, Director between 1878 and 1882. Albert Bruny had been, thirty years earlier, a brilliant pupil in the classrooms of the residence school. A native of Toulouse who had become a Languedocian, he detected regional needs and was able to make timely adaptations. He determined for a long period of time both the variety of specialties — literature, sciences and foreign languages — and the daily schedules. He was particularly concerned with the quality of the teaching personnel; and he invited experienced teachers to supply the younger Brothers whom the District sent to Béziers with guidance and advice; while he himself assumed the responsibility for teaching philosophy to these beginners.

Courses of religious instruction, Societies of Our Lady, a St. Vincent de Paul chapter, anything that could help develop the practice of the Christian virtues and secure the frequentation of the Sacraments received Brother Louis of Poissy's vigorous encouragement.

After him Brother Lange and Brother Jean Berchmans strove toward the same ends. Brother Berchmans introduced into the performance of his task a note of engaging affability. He had been teaching in the school since 1872; and as Sub-director in 1888 and Director in 1892, he administered with skill, just as he agreed to guide to a successful issue those youngster who were resolved to earn a bachelor's degree.

Minds were informed by every possible means. The school administration refused to accept a routine belief, a drowsy or narrowly individualistic faith. As early as 1886 the residence school's "Academy" was affiliated with the Catholic Association of French Youth. In 1900 the

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[591] See Vol. IV, pp. 549-562; Vol. V, pp. 158-165, 257-258, 391, 514-517 (Béziers), 258, 390, 536 (Toulouse), 259, 314, 391-393 (Marseille).

[592] Provided, furthermore, that 1,500 francs were paid to the State Treasury. (Law of 1872).

Director, Brother Josaphat established a conference on social studies for the pupils in the two highest classes, in which an analysis of the Encyclical Rerum novarum very quickly found a place on the agenda.[593] Toulouse shows up at the end of our journey, along with the activities of three great Brothers: Brother Junian, Brother Lactance and Brother Létance of Mary. We already know the first of these, a man who had been elected Assistant by the Chapter of 1875.[594]

He had previously — starting in 1862 — directed the residence school in Toulouse: he was an open-minded man, enthusiastic and cultivated who had in a very important way raised the level of studies. Materially, pupils and Community were no less in his debt; he had improved the physics and chemistry laboratories and the library and had begun a museum of natural history. As early as 1865 the purchase of the country house "St. Philomen" had gained hours of relaxation and delightful play for the residence pupils on the grass and under the trees facing the magnificent panorama of the Valley of the Garonne. In 1874 a reception hall such as an hospitable and refined Director would have wanted was constructed.

He was succeeded by Brother Lactance. Born in Villefranche du Rouergue on December 9, 1829, he was at the height of his powers when he assumed the responsibilities of supreme command. He had been teaching for thirty years at St. Joseph's; all the subjects included in special secondary education were known to him; following an examination that he took in Bordeaux, one of the teachers in the Department of Science wrote to Brother Junian: "I congratulate your school for having such a brilliant member."

It was said of Brother Lactance: "With him everything is large — the mind as well as the heart." He became a handsome old man, with a serious-looking face, austere at the same time that it was distinguished, with a forehead topped by white hair. His administration brought the residence school in an era of the most enviable prosperity. The number of pupils in 1886 was in excess of 600. The previous year the Lignières barracks was purchased, which made it possible to extend St. Joseph's to Riquet Street and to build a chapel of imposing proportions and with very pleasing lines. The structure was consecrated on June 24, 1892; and it witnessed magnificent ceremonies in an atmosphere of warm piety until the unfortunate moment of legalized pillage.

By that time Brother Lactance had already departed this life. Dead on September 18, 1902, six years earlier he had been named Visitor. Brother Létance of Mary had replaced him in the residence school. The new Director, a native of the Tarn, had been a citizen of Toulouse since his novitiate in 1863. His agile mind adapted equally well to mathematics and to literature: "I have met some very learned men", stated a naval officer who had been taught by the Brothers, "none of them had ever given such vibrant lectures as our Brother Létance".

An excellent teacher, he finished his work by writing a physics textbook from which the entire Institute benefitted in another way. As a good Religious, he showed what he was made of when, as an only son, he had won the struggle for his father's consent to dedicate himself to Christian education. He presided over the closing splendors of the institution founded by Brother Claude. Providence had destined him to lead across the frontier and into the peaceful Val d'Aran youths who wished to remain free to choose their teachers and unite their prayers with those of the sons of St. John Baptist de La Salle.[595]

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[593] Archives of the Immaculate Conception Residence School. — Obituaries of Brother Louis of Poissy (1924) and Brother Jean Berchmans (1936).

[594] See above, pg. 40.

[595] Archives of St. Joseph Residence School in Toulouse. — Obituaries of Brother Junian, 1919 and of Brother Lactance, 1902. An Historique of the school show that toward the end of the 19th century the educational program was not without a degree of austerity; classes began in six o'clock in the morning and day-pupils, beginning with the fourth class, were required to be present at that hour. After Mass at seven o'clock courses resumed until noon,

CHAPTER THREE

Professional Schools: Post-School and Social Work

As a monument to religious zeal and intelligent daring, the Lasallian school open doors to life. The Christian men it fostered knew that their steps were directed toward eternity. So guided, they followed earthly paths without hesitation, without indecision and without disastrous adventures. They were equipped to overcome obstacles and armed so as not to fear struggles. To vigor of mind and lucidity of conscience they joined a practical cast of mind, a technical competence and a social sense. Their teachers had not been idealogues. St. John Baptist de La Salle, while focusing on God, approvingly abided by earthly behavior. His judgment and experience, his discoveries and the resources of his genius situated this "son of light", like Vincent de Paul before him and Don Bosco in our own time, ahead of the children of this world. The Brothers of the Christian Schools had not lost sight of any of their Founder's lessons.

They loved to associate their contemporary undertakings with efforts made in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Sunday School set up in St. Sulpice parish and manual labor in honor of St. Yon were historical antecedents to youth clubs and professional institutions. There is no doubt but what the tree resides in the seed. Nevertheless, between 1870 and 1900 specialized undertakings and post-school projects came into such evidence that it became obvious that new attitudes and new forces were at work. And here, once again, the Brothers, far from lagging behind their times, were adapting to circumstances, interpreting the aspirations and striving to assist the introduction of individuals into the various levels of social life, and reducing the causes of conflict, isolation, abandonment, incompetence, hatred and injustice.

This mastery of the real world that they sought to provide their pupils as much by means of elementary education as by the curricula in their major residence schools, this marriage between basic principles of knowledge and the demands of action they intensified in their business schools, their technical courses, in their industrial workshops and in their agricultural institutes.

When it was important to protect faith and morals, to create a climate of Christian friendship, to bring together special groups inspired by a powerful ideal and capable of influencing the masses, the Brothers did not falter in passing beyond the threshold of their classrooms in order to take up an apostolate among the people and to invite their former pupils to mutual material and moral assistance.

These are the many and complex educative activities that it remains for us to study.

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In a report presented to one of the juries at the World's Fair in 1900, M. Cail, an Engineer in Arts and Manufactures, divided the commercial curricula introduced by the Christian Brothers into three groups.

He pointed out, in the first place, "all resident pupils, apart from classes in modern secondary education, had special classes in a curriculum that was clearly the same as that of the commercial classes at Passy."

Then there were the schools which, while they were not regarded as secondary institutions by

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interrupted by a brief recess. In the afternoon, classes and studies continue until eight o'clock in the evening for the older pupils. On Thursday day-pupils had to take part in the regular "walks." Residence pupils were allowed out once a month, on the second Thursday, from eight o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening.

the public authorities, guided their pupils toward careers in business.

In the third category were the four higher commercial schools in Paris, the Commercial School in Lille, the Higher Program at Rue Beauvoisine in Rouen and a few others places organized in analogous ways. Student recruitment was ordinarily effected through competitive examinations after successful completion of elementary studies. Hard work over two or three years earned good situations for young men and honorable prospects.

As the report implied, most of these Lasallian programs went back to much earlier times than similar institutions that depended upon the State. The "national schools of higher and professional elementary instruction", whose existence had been specified in the decrees of 1881 and 1882, were not in operation until 1887 in Vierzon, Armentières and Voiron; while a fourth was open in Nantes in 1896. On the other hand, an arrangement introduced into the finance law of January 26, 1892 had inaugurated a second series of technical programs under the name of "schools of practical commerce and industry", of which there were thirty-four in 1899.[596].

Among the Institute's residential or partially residential schools that tended to specialize in these subjects may be cited St. Charles' in Marseille, St. Joseph's in Rodez, and the schools in Nîmes and Agen. The most complete curricula were to be found in the private commercial schools in Paris: on St. Owen Avenue, Rues St. Roch, St. Antoine and in St. Clotilde parish. The Archbishop's office in Paris had founded these schools for the especially gifted youngsters from the parochial schools. Without yielding anything in the area of practicality to the State schools, the curriculum pursued by the Brothers provided an important place for religious instruction: — i.e., advanced catechism, apologetics, and Bible and Church history. Quarterly competitive examinations among the four schools fostered emulation. At the end of their studies, the pupils were examined by a jury composed of teachers at the Catholic University; and a diploma signed by the Rector bore witness of success.[597]

In Lille, "the Catholic School of Commerce and Industry" took its beginnings from the "honors course" at Rue Urbanistes. Here, once again, we meet with the influence of Philibert Vrau. Along with his friend, Jonglez de Ligne, in 1880 he pleaded with Brother Eleutherius, the Visitor, in favor of completing the studies of a large number of Brothers' pupils by immediate training in the economic activities of the region of the Nord. He got his confreres, the principal representatives of big business, interested in the project. Eighteen merchants, industrialists and bankers agreed to sponsor it. Following his custom, M. Vrau, supported it with his "anonymous gifts".

Courses began with the taking in of school in October of 1880 in an impressive establishment on Rue Monnaie. The faculty was primarily made up of Brothers but with a few lay-teachers. Brother Maurice Lucian occupied the principal rôle: none better than this former commercial employee and assistant manager of a textile mill to determine the intellectual, professional, moral and social needs of his students. In everything but name he directed the school for six years. Together with M. Bernot, the former university professor who was so faithful to the Brothers, he worked out the instructional program.

M. Witz, a teacher in the private school sector, stated in one of his reports: "The nature and quality of the instruction conformed to the most reasonable demands. What our business people require of their assistants, employees, clerks, store managers and bookkeepers is not extensive theory nor abstract knowledge, but rather factual knowledge, a store of clear,

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[596] Émile Cail*, l'enseignement industriel et commercial dans les institution libres catholiques*, Paris, 1900

[597] Motherhouse Archives, File BE f, ms. notes. Frequently the bes pupils in these schools had already completed their secondary education in the Brothers' residence schools, having headed their classes leading up to the bachelor's degree: for example, George Blanpain and Adolphe Lepape in Dreux.

practical notions; and, beyond that, a manly education from which one might expect to meet with stout souls and energetic hearts."

It was not long before Brother Maurice Lucian's students by business interests in the Lille-Tourcoing-Roubaix area. After appearing before competent judges — professors of higher education and the heads of large firms — they had in hand a diploma signed by Bishop Baunard.

Increase in the number of students and the progress of their work was occasion for satisfaction to the school's backers. Starting with about thirty students in the first year, the number arose to about fifty at the end of the second; in 1883 there were ninety and in 1885 there were 150.

A "Development Counsel" recruited from among the city's distinguished citizens, powerful tycoons and intellectual leaders. In every respect this group turned out to have both a Christian mind and a genuine realism: — a thing that surprised no one who knew men like Gustave Lemaire and Philibert Vrau; the former was an excellent Religious who placed at the service of youth as well as that of his Congregation his clarity of mind and the conviction of his decisions; the latter whose intense "interior life" "expanded into exterior works" destined to transform Lille into "a sort of holy city."[598]

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We cannot leave the capital of French Flanders without mentioning a work due to the combined efforts of the Brothers and M. Vrau. Once again, it was a technical enterprize, but one in which the concerns for art played a major rôle.

A report by Baron Béthune to a Congress of Catholics of the Lille region in 1878 supplied the program for the "St. Luke Schools", that marvelous institution inspired by the very remarkable Belgian nobleman from the city of Gand.[599]

Philibert Vrau sought for France a comparable renewal of artistic expression in accordance with the ideals and methods of Christian teachers. As he saw it, a St. Luke's school, founded on the Gand model, should be bound up, on the one hand, with a Catholic Faculty and with the School of Commerce, on the other.

Plans were drawn up accordingly. Brother Adelmir Joseph, appointed by the Superiors to assume the directorship, joined his confreres on the banks of the Escaut to learn his trade. He established cordial and productive relationship between his team of draftsmen and the industrialists, artisans and workers in the Lille region.

In 1884 he welcomed a seventeen year old Religious who gave evidence of taste, skill, a great deal of sensitive observation and a surprising sureness of hand. He was a young man from the diocese of Metz in Lorraine: — Paul Gabriel Dufour, born in Fillières on March 24, 1867, who had just left the novitiate in Annappes with the name of Brother Fidelis Gabriel. The entire history of the French St. Luke's would one day be bound up in the person of this Brother.

Brother Adelmir had been commissioned to specialize in the decorative arts. But very quickly Brother Marès Joseph, the man whom Belgium hailed as the new school's leading apostle, managed to get Brother Fidelis Gabriel transferred to Gand. For two years, the student teacher plied the pen, the charcoal and the paint brush under the supervision of Brother Marès and Brother Matthias, the founder's dedicated assistant. During this period he was succeeding in making perfect copies of medieval miniatures.

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[598] George Goyau, *Histoire religieuse de la Nation francaise*, pg. 598. — Baunard, Philibert Vrau, pp. 237-238. — Brother Maurice-Lucian's Obituary. — Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille.

[599] On the St. Luke Schools see Vol. VI of the present work, pp. 157-164.

With his return to Lille, his talents shown brilliantly. Beginning in May 1889 he taught decoration, which affected a great number of the crafts: painting, iron work, furniture, windows, mosaics, lace and textiles. Explanations were carried on clearly, distinctly, creatively, authoritatively, illustrated by impeccable lay-outs that sketched their objects. Under the guidance of such a teacher, young artists accomplished work of undeniable quality. The professional examination that they passed successfully dispensed them from two of three of their years of military service.

In 1894 Bishop Baunard asked Brother Superior-general Joseph for Brother Fidelis Gabriel for the School of Higher Industrial Studies. The Brothers teaching in that institution was to bear upon decorative composition, weaving and mechanical drawing.

What, then, might not be expected of the Brother's resourcefulness? One day in December of 1896 students in the private Department of Medicine saw him putting in an appearance in their amphitheater; they were surprised and seriously inclined to joke about the man in the black robe standing in the place of distinguished doctors. Brother Fidelis, coolly grasped the chalk and drew exceptionally fine sketches on the blackboard and explained them in terms that did not smack of the layman. The audience's incredulity turned to admiration. Thereafter there was a respectful and attentive following for his "lectures on osteological and anatomical drawing".

As a theorist, Brother Fidelis Gabriel circulated his ideas in numerous articles, explained his methods as a draftsman, wrote a huge book entitled *La Figure humaine dans l'Art et dans l'Enseignement* and sent a sketch-book on *The Stylization of Flora* to the 1900 World's Fair. His work as a painter combined with his work as a teacher in many places in the District of Cambrai-Lille; he decorated the chapel in the novitiate at Annappes, the schools of Monnaie and St. Michel's parish, the St. Pierre's Residence School and the institutions in Tourcoing, Douai, Valenciennes and Orchias; later on, he provided the plans for the ornamentation and a sketch of the reredos of the residence school in Passy that had been moved to Froyennes. His reputation extended to a great distance, since he was invited to Great Britain for similar work. And the church in his native village preserves a series of his paintings. At the time of St. John Baptist de La Salle's canonization he did a huge canvas representing the Founder's glorification.

It was a splendid career, but in the end it remained the route of an isolated pioneer. The environment, the events and perhaps other obstacles in France stood in the way of the developments of these schools of Christian art, which were Belgium's pride.[600]

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Industry, on the other hand, benefitted quite generally from collaboration with education. In this respect the Lyons region was especially favored.

We shall not revert to the preparatory course in the St. Étienne School of Mines. This institution, developed in such a conspicuous way by Brother Rodolfo, exceeded conventional standards. "It does nothing contrary to our Rule," asserted Brother Gabriel of Mary in his circular of July 7, 1897; "it satisfies the most intelligent and most apostolic Religious." The Superior was, nevertheless, concerned to link it up with the most important traditions of the Institute: "Future engineers learn to love the humble and the lowly, the worker and the poor and to sacrifice themselves for them."

The Brothers did not fail to address their efforts directly to the working class, for whom men like Brother Olbien of Jesus in Lyons and Brother Paramon Cyprian in the grimy and populous city of Forez worked.

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[600] Baimard, op. cit., pg. 240. — Brother Adelmir Joseph's Obituary, 1901. — Choix de notice, Vol. II, Brother Fidelis Gabriel.

Living for twenty-three years in the St. Polycarp Community, shared by teachers for eight parochial schools, Brother Olbien was impressed with the importance of an educational center that offered to the best youths a serious technical training within an atmosphere that was morally irreproachable and steeped in the faith.

La Salle School answered to his wishes. An Association of former pupils of the Institute had taken the initiative. Brother Pigménion was its organizer, but Brother Olbien dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the task with a tireless concern. He was appointed to a teaching post there in 1881, shortly after its foundation; he taught English, bookkeeping, history and geography; and at the same time he set up a workshop for weaving.

The tactful introduction of machinery inspired an awakening of talents. Mathematics and drawing in association with tools appeared in a new guise, in a "persuasive light". Abstractions took on a body, and drawing became a language.

After conspicuously modest beginnings, the necessary equipment was assembled. Manufacturers in the Lyons region saw the simple Brother approaching — he had gotten out from behind his desk and had become a beggar. They received him in a friendly way, and contributed generously to his cause. At the same time that he was obtaining funds to further his work, the teacher at La Salle School was winning respect, affection and popularity. His many connections with the "silk-manufacturers" helped him earn jobs for his young people.

The latter could count on all the more opportunities to obtain suitable positions in that the moral training they had received was no whit inferior to their professional education. The M. H. Brother Joseph, writing to the Director of the school on January 5, 1892 was captivated by "the miracle" of these simple boys living an integrally Christian life "in offices, stores and workshops" of the "licentious fin-de-siècle." Results show, added the Superior in 1885, that our schools produce youngsters of sound conscience and fearless faith.

Brother Olbien's pupils were solidly informed about their duties. Discussions on social questions were interspersed throughout the curriculum. And thrift societies and institutions of mutual aid accustomed them to shoulder one another's problems throughout their lives.[601]

People in Lyons — similarly to their neighbors in St. Étienne — combined a well-informed good sense with the highest aspirations. They walked at a sure, fixed pace while keeping their eyes on the stars. Brother Paramon Cyprian — Jean Barlet — was the son of a silk worker in the St. Clair quarter of the city. Once his novitiate had been concluded at Caluire in 1868, he was sent to St. Étienne, which meant that he was not very far removed from his element. In this environment his human qualities discovered a vast field for action; his virtues thrived — at times in peace, at others in frustration and suffering. A charm emanated from his person, from his incisive look, from his intelligent and genuinely limitless kindness and from the intense flame of his faith. He called the people in St. Étienne, the Brothers in his Community and the pupils in his school "My sons"; and those who would knew him in the evening of a productive life (that, after seventy years, had hardly deteriorated) would call him "Grandfather".

In 1882, when the school he directed was secularized, Brother Paramon Cyprian moved to a narrow, makeshift hovel on Rue Bourse; and seventy-four of his pupils followed him.

While continuing to teach them, he had them learn a trade that had been selected after consultation with their parents and according to the boy's talents. It was in this way that the professional curriculum began. In concert with the pastor of the parish, Father Bouché, Brother Paramon bought a piece of land on Rue St. Barbara, bordering another Brothers' school of which we shall speak later on.[602] A building of suitable proportions was constructed.

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[601] Brother Olbien of Jesus' Obituary, 1914. — Pamphlet on the La Salle School, Lyons. — Rigault, *Le Frère Joseph,* pg. 240.

[602] Institution for the Hard of Hearing. See below, pp. 410-411.

However, the funds necessary to furnish workshops with a full complement of tools were not available. An ingenious idea solved the problem: instruction in theoretical matters would be provided in the school; and apprenticeships would be made with the industrialists and artisans in the city. Brother Director entered into contact with various groups in St. Étienne; and very quickly he won over to his plan bosses, foremen and qualified workers.

From that point on the quite novel work grew. Brother Paramon Cyprian, surrounded by an excellent staff of Brothers, priests, engineers, conducted the technical training and the moral education a large number of young people. In the classrooms on Rue St. Barbara teachers of mathematics, drawing, chemistry, physics, mechanics, French, bookkeeping, indeed individuals competent in political economy and civil law plied their trades. And in the city the pupils of the imaginative Brother became ribbon makers, dyers, blacksmiths, metal casters, sculptors, joiners, etc.

Vocational guidance took place as follows: beginning in January, second year pupils in groups of fifteen or twenty at a time under the direction of a teacher made detailed visits of the industries in St. Étienne. The owner or one of the men who had his confidence — often enough it was one of Brother Barlet's "former" hands — supplied all useful explanations which the boys carefully noted. The principal forms of industrial activity were, in this way, studied before the end of the last school term. During vacation the future apprentices made up their minds and informed the Brother Director; and then they were dispersed among the various trade groups.

During the third and fourth years, schooldays were divided between specialized work and further general education. Each pupil then produced a report on the trade he had selected. This composition became the object of a very thoughtful deliberation in the presence of parents, friends and benefactors. Diligence and a passing grade in the course were rewarded with a diploma.

Special circumstances had inspired experimentation with the system. With experience, it appeared so appropriate that other — foreign — schools would imitated it and judges at World's Fairs would acclaim it and bestow awards upon it.[603]

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While the group in Lyons merits greater attention, we should not leave the impression that it exercised a sort of monopoly. Moving in the direction of Auvergne, we can point to the "Higher Professional Program" that had been inaugurated at Clermont-Ferrand on land acquired on Rue Charras in 1892. Brother Guillaume de Jésus, who spent a portion of his patrimony on this school, assembled seventy pupils in October of 1893. He provided them with a program of higher elementary studies and took them through a series of practical operations that lasted three years.[604]

Farther to the north there was St. Bonose School in Orléans, the achievement — snuffed out by the calamity of 1904 — of Brother Heli Samuel whom we have already met with at St. Euvertus and who had thereafter been put at the head of an institution on which he was to stamp a new character: foremen were recruited to teacher the oldest boys the iron and wood trades. A certain number of competent workmen, hastily trained, were distributed among the carpenter, locksmith and pipe-fitter businesses in Orléans.[605]

We move on to Brittany where, quite appropriately, the Brothers in that province planned

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[603] Account of the Private Professional School at St. Étienne, 1909. — *Choix de notices nécrologiques*, Vol. III, Brother Paramon-Cyprian, pp. 129-134, 139-144.

[604] Archives of the District of Clermont-Ferrand, Historique.

[605] Obituary, 1940.

how to help their pupils find employment at sea. In Lorient, between 1873 and 1880 the Port Apprentice School had been confided to a Community of Brothers on the favorable judgment of the assistant director of naval construction. Secularization put an end to that sort of job. But elsewhere more important tasks demanded the attention of the Religious teachers: in 1892 in Paimpol there began what was called the "Applicants Project" in which courses were offered to future "ocean-going" and "coastal" workers who frequented the public school of hydrography that existed in the same city. Patient and clear lectures enabled these young people the better to understand their government-appointed professors. Furthermore, a dozen or so of them took advantage of the living quarters that had been provided at St. Joseph's by a local benefactress.

In Brest a school of the same name had, since 1896, been admitting, apart from aspiring fleet mechanics, professionals in similar categories who were preparing for an examination in order to take a job in the arms factory or in the artillery works' company or in the port's equipment workshop.

People in Saint-Malo had had recourse to the inexhaustible charity of the Mlles. Garnier-Kerruault.[606] In so doing, they were able in 1893 to open a joiners' shop and in 1897 to start courses in mathematics and French for the benefit of captains in the merchant marine.[607]

Along another coastline, in a sea-side city no less celebrated, there was similar work being done. In Dunkerque there existed, between 1880 and 1895, a teacher of navigation whose name was M.Lheureux. He trained coastal pilots, overseas captains and higher level mechanics. His Christian convictions the clergy found to be completely reassuring. But with his death people were fully justified in fearing the influence of the enemies of religion. Once the Brother Visitor had been informed, he ordered one of his men, Brother Emilas, to succeed M. Lheureux. Thoroughly competent and dedicated, the teacher — thus selected unawares — quickly succeeded to bringing together a class of twenty-five students. The project prospered — to the great benefit of the people in Dunkerque.[608]

We now take our leave of the "sea-going people": — without at first going any further than Douai where Lewarde's ancient foundation supplied, in 1875, the resources to open a joiners' workshop, a carpenter shop and a cabinet shop on Rue Jean de Gouy. The equipment was of an excellent quality; the apprentices became choice workers or owners whose professional skill and conscience in moral matters went hand-in-hand. With respect to the Religious teachers two in particular were the foundation of the school's reputation: Brother Anthilde Edmond who expended himself in the effort to found the school; and Brother Fromont Eubert who was possessed of an extraordinary mind: during his brief life — laryngeal tuberculosis carried him off in his twenty-ninth year — he dedicated himself to a variety of forms of the industrial arts; the notes and plans that he accumulated continue to stand in proof of his talents as well as of his inventive spirit. An esteemed teacher, he obtained important jobs for his students in metallurgy and among manufacturers of artistic furnishings.[609]

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In all directions it was possible to find technical schools: in Aix and in Toulon, in Provence or in a coal-mining region like Commentry, or in Roanne or in Fourchambault where there were iron and steel works. The Brothers inquired into the ways in which a region made its living; they also investigated its needs and resources; and then they mapped out ways to serve people by helping them create new occupations within a given social environment.

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606 See above, pg. 324.

607 Archives of the District of Quimper.

608 Archives of the District of St. Omer.

609 Archives of the District of Cambrai; and Obituary of Brother Fromont-Eubert, 1897.

But beyond the fragmentation implicit in this approach, which, however, was inspired by circumstances and not at all detrimental, they contemplated some sort of synthesis. One of their best thinkers in this connection — a realistic influence with nothing of the dreamer about him — was Brother Fidelis, Brother Evaristus Abel's predecessor at the helm of the residence school in St. Omer.

Prominent Catholics frequently consulted him: to Brother Fidelis' mind, how to restore faith and morals within the working class? His response was that the influence of particularly dedicated persons acting upon the masses would constitute a strong force toward re-Christianization. In order to form such an elite group he suggested the founding of private schools of Arts and Crafts. The foremen, shop stewards and even factory managers who would graduate from such schools would be selected from the masses and would continue to be a part of them or, at least, would remain in daily contact with them in cordial and confidential association.

These ideas found a ready hearing among the outstanding personalities in the dioceses of Arras and Cambrai. At its Congress on November of 1876 the Educational Commission listened to a report from M. Bernot who came to the conclusion that swift action was required. Philibert Vrau was of the opinion that it was immediately necessary to acquire a piece of land of 10,000 square meters and, for further details, to speak to the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

A Building Society was set up on February 3, 1877; and preparations were made to undertake a vast appeal for funds. In order to guarantee the Brothers' cooperation, Cardinal Regnier, Archbishop of Cambrai, interceded with the Institute's protector in Rome, Cardinal Pitra.

The tactic succeeded, since Brother Fidelis received orders to leave his residence school in order to take charge of the organization that was only in the planning stages. Separation did not take place without a certain sense of loss. And M. Vrau agreed with the Brother that "God's work is founded only on sacrifice".

It was a sacrifice that the Brother was prepared to accept. Indeed, what was asked of him hardly resembled the sacrifices he had been imagining. They seemed coincidental. But since they were no less meritorious, he retained their powerful efficacity.

At the Catholic Congress in November of 1879, Brother Fidelis, the able spokesman for the Commission, announced that a capital fund of 1,250,000 francs would cover nothing more than the building expenses, the furnishings as well as the purchase of the materials. These facts "aroused fear".

The enterprize was postponed and its moving spirit returned to St. Omer. However — a mere "stumbling block" — the foundation stone of the School of Arts and Crafts was set in place on Tourcoing Square in Lille, on November 27, 1880.

In the immediate vicinity the Brothers pursued another project that was implicit in the preceding one and followed a plan that had been approved at some time earlier; but it was a supplementary activity that had been ignored on the list of more urgent and important matters in the light of the perceived insolvency: the residence school of St. Pierre's.

Thereafter, although reluctantly, the Institute gave up the idea of assuming eventual control of a school that had been constantly in its plans. On June 25, 1892, when M. Veron-Vrau and M. Harmel visited the Superior-general they received the following response: "At the moment we do not have the necessary personnel. And furthermore it seems difficult, if not impossible, to put together the sum of money that is required."

It was then that the Committee turned to the Jesuits who opened "The Catholic Institute of Arts and Crafts" with fourteen pupils on October 24, 1898.[610] Brother Fidelis died without

[610] Baunard, op. cit., pp. 241-247. — Brother Fidelis' Obituary, 1888.

having experienced the satisfaction of success. But other individuals in his Congregation would accomplish what he had ardently desired. Lille remaining a Jesuit stronghold, Rheims became the Institute's preferred arena, a privilege to which the Founder's native city certainly had the right.

With a sense, therefore, not of jealous rivalry, but of legitimate emulation, the School of Arts and Crafts directed by the Brothers opened in Champagne.

Since 1893, courses in weaving, joinery and carpentry had been functioning on Rue Contray at a location in which De La Salle had introduced his first followers. Brother Berardus Julian was the Director of the institution. This beginning was taken in hand by a man who had become accustomed to huge undertakings: Brother Amé Leonce of Longuyon. In a few months he accomplished his purposes: the remodelling of the Henry Goullet property on Rue Barbâtre, the construction and furnishing of a workshop, and the installation of machinery. A Building Society had collected and managed the capital funds. Once the situation had been thus organized and complete order established, Cardinal Langéneieux came to bless the school on November 17, 1900 in the presence of the M. H. Brother Gabriel-Marie. Students were already at work under the direction of Brother Apollonius Henri; and soon there would come to work earnestly in their service teachers like the distinguished mathematician, Brother Aristus Leonce as well as Brother Auxence of Jesus. The latter, who was the Director's assistant, won public opinion in favor of the infant project: business men, at first suspicious, became convinced of the appropriate employment of the equipment, of the seriousness of the programs, of the fine spirit of the young people and of the quality of the teaching. Doubts were caste aside. After the hiring of first certified technicians by the various factories in Rheims and beyond, it had to be acknowledged that the Catholic school equaled and, in many ways, even surpassed similar schools.[611]

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In the panorama of Lasallian schools that of St. Nicolas can obviously not escape notice. It was an imposing whole both by the number of its pupil population as well as by the number of teachers that this group required; and it was no less imposing by its material growth and its plants whether on Rue Vaugirard or at Issy or at Igny or, finally, at Buzenval. These places evoke a half-century of history.[612] And Bishop Martin's foundation at Bervanger, preserved in 1859 by Cardinal Morlot, is distinguished from its less commanding neighbors for another reason: under the responsibility of its Administrative Council, it remained autonomous.

The Brothers did not cease to play an important rôle as directors of studies, religious and professional teachers and moderators of the activities of their pupils.

Brother Amérius at Rue Vaugirard worked for twenty years — between 1869 and 1889 — toward the school's progress. Energy and kindness radiated from this solid native of Bourgogne. His assistant principal, who was to become his successor, Brother Antoine Edmond, came from the same province; as Antoine Dolez he had entered, in 1866, a young pupil of thirteen years into the workshops of St. Nicholas. Here he was to spend the entire course of his earthly life; here, too, in his thirty-sixth year he became Director and here he died in 1908 in his fifty-sixth year. He did not possess the physical stature of his confrere and predecessor: nevertheless, he was grave in his bearing, his gestures and in his walk. Actually, he was quite charming, with intelligent, kindly and refined features, a captivating voice and a

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611 *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for January 1907, pg. 15. — Brother Auxence of Jesus' Obituary, 1910. — Brother Arnold of Mary's biography. — Brother Aristus Leonce biography (by Brother Artheme). The other "central column of the school" was Brother Appollinarus Jean (M. Poinsat).

612 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 409-415.

cultivated mind, resourceful and competent. He had a taste for subtle jokes, and he wrote in a clear, warm and vivid style. Friendship was important to him; and there were few who were as sensitive and at the same time as discriminating, wise, gentle and dedicated.

Under Brothers Amérius' and Antony Edmond's administrations, St. Nicolas in Vaugirard went from one success to another. In 1874 there were 225 apprentices. Brother Antoine guided 950 pupils with a staff of sixty Brothers. Certificates of elementary studies, elementary school finishing certificates, higher certificates, all of these diplomas, whether unpretentious or difficult to obtain increased in number at the school's graduation exercises. St. Nicholas' pupils participated in competitive examinations held for Arts and Crafts schools; they earned admission into very distinguished ranks, and won numerous scholarships. Vaugirard was, at this period, a nursery of foremen and small business men.

In 1887 Mme. Aristide Boucicaut, the widow of the founder of the large "Bon Marché Department Store" bequeathed a million francs to the project. This sum facilitated the acquisition of a 4,000 square meter piece of land that adjoined the existing property. Here workshops were built, and in 1896 they were inaugurated by Cardinal Richard.

On all sides commendation and awards converged upon the celebrated school: a Gold Medal at the World's Fair of 1889, and on December 5, 1896 the Audéoud Prize bestowed by the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.

The effort achieved in Paris by Brother Amérius and Brother Antoine Edmond — and continued no less magnificently with them and after them by Brother Basil Joseph[613] — Brothers Photius and Bertule, and then Brother Anacletus supplied in St. Nicholas' second school situated near the Sulpician Seminary at Issy les Moulineaux. Physical alterations and excellent educational methods characterized this period. The architect Corroyer built a chapel in which reposed the body of Bishop Bervanger. A thousand children came there to pray and to join their song to the harmonies of instrumental music.

St. Nicholas in Buzenval did not come into existence until May 1, 1901 on the superb estate bequeathed by the Duchess Cadore, where, in perfect order, twelve Brothers taught 269 pupils. The following year a new establishment housed nearly double that number. The Junior Novices, who had inhabited the premises for thirteen years, were squeezed into rooms and courtyards set aside for their use.[614]

St. Nicolas in Igny turned up in a strikingly lively way with a character all its own. Undertaken as a risky gesture, the agricultural section had been added in 1863 to the original Bervanger enterprise. By 1872 the school had not yet emerged from its precarious situation.Brother Bertandus, from the Lyons dioceses at this time was appointed as Director; he found seventy five orphans or their equivalents whose room-and-board — never paid very regularly — was no longer adequate. Under his administration all of that was about to change.

He was a Religious with an austere appearance and rough traits, but once one got to know him, one loved him. His solemnly courteous manner easily allowed his smiling and indulgent kindness to show through. He was prepared for every self-sacrifice and he bowed before every burden — supervisor, infirmarian, bell-ringer, or treasurer depending upon circumstances and the service he might render.

Nevertheless, he was not a man who got lost in details. His good judgment conducted him to decisions that guaranteed the future. The orphanage could not survive on its own resources: Brother Bertrandus developed an elementary residence school whose situation, both out in the countryside and close by to Paris, attracted a public which, while of modest means, was

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613 Brother Basil Joseph exercised important influence both before and after 1904.

614 Cf. above pp. 90-91.

certainly abundant. However the primary end of the institution was not lost from view. The new Director had hardly been there a year before he fitted out a building and prepared a piece of land for forty "horticulturalists". He obtained promising jobs for these youngsters when they had completed their apprenticeship. His connections with farmers, as with middle-class property owners, were extensive. How was it possible to ignore locally or even in Paris or other provincial centers a school which every day became more important, better equipped, offering an obvious social advantage and whose vegetables, fruits and flowers were on the way to becoming the choice of the market?

At his death on May 26, 1896 Brother Bertrandus was mourned by this Community, by his 825 pupils and his eighty apprentice-gardeners. St. Nicolas in Igny which Brother Allais Charles received from the hands of the dying man "reminded one of a Cistercian monastery of long ago": — solid buildings in the midst of splendid gardens. The chapel still retains the freshness of novelty. As on Rue Vaugirard the openhandedness bequeathed by M. Boucicaut had here been put to perfect use.

Vigorously Brother Allais broadened, not the physical limits, but the soul of the institution. As a teacher, divisional head and Sub-director at St.Nicolas in Paris between 1877 and 1891 and for five year Director at Igny he knew kids, lively, noisy, mischievous, affectionate, quick to bestow their confidence as well as to withhold it also depending on their feelings. With an energetic and meticulous organizer who was at the same time a father with thoughtful concerns and an easily joyous disposition, things went very well indeed. The Director had a gift for inspiring a sense of security; and thus he was able to demand a great deal, and to involve everybody without overworking them.

Up to this time studies had lacked an overall plan. For each class Brother Allais Charles set up a fixed program, clearly separated from but coordinated with that of the neighboring sections. In October new scholars took an examination enabling the teachers to appreciate their abilities and their level of education. Two examinations every trimester provided a school-wide control. At the end of every school-year an extremely serious revision was undertaken. Beginning with the fourth and third classes pupils prepared for a certificate of studies. A diploma was made available to many of the older pupils. But all pupils appeared before the private Commission of the diocese of Versailles and in this way received an evaluation of their efforts. In order to encourage a taste for literature and the reading of the great authors, the "Academy of St. Aloysius Gonzaga" was founded for a select group of youngsters.

Manual labor was no less honored. After three years of practical exercises as well as studious application, horticulturalists were able to apply for a diploma: and qualified judges awarded it to them.

Followed step by step, cordially loved and trained in a Christian way, the youngsters at St. Nicolas in Igny benefitted until November of 1899 from the challenges of the future Superior-general of the Christian Brothers. Brother Aggée Prosper succeeded Brother Allais Charles, who had been promoted to Visitor: life, bracing and brisk, went on.[615]

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We have just been taking a look — among the activities of robust organism — at the functioning of a school that restored French youths to the land. Igny, of course, was not the only place on the map where De La Salle's Brothers successfully undertook such a restoration.

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[615] Brother Bertrandus' Obituary, 1896. — *Vie du Frère Basile-Joseph* (M. Lévesque), by Brother Albert Valentine, 1933. — *Vie du Très Honoré Frère Allais-Charles*, by Brother Adolph Joseph. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes*, for April 1909, pg. 161, and for October 1929, pp. 327-331. — Brother Aunobert's Ms. notes. — Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 270.

While, in 1900, the Little Brothers of May, the Brothers of St. Gabriel and Don Bosco's Salesians could point to works of this nature,[616] none of them fulfilled the rôle of precursor. "Likès" in Quimper had as early as the Second Empire rendered important service to agriculture in Brittany.[617]

Other Lasallian institutions during the last quarter of the 19th century provided special courses for those of their pupils who wished later on to farm in a some rural area: thus there were La Roche sur Yon, St. Joseph's in Dijon, Longuyon, etc.

As early as 1889 Brother Arnold of Mary in Longuyon promoted this sort of professional orientation. In 1898 he set up a complete "Agricultural Section" provided with two autonomous classes. A man who liked to refer to himself as "a peasant" became a genuine technician; through irrigation, fertilization and pasturage he transformed rocky undeveloped areas called "the Boussieux" which was everywhere on the residence school grounds into productive lands. An analytical laboratory was opened; and the financial returns of various soils were made the object of serious study. A model farm possessed numerous and select livestock, modern machinery, experimental plots for types of wheat and potatoes. At World or regional Fairs, at Luxembourg and at Nancy, Brother Arnold's enterprises won flattering prizes.[618]

Elsewhere, as at Igny, there was horticulture as well. Brother Photius, the former Director at Issy les Moulineaux, was given the responsibility of putting the "Fénelon School" in Vaujours on its feet. It was an institution similar to St. Nicolas but had fallen upon bad times in spite of the best intentions of the priest who had founded it and its lay administrators. Brother Photius and his assistant and successor, Brother Aidan Pierre, provided it with a period of prosperity. There they set up a curriculum of elementary education while, at the same time, training serious gardeners.[619]

In Laurac, in the Ardèche the operation was embodied in a very special individual, Brother Serdieu (Jacques Breton). The people in the village showed their appreciation for this native of Montpellier who had become one of their adopted fellow-citizens, by erecting as statue to him at public expense. Brother Serdieu trained not only farmers but students of Arts and Crafts in Aix, and "Miners" in St. Etienne and Alès. He drew up blueprints for churches, priests' houses and schools and engineered a drinking-water system with resounding success; he got the reputation for being a competent folk-healer. His special claim to fame, however, was due to his contributions to local agriculture. After the ravages of phylloxera in the vines, he introduced cuttings from American vines. With guidance from Louis Pasteur, to whom he had sent Brother Samuel, one of his assistants, he warded off a disease of the silkworm and so aided in the revival of the silk industry. Once his Communal school had been secularized, he restored a former residence school in Laurac, which made room for a school of agriculture. The experiments in which the brilliant teacher was engaged earned him a student-following in all the neighboring Communes. He also founded an agricultural association of which he remained the driving force. And after all this, he had the good fortune of having as his Sub-director, Brother Sabien who was himself a social innovator and a founder of "Insurance Societies" against the risk of accidents, fires, etc.[620] While we are still in Languedoc, we note the

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616 Védie, *L'Église et les OEuvres sociales en 1900*, pg. 20.

617 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 264-265 and 389-390.

618 Biography cited, pp. 36-43.

619 Brother Photius' Obituary, 1911. — *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for October 1929, pg. 324.

620 *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes*, for April 1923, pp. 135-145. — *Choix de notice nécrologiques*, Vol. III, pp. 458-459.

"farm-school" in Limoux, which had been founded by a former Director of the normal schools in Rouen and Aurilla, Brother Surin. He wanted to endow his native city with this school and he bestowed upon it his entire patrimonial property. After him Brother Hunon was appointed to head it.

Mme. Perret, the former Mlle. Dupont Latuillerie, on November 11, 1898 signed a contract with Brother Gabriel-Marie, the terms of which called for agricultural and horticultural instruction to be organized on property situated in Limonest, a Commune in the Department of the Rhône. The Brothers' Institute became owners of the estate; moreover, the benefactress obligated herself to pay an annual fee of 8,000 francs for the running and the upkeep of the institution. Besides paying pupils, a number of tuition-free resident pupils, mostly orphans, were educated at Limonest.[621]

We need only a word here to recall the flourishing St. Andrew's "Enclosure" in Clermont-Ferrand and the Choisinets school in the rugged region of the Lozère.[622]

At this point it is fitting that this survey pause at the celebrated Agricultural Institute in Beauvais. The years of the Second Empire had witnessed the successful beginnings of the work of Brother Menée, of Edward Tocqueville and of Louis Gossin.[623] After 1870 the support of the public authorities had been achieved by the project's organizers. There was even a time — in 1872 — when it was hoped that the government would grant this superb effort a well deserved reward: the school might have been accorded the name and the privileges of a "National Agricultural Institute". M. Gossin had been assured of the favorable attitude of the Minister, Pierre-Edmond Teisserenc de Bort, who was also among the most distinguished agronomists of the period.

Steps taken along these lines, abruptly, turned up empty. On the other hand, on April 2, 1873, the General Council of the Oise, presided over by the Duke of Aumale, decided to establish a Departmental Agronomical Station in the Brothers' school: an immense building was fitted out; all sorts of experiments were conducted under the direction of distinguished experts; and "reports" kept specialists and concerned portion of the public informed. At about the same time Louis Gossin published the third edition of his book entitled French Agriculture, a model of exquisitely austere language and a remarkable technical treatise, but also a witness to the observations of a sociologist and the reflections of a Christian.

When, within the political order, a development unfavorable to Catholic activities arose, the Agricultural Institute could count only on the aid that came from faithful friends, nine of whom drew up by-laws and made up the Council of the Beauséjour Society, Lt. whose stated objective was "the creation and exploitation, in the Department of the Oise, of all instructional and educational institutions, with or without residents, as well as all the farm schools".

The new agency was modified in September of 1881. During the same year relations, at first quite cautious, were struck up between the Brothers' school and the French Agriculturalist Society . The Departmental administration, which had been at one time so friendly had by that time stopped assigning to the pupils' examinations the Commission which would then submit certificates and diplomas for the Prefect's signature.

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621 Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute. — In order to guarantee the execution of the agreement, Mme. Perret "ordered Mr. Émile Loubet, President of the Senate, to represent her. In the case of Mr. Émile Loubet's death, the same powers were delegated to his son, Mr. Paul Loubet." Thus, the seventh President of the French Republic had occasion to deal with the Brothers, whose Institute was to be so sorely afflicted during the seven year period from 1899 to 1906.

622 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 408-409.

623 Ibid., pp. 404-407.

The Baron Corberon, President of the Agricultural Society of Beauvais, was listed, along with Count Salis, President of the Agricultural Engineering Section, among the founders of the Beauséjour Society. Both of them strove to draw the attention of big land owners in the Ile de France, Picardy, Brie and the Beauce to the work of young people whom they knew. In 1883 they both had themselves appointed by their colleagues to preside over the final examinations, the written portion of which took place in buildings on Rue Nully d'Hécourt, while practical applications were conducted at the Forest Farm.

The system, the result of which had given satisfaction, did not remain a mere experiment. Paul Blanchemain, a former pupil at Beauvais and President of the Alumni Association, was the Secretary of the Council of the Agriculturalist Society; extremely dedicated to his former teachers, inspired by an undeviating concern for his younger school-fellows and enjoying a lively respect and wide-ranging influence in aristocratic rural circles, the friendly M. Blanchemain pleaded the Brothers' cause before the controlling Council. He was supported by Count Salis, by M. Lucay, who presented the final report. As a result, the Society of French Agriculturalists officially accorded its sponsorship to the Agricultural Institute of Beauvais. The Jury that it had so competently selected issued diplomas at graduation beginning in 1884. The French government did not view them as having any legal value. But a number of foreign governments did validate them; and people in the trade easily acknowledged the excellent professional training of they represented.

From thirty pupils in 1870 the institution, twenty years later, went on to double that number. Courses were spread out over three years. However, bachelors, or any other students who could prove they possessed a sound educational foundation, could begin immediately with the second cycle of courses and thereby gain a year on their comrades.

Brother Eugene of Mary succeeded to the position held by Brother Menée; he had belonged to the Beauvais Community since 1840; he had been there at the beginning of the Agricultural Institute in 1854, and was the soul of the school until July 30, 1893, the date of his untimely death, since he had not yet completed his 69th year. Nevertheless he was present for more than a half-century in the capitol of the Oise — a lifetime of action, accomplishments of all sorts, of service rendered with cordiality, affection and the total forgetfulness of self. It was said of Brother Eugene that he was "A distinguished scholar, a skillful educator and a delightful human being," and a Religious without reproach. His former pupil, Paul Blanchemain, described him as a small, erect man, "smiling next to interviewers who were a foot-and-a-half taller than he, never ruffled, tempering his responses with such cheerfulness that, in spite of himself an adversary had to succumb..."

The same loyal alumnus depicted the principal aide and effective successor to this much lamented teacher. Brother Antonis, a product of the Auvergne region (while Brother Eugene of Mary had been a country-boy from Champagne) came to Beauvais in 1860, an eighteen year old Christian Brother. "We look upon him," writes M. Blanchemain, "as though he were the personification of our dearest recollections. We evoke effortlessly the friendly face of the man who continues to be the guide of our life: majestic, maintaining a tremendous control over himself, never letting himself go, Brother Antonis without coercion imposed an authority that one found attractive." His life was a tissue of obscure and constant tasks. Every morning he taught class. Each afternoon, summer and winter, he brought his pupils to the farm; after a three-mile hike, he explained the day's labor and then shouldered his portion of it. Returned to Beauvais at the end of the day, punctually he shared in the Community's religious exercises. When others were enjoying their rest, he assumed responsibilities for supervision: he paced the corridors with his rosary beads between his fingers.

Once vacation time came around, his entire leisure was consumed by work on the land and the innumerable experiments in connection with plants and fodder. Through skillful selection, he improved plaint strains and similarly for sheep, cows and goats. He wrote a number of

articles for the *Annales de l'Institut de Beauvais* and for various agricultural journals.

His technical competence only increased his spiritual influence over youth, for whom he was "our guide" as Paul Blanchemain asserted. Brother Antonis directed along Christian ways not only the school's resident pupils, but also, and especially, those whom he brought together in a Fraternity dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. He preserved a profound influence over the alumni, who as a rule became important land-owners, locally and regionally prominent, indeed important names in the world of agriculture.[624]

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The final feature of the properly educational zeal of the Brothers — and one of its most meritorious occupations — is the assistance it contributes to children who have been morally disinherited or are physically impaired. We have talked about St. Nicolas in Igny or in Limonest without recalling that these schools were principally or, in practice, partially, institutions for the benefit of orphans. In previous pages of these volumes we have been emphasizing the same quality of the Brothers' service, which nothing can efface, whether at St. Andrew's in Clermont-Ferrand or at Choisinets.

There was a superb institution for abandoned children — the Fleury-Meudon Orphanage. It owed its existence to the generosity of the wealthy Duchess of Galliera, the daughter of a former ambassador of Sardinia to France, and the widow of Raphael, Marquis of Ferrari, Prince of Lucedio and Roman Duke of Galliera who died in 1876 leaving an estate valued at 220 millions. The fine arts and charities were the beneficiaries of this fortune.

For Fleury the Duchess set up a threefold aim:

"To gather male orphans in a residence placed under the protection of St. Philippe; provide them, through the work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, with an elementary and professional education; and, in particular, to enable a certain number of them to specialize in the gardener's arts;

To assure up to about 100 aged or infirm Christian Brothers the attention demanded by old age and illness; and finally in a building situated in the contiguous Commune of Clamart, to construct "the Ferrari Hospice" for the elderly of both sexes.

The system was placed under the supervision of an administrative Council which, among its nine members, had to include a representative of the Ministry of the Interior and a delegate of the Archbishop of Paris.[625]

Several years were required for the completion of the buildings that had been specified. The benefactress wanted an imposing monument and shrunk from no expense. Forty million francs did not seem to her excessive for the orphanage and the retirement home for the Brothers: in order to achieve a planned contrast, one of these buildings arose on the summit of a hill, while the other nestled in a valley.

On November 3, 1888 the Bishop of Versailles blessed the buildings in the presence of Mme. Galliera and Brother Joseph. Shortly thereafter the Duchess died. Endowed with a considerable sum of money, the institutions at Fleury-Meudon appeared to be secured against every threat.

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[624] Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute. — Archives of the Agricultural Institute of Beauvais. — Paul Blanchemain, Louis Gossin, Paris, 1880; cf. also his addresses at the graves of Brother Eugene of Mary, 1893, and of Brother Antonis, 1905. — Report to the Catholic Congress in Paris, may 1890, by C. Senneville. — A la mémiore du Frère Eugène, Beauvais, 1894. — Brother Antonis' Obituary, 1905. — J. Bavencove, L'Institut agricole de Beauvais, 1921. — *Bulletins de la Société des Anciens èlèves de l'Institut agricole de Beauvais*, four volumes, 1867-1904.

[625] Deed of the Brignole-Galliera Foundation, submitted to Master Duluard, Notary in Paris, November 30, 1878. Approval by the Council of State on December 26, 1878. authorization Decree the following day. Archives of the Secretary-general of the Brothers' Institute.

With such magnificence the orphanage in Levier, in the Department of the Doubs, could sustain no comparison. Nevertheless, it was an extremely generous gesture on the part of two Pontarlier businessmen, Alexis and Nestor Cretin, which opened a line of credit of a million francs so that the Superior-general could purchase land, construct a building, set the project on foot and maintain it. Levier, the native region of the two benefactors, had witnessed the departure of the Brothers' community in 1882 when the Communal school had been secularized. Brother Ostinian, whom the two men had known as Director at Pontarlier, volunteered to give them advice. And in 1889 the Motherhouse on Rue Oudinot received a proposal for the reestablishment of the Brothers in Levier, under totally different conditions, and for purposes that were completely commensurate with the educational and charitable mission of the Institute.

"The St. Joseph's Park Society" — of Dijon — accepted the financial responsibilities and, acting as the legal property owner, signed a contract for the lease of purchased land and for the planned school to a group of three priests, the pastors of Levier, of Chapelle d'Huin and of Labergement du Navois. The Brothers of the Christian Schools assumed direction of "St. Joseph's School" on October 3, 1891. In 1893, to the orphanage the founders added a farm-school where were was applied the system of intensive cultivation, which was followed with a great deal of interest, and subsequently imitated, by the people in the region.[626]

Praesertim pauperes: this obligation imposed upon the Brothers by the Rule of their Institute and by the Bull of Benedict XIII inspired them to extend their concerns to a type of child whose infirmity placed him among the most unfortunate of human beings: the Brothers of the Christian Schools, emulators of the Brothers of St. Gabriel and the Daughters of Wisdom, undertook the education of the hard-of-hearing. Since the days of Brother Philippe, they had directed three schools that specialized in the education of these youngsters, who were at the time taught by means of signs and according to a method devised by Father L'Épée. They had been invited to Chambéry in 1845, to a school founded by a saintly lady, Mlle. Barthélemy. The institution, called "Royal" under the Sardinian government but become "Imperial" after the reunion of Savoy and France, had been moved in 1862 to the Corinthian Mansion. In 1866, the Minister of Public Education decided to name a civilian Director: the Brothers left.[627]

They still retained, and continued to do so for a very long time, the educational center at St. Étienne as well as the one in Besancon. Further, in 1889 they signed an agreement with the Bishop of Belley who wished to entrust them with the same sort of education in Bourg en Bresse.[628]

Brother Odilide, who had come from the institution in Savoy, organized the St. Claude school for the hard-of-hearing near Besancon. There existed in the Franche Comté as early as the beginning of the 19th century a foundation that owed its beginnings to a disciple of Father Sicard. Moved in 1808 from the capital city of the Jura to the capital city of the Doubs, it had experienced a number of misadventures. Finally, the General Council of the Department, in order to guarantee its future, appealed to the Christian Brothers who, beginning in December of 1865 assigned its specialists there: after Brother Odilide, there was Brother Riquier, followed by Brother Romule Martyr.

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[626] Archives of the Secretary-general and Archives of the District of Besancon. — Here we can only mention Orphan-Apprentice Charity founded in 1892 by Father Thilmont at Guéange (in annexed Lorraine) and entrusted to the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1902. This extremely interesting institution did not become French until 1919.

[627] B. Secret, op. cit., pg. 60.

[628] The convention of 1889would be renewed on 1st June 1899 between Mgr Luçon, then bishop of Belley, and the Mots Honoured Brother Gabriel Marie (Institute archives).

Brother Riquier undertook the first experiments with "oral articulation" which, little by little, successfully replaced "hand signs". He gave a demonstration of the new system at the graduation exercises in 1876 and at the blessing of the chapel that had recently been constructed: a hard-of-hearing pupil read a congratulatory message, another recited the "Our Father", and a third the "Ten Commandments".

The great promoter of a system that restored the use of speech to the hard-of-hearing was none other than the former Director of the Junior Novitiate in Paris, Brother Pierre Celestine. The indefatigable mentor of future Religious and superb artist showed that he was able, in a variety of ways, to exercise his dedication, his clever mind and his adaptable talents to souls and intellects. He was appointed inspector of schools for the hard-of-hearing by Brother Irlide in 1880. He went to Besancon where he worked tirelessly in the writing of textbooks for youngsters so afflicted and spent months in Tours and Paris seeing the books through the presses. In 1882 he was in St. Étienne, in 1886 in Comté, in 1889 in Bourg en Bresse. At several Congresses, his theories were examined and won adherents. His books and the phonetic apparatus which he had invented or that he had improved took their places in the stalls at the major World Expositions: apprentices in his workshops printed his French course for school children deprived of hearing.

For a quarter of a century the school at Bresse en Bourg had the benefit of the knowledge and kindness of Brother Roger of the Cross. He had been a novice in Besancon in 1862 and almost immediately thereafter dedicated himself to the instruction of the hard-of-hearing and initially with Brother Riquier and then, between 1878 and 1889, in the classrooms at St. Étienne where he displayed his superb qualities of mind and heart.

When the Brothers were invited to the diocese of Belley for similar work, the Superior-general placed the new center in the hands of Brother Roger. Up to that period the school, under the control of an ecclesiastical administration, had depended for its principal resources upon student tuition, scholarship established by several Departmental General Councils and upon alms. The Brother Director's initiatives increased the school's income: to the horticulture course which had already been in existence he added the operation of a vineyard, the maintenance of orchards and a dairy. For these undertakings he was awarded a gold medal by the Society of French Agriculturalists.[629]Here, once again, professional training — especially recommended in order to improve the social status of the hard-of-hearing — bolstered the teaching of language and grammar in a permanent environment of Christian education.

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The sober work of the teacher does not exist which does not turn to the advantage of the human collectivity. The entire preceding analysis would serve to illustrate this truth. The Brothers, however, did not limit themselves to the education of the child and boys in their early youth. Beginning with the years they were spreading throughout the Kingdom of France, morally and materially they counselled and assisted their pupils who were approaching their maturity. The reciprocal friendship of the Brothers and their former pupils was manifested at every period.

But during the last third of the 19th century the post-school activity of the Institute took on considerable scope; and it was integrated with the history of social Catholicism. Catholic groups of workers, young men's clubs, friendly associations, improvement and transformation of relations between salaried workers and heads of industry, cooperative undertakings, unions, the efforts of Popular Action, Catholic Youth, Sillon when it first began, and the doctrine of

[629] Archives of the District of Besancon. — Brother Pierre Celestine's Obituary, 1899. — Brother Roger of the Cross' Obituary, 1914.

Semaines sociales, all these forms produced, in France, a powerful movement that was more coherent than an outside observer might have imagined, a movement that continued to grow.

In the beginning it had been the noble ideal of Albert de Mun and La Tour du Pin to aim at restoring the working class to religion and at reconciling workers and the "managerial" class; striving to that goal, by means of "clubs", designed on the model created by a priest of the Community of the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, Maurice Maignen in the Montparnasse neighborhood of Paris — places of reconciliation and of understanding (but not always of genuine unity) of men of the world, believers and practicing Catholics and of the real representatives of the working classes. In 1884 there were 400 of these Groups totally 50,000 members of every social condition.[630] During that year there took place in the French Houses of Parliament the vote on the law concerning trade unions: the rôle played by Albert de Mun and the support he provided the author of he law, Waldeck-Rousseau, went far to prove the soundness of his knowledge, of his social experience, his sincerity and the independence of his convictions.

He was unable, however, to realize his cherished dream of national reconciliation. The Work of the Groups did not permeate to the heart of the world of manual workers. In a factory in Val des Bois, Léon Harmel supplied a singularly attractive mode, but one, nonetheless, that remained exceptional, of a Christian working fraternity that included a boss and his employees. At least there was here sketched the outlines of an organization for the future: in place of the "patriarchal" conception of the employer exercising a beneficent but limitless and undefined control over his employees there would be gradually substituted the idea of collaboration based upon justice, rights and mutual obligations and of shared duties and precisely defined responsibilities.[631]

The Groups had prepared the soil. It would also rouse among the young a keen desire to make themselves useful to the Church and to the nation and a firm resolution to abandon attitudes of egotism and lazy pessimism and search for solutions to the problems of the age. Under M. de Mun's inspiration, the *Catholic Association of French Youth* was born in 1886 in a house on Rue Du Bac where Bishop Ségur died. Robert Roquefeuil was its first president.[632]

Some twelve years later Mark Sangnier started his *Sillon*. Along with his friends, he succeeded in stimulating within the youth clubs in Paris and its suburbs the creation of "study groups", closely knit gatherings in which dedicated individuals, infatuated with a love of purity, minds eager for light strengthened and mutually instruction one another while awaiting the call to action. Louis Cousin, a Brother of St. Vincent de Paul and Father Roblet, a Parisian priest, set up, each one separately, two spirited groups, two prototypes. Bishop Péchenard, Rector of the Catholic Institute, Father Odelin, former chaplain at Franc Bourgeois and future Vicar-general and, with them, numerous directors of charities promoted "Mark Sangnier's" approach. A ray of hope had pierced the darkness and the clouds in the opening moments of the 20th century.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools were not merely content to applaud; they participated in the renewal. In the person of their Superior-general, Brother Joseph, they possessed a master of social action. His influence over the young had enabled him as the Director of the Commercial School on Rue St. Antoine to undertake a superb series of achievements: the

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630 Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 15-18.

631 Goyau, *Histoire religieuse de la nation francaise*, pp. 604-605. — Cf. George Guitton, *La Vie ardente at féconde de Léon Harmel,* Paris, 1929.

632 Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 660-662.

permanent organization of former students into a multi-faceted Group; the opening of a "Home" for migrants from the provinces working in Paris; moral support, strongly maintained relations and associations among Brothers' pupils after they had entered into the responsibilities of adult life — homemaking, paternal obligations, concerns with getting and keeping a job.

The educator's reputation, in 1873, earned him a place on the Central Bureau for Catholic Charities, a bridge-organization directed by Bishop Ségur. Brother Joseph was thus well situated so as to have a view of the whole. He also took part in a variety of Congresses.

This background to a certain extent explains the policy of his administration between 1884 and 1897. But it is important to put the emphasis on another cause: his determination to follow the Pope's directives.

Pope Leo XIII had pity on the masses who were a prey to suffering of both mind and body; he had pity on people who, were seeking a response to their anxieties, a solution to life's enigmas, outside the ways of Christian wisdom. He rejected every contemporary error and refused to retract any of the anathemas hurled against them by his predecessors. But he understood the aspirations of his contemporaries and he had a profound sense of the sincerity and the grounds of their discontents. He knew that the Church's teachings, founded in the Gospel, set forth the principles necessary to just reform. In 1891 the Encyclical *Rerum novarum* appeared as the conclusion to patient investigation and fruitful meditation; and it remains as the charter for "Social Catholicism."[633] But the essential thought of the Pontiff had been earlier defined in the many audiences he had given. Leo XIII spoke frankly with members of the clergy, Religious and faithful who shared his confidences and who were in a position to lend effect to his directives. Brother Joseph was one of these.

He went to Rome in March of 1885 at the beginning of his generalate. The Pope questioned him on the Brothers' recruitment, their formation, their zeal and docility and on the increase in the number of their institutions throughout the world. Thus informed, he specified what he expected of these teachers who were so rich in faith and experience: within the vast and compact ranks composed by 12,000 Brothers not only must the 300,000 pupils of day- and residence schools receive an education, but also well-ordered battalions of apprentices, workers, employees and students must be organized and contend. Souls must be snatched from the perils of exclusion; the sense of their strength and their fraternal cohesion must be restored to the Christian masses.

These were the watchwords. The Superior-general had already grasped the substance of them in his Circular of November 21, 1884, when he reported an interview between the Holy Father and Cardinal Massaja: "It is not," said Leo XIII, "that while young people are attending religious schools they become members of diabolic organizations that is the principal cause of the all the evil we see around us; it is after they finish school. It is therefore important that their lives be lived within the influence of a ministry that is capable of preserving them from the seductions of Free-Masonry...I want to see the Brothers open institutions of this sort in every city in which they operate schools."

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What exactly are these apostolic ministries? All of them, of course, have religion as their basis: Brother Joseph emphasized the rôle of the priest: — "the dispenser of the word of God and the minister of the Sacraments". He did not pretend to provide an unalterable model that would lead inevitably to the desired goal. One had to bend before "circumstances, places and

633 See Father J. Lamoot's book *Monseigneur Paul Six, Premier missionnaire du Travail.* Paul Six strove to give substance to the principles of the Encyclical in Northern France. — Paris, 1937.

persons". In one locality the Brothers would make their own residence the center of friendly associations and group prayer; elsewhere they would guide their young people toward parochial or diocesan groups. In many cases the youth club, with its offices, games, celebrations and outings would be the constantly revitalized center of Christian life. Less engrossing, sodalities, study clubs and cooperative groups deserve particular attention: we have proof of their spiritual effectiveness and we are aware of the results they have achieved at the level of friendly cooperation.

The youth club presented itself as the immediate and indispensable prolongation of the school. "We can scarcely ever count on" [writes a Parisian pastor][634] "the perseverance of a child who, at the age of eleven or twelve, leaves a Catholic school. Even assuming that the school attended was excellent from every point of view, the child could have received only a fleeting impression. Its soul is like soft wax that hardens only with time. No matter how perfect the first influence, another may be quickly substituted, and there is a danger that the adage may be confirmed: *Corruptio optimi pessima*."

This is something that French Catholics have clearly understood for half a century. On this subject nobody claims to be able to teach the French anything. In 1896 one of the leaders of secularization, Léon Bourgeois, stated: "Our adversaries have designed the youth club around the institutions the Church protects, supports, develops and defends." [635] Radicalism, Socialism, Communism and Free-Masonry have attempted, and, unfortunately, not without success, to make up for lost time.[636]

Youth clubs founded by the confreres of St. Vincent de Paul appear shortly after the birth of the charitable Society. In 1834 the building at 11 Fossés-St. James became the birthplace of a ministry which began with the rescue of three lost children.

The initiatives of Ozanam and his first companions were broadened by the Vicount Armand of Melun. The man distinguished for his service and Brother Philippe maintained the best of relations: mutual confidence enabled them to initiate, in 1843, the youth club in St. Marguerite's parish.[637]

In 1845 the Brothers Director of the Parisian schools were called to the Motherhouse; M. Melun, in the presence of the Superior-general, explained to them how the youth among the masses of the people had been left to shift for themselves: once the celebration of First Communion was over, thousands of boys, scarcely of adolescent age, were stripped of all moral guidance and every refuge against the temptations that were everywhere in the streets. With the warm support of Brother Philippe, the speaker was given the promise of cooperation.

A few months later, post-school organizations were functioning in three precincts, and there were others just starting up. Growth became constant until just after the lifetime of the founder. In 1875 the Brothers in Paris were directing seventeen boys clubs frequented by 3,000 youths; and by 1879 there were twenty-three of them along with an increase of about 500 new members.

"Barring the absolutely impossible, let every schoolhouse have an attached youth club!" These words of Leon XIII to Brother Joseph, Anatole Ségur underscored in a formal Assembly of militant Catholics on January 28, 1894.

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634 Father Lesêtre, pastor of St. Étienne du Mont, in an article *Le Bilan des Écoles chrétiennes*.

635 Cited by Lecanuet, Vol. IV, pg. 273.

636 On the subject of post-school lay ministries at the end of the 19th century, see G. Goyau, *L'École d'aujourd'hui,* 1st series, 1899.

637 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 527-528.

To reach that goal there remained a long piece of the road to travel. Serious efforts were made, since by December 31, 1897 31,200 French youngsters, in Paris or in the provinces, belonged to Brothers' youth clubs. The Department of Nord lead the list with 7,125 members; while the Seine was second with 6,450. There followed, but at some distance, the Lower Seine, the Girond, the Pas de Calais, the Lire, the Somme, and the Lower Loire, the Oise, the Aisne and Calvados...etc.

Such were the results immediately following the death of Brother Joseph. Statistics prepared for the Worlds Fair of 1900 show the figure of 32,572 youths divided into 350 boys' clubs.

The total was, no doubt, still not very impressive. It represented scarcely a tenth of the projects of a similar nature in existence throughout the nation. The confreres of St. Vincent de Paul and the Religious placed under the patronage of the inspired apostle of charity had worked tirelessly. Priests in the parishes had gathered together, retained or restored to Christian ways a huge number of children educated in secularized schools. The Brothers, indeed, laid claim to no more than an honorable mention on the list of faithful workers. Some of them, perhaps, feared the fraternization of their pupils with "secularized" youths; and the influence of their work suffered as the result of such exclusivity. And, then, as was pointed out by Bother Joseph in 1884, frequently the day's program at a youth club did not square very well with the practices of the Rule; and hence there was some hesitation about entering wholeheartedly into an area strewn with obstacles.

But we must not forget that there were other ways in which the social apostolate was practiced within the Institute; if we add to the beneficiaries of the youth clubs those of the "homes", "the cooperative associations" and the members in the powerful groups of which we spoke a moment ago, we can see that, as we approach the year 1900, the influence of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, outside the walls of the institutional school, extended to more than 57,000 youths of French birth or culture.[638]

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We shall pluck a few names from the shadows in which religious humility has concealed them. First of all, we discern the features and the mind of Brother Alpert, an Alsatian who, through teaching and example, instructed and edified those of his fellow-countrymen who had migrated to Paris and by his holiness inspired "Hosannas". Christian Motsch, born in 1849 in Eywiller, in the Commune of the Lower Rhine,[639] had first known about De La Salle's Institute through hearsay; he made contact with the Brothers in Sarralbe, and then, on September 10, 1864, he arrived at Rue Oudinot. After his novitiate, he was sent to the St. Joseph's Mission School on Rue Lafayette, where he was to teach for a second time in 1869. He returned there once again in 1879, this time as Director and never to leave except when worn down by illness.[640]

This school had been founded by a Jesuit, Father Chable, in about 1850. It was called "the German Mission". Nearby, in the St. Denis and St. Martin neighborhoods there lived a number of immigrés, who had come from the Germanic regions; most of them were poor and they did not speak French.

The Jesuits set about to serve them. A chapel was opened near the priests' residence. The

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[638] Max Turmann, *Au sortir de l'école: les patronages*, Paris, 1899, pp. 17, 19, 86-87, 191-192. — Stephen Védie, *L'Église et les OEuvres sociales en 1900*, Pais, 1901, pp. 28-29, 97 et sq. — Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 272-273. — *Vie du Frère Exupérien*, pg. 119.

[639] His maternal grandfather, Jean Schneider, a master stonemason, in 1853 took the initiative to build a church in the village which until then, had been a dependency of the neighboring parish.

[640] See above, pp. 123-124.

ministry included a school for boys, a school for girls and two youth clubs. At first the Brothers who were employed to teach in the schools came daily from their Community on St. Martin's Square, but later on set up their own residence. The first Directors of the new team belonged to various nationalities: there was a Westphalian named Brother Vincenzius, a Pole, Brother Mainaudin, and a native of Luxembourg, Brother Alix Peter.

However, after the Franco-Prussian War the public served by the Mission changed. Families from Alsace and from Lorraine left their province, which was now called Reichsland, and asked for asylum in the mother country. The government in Paris authorized them — which was only just — to occupy the free land which surrounded the Buttes-Chaumont and Belleville heights. Others settled in Villete and, outside the fortifications, at Quatre-Chemins. When Brother Alpert began his directorship most of his 300 pupils were Alsatians or Lorrainians. These schoolboys spoke both French and German, but lessons were given in both languages; German was the only language used in the instructions and the catechism classes that were held in the church; it was thought that in doing so one would better support the practices of piety that had been contracted in the land of the pupils' birth.

The son of the Motschs and the Schneiders of Eyviller found the most favorable environment for his religious activities. The Jesuits, who had already been pleased with their Lasallian auxiliaries, were delighted to have a Director who agreed with them with such consideration, intelligence and dedication. And the difficulty that had momentarily interrupted the task through the decrees of eviction in 1880 did not finally prevent the good from being achieved.

Brother Alpert, equipped with vigilance and foresight, with strict resolution and sensitive goodness, ruled over hearts and wills. The families of the children were docile to his counsels. In the youth club the talks given by the saintly man were highly appreciated; they censured neither the games the boys played nor their great and joyful outings. They inspired souls to prayer and they lead the way to the only success the apostle craved — the liturgical feasts and the fidelity of his young people or else their return to God.

He demanded and got a great deal; the regulations that he issued were scrupulously observed; Christian life grew both in extent and depth. Every month the pick of the youth club, along with Brother Alpert, went up to the Sacred Heart Basilica for evening devotions. And within the Society of St. Benedict Joseph Labre — a marvelous association of which we shall speak presently — the Alsace-Lorrainians composed a large group; they joined to restore their energy; and, devout, animated, enterprising and obliging, they showed up consistently on Rue Lafayette for Sunday meetings with the revered Director.

And when Brother Alpert's pupils married, they were no less involved with the life of the project and they still met in the rooms and courtyards of St. Joseph's Mission; the church steeple became the rallying point for a lot of young households among which enduring friendships were sealed. It was, in fact, a dynamic parish. Furthermore, in the beginning the use of German by preachers as well as by catechists had abundantly justified the autonomy which Father Chable's foundation enjoyed. When the generations born after the Treaty of Frankfort had grown up and had become completely Parisian, the use of French spread and eventually dominated. Would the privilege of celebrating Baptisms, First Communions, and feasts such as Easter away from the center of the official church be continued? Brother Alpert sought authorization to provide bilingual religious instruction: and the archbishop's office consented. The Metz catechism was introduced at St. Joseph's school. Count Hoyos, an Austro-Hungarian ambassador, sent his sons to prepare for the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Confirmation with the children from Alsace: Cardinal Richard, who presided at the ceremonies and fulfilled his rôle as pastor by administering Confirmation, went away fascinated. The Mission's privileges were maintained, and the Brother Director had not labored in vain.[641]

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641 *Vie du Frère Alpert*, pp. 10-20, 54-90, 110-112, 123, and 135-136.

In a very different sector of the capital, Brother Alton of Mary impressed with the authority of his virtue, his natural dignity, and the wise, placating, friendly counsel. Between 1869 and 1905 he was at the head of the St. Augustine Community. More so than anybody else he contributed to the achievements of this excellent youth club where his former pupils, numerous and persevering, effected, in marvelous harmony, a particularly successful type of Catholic association.[642].

In Orleans, Brother Blimond, Director of St. Bonose, devoted himself for twenty years not only to his pupils but to the service of commercial employees, apprentices and young workers. He was an accommodating and useful collaborator of priests who were open to the aspirations of people who were young and in a hurry to follow Rome's directives. Become Visitor of the District of Moulins in 1888, he regretted "having to leave the fine city of Orleans, where he experienced so many consolations and the good priests who assisted him with their insights...[643] He himself would never be forgotten in a city where he had become a popular figure.

Also among the Brothers at St. Bonose there was, between 1891 and 1898, an enthusiast for every one of the ministries of faith and charity, called Brother Isaac Antony. A native of Rabastens, in the Tarn, he was the son of a father who practiced both Franciscan piety and poverty. Antony Darrasse went from the school in his region to the novitiate in Rodez. By way of Moulin, where he fulfilled the functions of Sub-director of novices, he came to Orleans. His influence extended beyond they youngsters in the choir, to the youths who were part of the "St. Joseph Ministry"; in this serious and unassuming environment were recruited active Catholics, confreres of St. Vincent de Paul, auxiliaries of the parochial apostolate, supporters of the Catholic schools, social activists, future priests and future Religious. Brother Isaac Antony loved these conscientious people; and they trusted him and valued his circumspect dedication, his intense love of God. He had already left his stamp on a number of them when, all too quickly, his Superiors transferred him to Dun sur Auron, where, until the onset of old age, he continued on as a model educator.[644]

In the St. Étienne region there are two names that deserve to beheld in honor. At St. Étienne there was Brother Ptolemy for whom, although crippled and partially paralyzed — walking with the aid of two canes — physical affliction did not preclude his moderating the Catholic Club, initiating an association of Christian employers, a legal claims service and a peoples' bank. He frequented a youth group that discussed social problems and, at the same time, he influenced the thought and feelings of people by introducing them to the pathetic reality of lives lived in attics and squalid hovels.[645]

In St. Étienne itself we meet once again with Brother Paramon Cyprian, whose post-school ministries, study clubs, Alumni Association, St. Vincent de Paul Society and "Textbook ministry" (distribution of free textbooks) were connected with the model professional school.

A page out of the Lives of the Saints was occurring in Rheims: Brother Attic Michael lived his brief life like the saints exalted by the ancient hagiographers. He was born in Steinsel in 1861, in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. As a novice in Thillois, he yielded docilely, joyfully

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642 Brother Alton of Mary's Obituary, 1908. Theodore Botrel, the talented Breton songwriter, was one of the members of the St. Augustine Society; he delivered a talk at his former teacher's funeral

643 Letter quoted in his Obituary, 1896.

644 Brother Isaac Antony had the distinction and the uoy of contributing to the Christian and social formation of M. Émile Jouffrey, founder of the Friends of Private Education in the diocese of Orleans and former Vice-president of the "Friends of France." — *l'Écho de Bethléem*, for which the Brother had been an ardent advocate, published an article on him in its May, 1935 issue.

645 Obituary, 1897.

to the austere direction of Brother Arnold. As a pledge of his total commitment to the views of his mentor, he asked to be affiliated to the poorest school in the District. He was given the "first grade" in the St. Anne neighborhood. He lavished a near maternal attention on these urchins, especially the most shabbily dressed and the most infested. He went on to perform essential acts of hygiene for them, he healed their wounds, washed their hair, mended their clothes and their shoes. The fragmentation of some families broke his heart; and so, he went out begging help for them. "I cannot refuse him anything, he has so touched my heart", he told Father Baye, the pastor-dean of St. Remy.

Brother Attic Michel remodelled a shed into an immense room; he finished everything, stonework and carpentry, with his own personal labor. He brought children together in this makeshift shelter. And here, too, he convened parents, day laborers and factory workers and created a family atmosphere. The humble Religious excelled at inspiring persons of good will to work together to dissolve prejudice and propagate peace. In this way he brought together the makings of a new parish, which took St. Anne as its patron. Similarly, as a very important associate in the priestly ministry, he contributed to the organization of a second center, St. Clotilde, in another Rheims neighborhood.

Those of his confreres who were witnesses to his work had no difficulty believing in his profound and luminous influence. With his very simple appearance, minimal education and unpretentious position, there was nothing about Brother Attic that would draw peoples' attention to him. But at his death on December 28, 1901, the funeral of the young Religious took on the character of a triumph. Simple people came in droves, saddened at having lost a real friend.[646]

The soldiers garrisoned in Nantes professed the same affection for Brother Camillus of Jesus,[647] who in 1876 chose from among the best the twenty who would instruct their comrades in the practice of their Christian duties. The group, called the "Legion", disappeared officially when, in 1880, the military authorities, embracing anticlericalism, prohibited the meetings that were held in the "Rosmedec House". Good things , however, was accomplished secretly. On Christmas of 1893 200 soldiers received Holy Communion in the Brothers' institution. In 1894, on Passion Sunday, Bishop Laroche of Nantes administered Communion to 295 of Brother Camillus' faithful ones; and then on Palm Sunday 115 enlisted men and forty-five students received Holy Communion after having followed the talks at an Easter Retreat. In 1897 there were 490 Communions; and 429 more in 1899 with the soldiers alone making up nine-tenths of the congregation. [648]

The "Youth Ministry" was the name according to which Father Allemand in Marseille had early inaugurated an apostolate that, long afterwards, had been resumed by Father Jullien and by Father Timon-David,[649]and adopted in 1854 by Brother Joseph for his "Franc-bourgeoise" foundation.[650] The more euphemistic term of "Club" prevailed, which took away nothing away from the educational value of the organization or anything that contributed to its appeal or success.

Lille did not disdain the term originally given in Marseille. The "Youth Ministry" around 1872 in the Flemish capital had already been exhibiting intriguing enterprises. It was the period

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646 Obituary, 1902. — And *Choix de notices*, Vol. II, pp. 388-409.

647 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 528-529.

648 I. de Cicé, *Le Frère Camille-de-Jésus*, 1927, pp. 58 and 67-68.

649 Max Turmann, op. cit., pp. 16-17

650 See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 529-531.

during which the future Brother Maurice Lucian was frequenting the circle of former Brothers pupils in buildings in Monnaie where he availed himself of the spiritual means which safeguarded faith and conscience and — for certain individuals such as himself — progress toward the total gift of self: private retreats, general retreats, daily and nightly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Sodality of the Most Blessed Virgin and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. However, taste for the arts and literature in this case did not go without some satisfaction: Brother Edouardis, a teacher at St. Peter's, organized the Monnaie Academy; they wrote stylistic pieces, they read or declaimed poems, monologues, and quotations from classical authors; they produced comedies and tragedies on a stage. The youthful Lemaire showed what a good actor he was, and he learned to write with ease and precision. Applause did not go to his head. The modest reputation derived from the talents he cultivated he attributed to God; and he was to make use of them in his teaching career either to guide the writing of beginners or to provide an adequate mold for his own thought.

Brother Maurice Lucian would never forget the religious guidance that pointed him toward the Institute. As Visitor of Cambrai, he never lost sight of the "clubs"; he liked them not as simple experiments in the preservation of morality or as a domain for innocent games and good-natured distractions, but, the image of the institution that dominated his own life when he was twenty years of age, that is, centers of Christian education and of training for the struggles and conquests under the standard of the Cross. At his suggestion the diocesan clergy, the teachers in private schools, the superiors of religious institutions were to plan for the older pupils, for students, for employees and workers situated at life's crossroads, indeed for fathers of families shouldering the heaviest of life's responsibilities hours of "recollection", days of meditations, prayer and interior renewal in silence and in conversation with God.[651]

In general, we can say that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were above all concerned with the religious perseverance of their pupils, without neglecting, however, temporal considerations and adaptation to the "greater world". To save souls was indeed the goal; but salvation takes place on this earth, in company with other human beings and within the most concrete context. One has to know how to cooperated with God and open up the paths of Grace. Chapters of St. Vincent de Paul Society supplied an easy way of combining action with prayer, a decision for personal perfection with a knowledge of the needs of the poor and with charity conceived as an effort of love for one's neighbor and not merely as a transitory alms. We have seen how the saintly Brother Léon of Jesus was particularly appreciative of this form of the apostolate.[652] His voice did not go unheard, as in 1899 the "Youth Ministries" directed by the Brothers contributed a contingent of some 500 members to the Society founded by Ozanam.[653]

Ozanam, Armand Melun, Albert de Mun, Roquefeuil, Bazire, Gerlier, Mark Sangnier, Henry Lorin, Marius Gonin, and in fact all the promoters and laborers in the work of Social Catholicism, either successively or simultaneously, found in the Brothers supportive, indeed enthusiastic, and invaluable assistance. After the Franco-Prussian War the ideas of Count de Mun and the Marquis de la Tour du Pin guided Christian educators, like Brother Louis who founded the "Catholic Club" in Versailles.[654] And then, too, the Catholic Association of French Youth recruited members in residence schools. "Sillon groups" were established in

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[651] Brother Edouardis' Obituary, 1900 and Brother Maurice Lucian's Obituary, 1920.

[652] See above, pg. 342.

[653] Turmann, op. cit., pg. 103.

[654] Known as "Brother Louis," this man, upon his entrance into the Institute, had been given the anme of "Brother Nemesionis"; cf. Obituary, 1884.

many of the clubs, where the atmosphere was hospitable to the idea of a democracy operating under the inspiration of the Gospel; but when excessive politics and perilous doctrinal pronouncements roused uneasiness on the part of Church authorities and finally drew down the condemnation of the Holy See, there were no dissidents among the Sillonists, no matter to what group they might have belonged. Those who promoted "Social Workshops" were assured of a most attentive hearing from youths who had been armed against selfishness and class prejudice; and at St. Euvertus residence school in Orleans there unfolded one of the first sessions of what came to be known as the "Mobile University", which gave promise of such a productive future.

For the Brothers, who were faithful to the teachings of John Baptist de La Salle on wisdom, prudence and modesty, there was no question of manipulating public opinion; the educators' rôle consisted in keeping their pupils in contact with life, in opening their eyes to the vast world. The *Bulletin des OEuvres de Jeunesse* that Brother Exupérien began to publish in 1882 was printing 6,000 copies by 1904; it intensified the cohesiveness among new groups and it threw up barriers to pessimism and inertia. It created a common spirit that gave rise to hope in more gloomy moments.

The "social doctrine" that the Institute advocated and that it practiced in various ways was commented upon at the World's Fair of 1900 by M. Lami in the warmest terms: "To generations which were no longer guided by a respect for tradition, the Brothers taught what experience had to teach...Sunday discussions had been begun in the schools in Lyons and thereafter extended to St. Étienne, Bordeaux and Roubaix...Influence was expanded somewhat in every direction; the "Society for Social Economy" made its contribution. It offered prizes for the best work."

These comments concluded with an especially flattering note: "De La Salle's disciples were the first to reflect that it was not enough to turn out good Catholics; it was also necessary to train good citizens. In the world of religion, they were there at the beginning of the trade union movement, the industrial unions and the cooperative societies."[655]

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Rarely today do we meet with a school whose former pupils do not get together into "Alumni Associations". In this area those who benefitted from religious education were the pioneers. To the desire to preserve cordial relations with one another there was added the further desire to show fidelity to the principles learned and gratitude to the teachers who had imparted them. These wishes did not remain ineffective: "to be of service" became the motto of these Associations: they aimed at helping companions who were experiencing difficulties at the beginning of a career or who had been the victims bad luck; and, morally and financially, they proposed to support private colleges, such as the Catholic schools; and, in the face of sectarian prejudice they intended, in word and deed, to proclaim Catholic solidarity as former pupils of priest, Religious and their teachers of times gone by.

These generous purposes did not surface all at once, even in circles under the influence of the Brothers. In the beginning there were the pleasures associated with more or less frequent meetings, the exchange of handshakes and of mutually interesting bits of information. Such were the initial appearances of the Society of Former Pupils of the Clermont-Ferrand residence school, the senior member, it seems, of the Alumni Associations that gravitated about the Brothers' Congregation. It dated from 1865. And to it was grafted as early as 1866, the "Literary Society of Former Academicians", associated with the same school. A proposal was

[655] Report of Group 108 at the World's Fair. Quoted in a "report on the question of St. Peter's residence school," in the Archives of the Secretary-general of the Institute.

made to contribute more important data to discussions and communications: and so, each member was required to submit to the secretary "literary or scientific notes" which would form part of periodical "reports."[656]

A change occurred. In 1882 all former pupils could sign up in the Literary Society, provided they had completed their studies in one of the classes in the advanced courses. The bulletin that began publication at this time appears to be an organ for the entire Association. It displays a decided intellectual quality, while, at the same time, exhibiting a highly religious inspiration: St. Paul was chosen at the Association's patron. Future Dominicans Felix Mandonnet and Antonine Sertillanges tried an amateur hand at essays in moral philosophy and Bible history.[657]

A movement in the direction of mutual edification is clear. Elsewhere there is evident a decision in favor of reciprocal assistance. It is assumed in Beauvais where, as early as 1867, Louis Gossin was pleased to see an exclusively "fraternal" Society issue from "Paul Blanchemain's courageous initiative" in the favorable atmosphere of the Agricultural Institute.[658] The Alumni Association of the residence school in Dijon, founded in 1872 by Brother Pol of Léon — the first to adopt a fully legal form — supported scholarship-pupils chosen from among the best pupils in the elementary classes, who had also passed the entrance examination to "St. Joseph's."[659]

In Nîmes, where there was no residence school, the alumni of the Brothers' schools, organized by one of them, Mark Milliarède, got together so as to subsidize the cost of private education. Membership rose from 320 in 1878 to 522 in the course of a year. They witnessed openly to their Catholic faith in a city that was in part Protestant. The rich middle class were Calvinists; and the Brothers' pupils, usually from the lower economic ranks, collected funds to pay for the support of some of the novices in Avignon.[660]

North and South combined in the same magnanimous projects: in Douai the Alumni Association of the Lewarde school, begun in 1879, determined to take up the task of the supporting and advancing a very much beloved institution.

We are approaching the time when Alumni Associations were beginning to take on much more importance. After 1880 the experimental period was practically over. This was the date of the anticlerical offensive: hostile forces had failed sufficiently to conceal their tactics for Catholics not to have sensed the threat hanging over not only Religious Orders but over the Church itself. It was essential to protect the faith of children, to extend private education and to assume the defense of teachers who had been charged with not being up to the demands of their vocation. Individualism was no longer in fashion. Numerous pupils rallied around their Lasallian teachers.

Existing Associations clarified their programs, and new Alumni Associations began to appear. Paul Pelerin, a judge who had recently resigned as a result of the Ferry decrees, worked out the by-laws of the Alumni Association in Béziers — and several others — together with his friend and one-time schoolmate in the Immaculate Conception residence school, Adrien Mas,

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656 Archives of the Clermont residence school. Explanation presented at the meeting of May 12, 1867, by J. M. Biélawski, corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences, Literature and Art at Clermont-Ferrand.

657 Bulletin no. 4, in 1883 includes a study by A. Sertillanges on Moses; Bulletin no. 8 (1884) contains an article by the same author on The Poetry of David.

658 Association's Bulletin: first meeting, June 6, 1867.

659 Archives of the District of Besancon. Henry Poupon, between 1880 and 1900, presided over this Alumni Association which included more than 100 priests of the Dijon diocese, five Jesuits, three Dominicans, a capuchin and a Premonstratension and about fifteen Brothers of the Christian Schools.

660 Durand, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

Brother Exupérien.[661]

It is not possible to pass in review all of those groups which sprang up on all sides. Whether already seasoned, then, when cries went up to mount the barricades or of recent vintage, we mention only certain ones in Paris and certain ones in the provinces: there was the Francs-Bourgeois Association, which must not be confused with the "Club" that existed at this school and whose influence was spread abroad for advertising purposes,[662] the Alumni Society at St. Nicholas, established on Rue Turenne at the House for Family Ministry; the Association at Passy, one of whose principal guides we have identified as Émile Montargis;[663]
and — a more intimate group on the fringe of this powerful organization — the Society for Perseverance, established in October of 1887, which conducted business monthly, and subsequently twice monthly, under the moderatorship of Brother August Hubert;[664] at St. Étienne in Forez, there was the superb work of Brother Paramon Cyprian which was called the "Association of the Professional School", a stronghold that protected the defenses, the center for recruitment, reprovisioning and the redistribution of troops; in Rodez there was the assembly of the alumni of St. Joseph's residence school that had been solicited by the Senator from Aveyron, Eugene Lacombe but only effected five years later after the entreaties of Brother Idinaël of Mary.[665] And, among the arrivals of the very last moment there was the group at St. Genes in Bordeaux, set on its feet by Brother Jules in 1894,[666] the group at Gaillac, headed by Brother Isaac Alexis the following year; its by-laws were not approved by the Prefecture of Tarn until the following paragraph had been formally suppressed: "[the group's object is] to come to the assistance of the poor children who attend the Brothers' schools."[667]

The "Associates" — the name the 20th century would give them — did not seek to minimize their duties. The storms of 1904 would excite their energy. It was then that brave men were recognized: from one end of France to the other, former pupils in the schools and Catholic clubs "federated" in order to hold off destructive designs, control calamities and restore the ruins.

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Some gatherings, in "small groups", fulfilled yearnings of heart and mind that larger, more formal and raucous meetings left unsatisfied. We have just mentioned Brother August's Society for Perseverance at Passy. It had singled out mutual edification as its purpose, a program of spiritual advancement built upon the firm foundations laid down during the years in the residence school.

The "Blessed John Baptist de La Salle Society" established in Paris in 1888 was mainly a study group. In the person of Brother Idelphus it possessed a superb moderator. From the

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661 *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April, 1924, pp. 163-164.

662 We have already spoken of the origins of the Club at Francs-Bourgeois and of its nature. Its founder, Brother Joseph, after he had become Superior-general retained a profound influence over his former pupils. We cannot repeat here the analysis of his letters to Ernest Hubert, Léon Dupont, Jules Loebnits, Charles Pelliot, Ferdinand Florentin, and Charles Petit. They will be found to be amply dealt with in chap. III (entitled "Teacher of Youth") of our book on the 13th Superior-general of the Institute.

663 See above, pg. 340.

664 Vie du Frère Auguste-Hubert, pp. 300-317.

665 Residence School Archives, Histoirique by M. Albagnac (Brother Irlide Bernard).

666 St. Gene Archives.

667 Brother Ildefonse Gabriel, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

District of Nantes and a teacher at St. Joseph's in Bel-Air, he was called in 1884 to become Secretary-general at Rue Oudinot by Brother Joseph. He was recognized for his talents in literature and his early reputation as a writer. His works for the theatre, *Olivier de Clisson*, *Arthur de Bretagne*, and *Les Enfants nantais* (Saints Donatian and Rogation) enjoyed a long-standing success. He was a man who could not go unnoticed; he had a magnificent tenor voice which he employed in the chapel for the glory of God and which he occasionally supported with his own organ accompaniment, since he played most musical instruments. An imposing stature, a pleasing face, his lively mind, his joyfulness, which drifted easily into humor, were so many qualities that enabled him to win a sympathetic hearing. Brother Idelphus was always a teacher who was appreciated and loved by youth. He founded the Society of Blessed de La Salle for the alumni of residence schools and the advanced primary schools who came to live in Paris. The meeting were held at 78 Rue de Sevres, two or three times a month. They began with prayer in common, followed by a reading and commentary on some verses from the Gospels. And then, on an assigned topic selected in advance, one of the members developed his ideas, which gave rise to questions and distinctions, followed by open and courteous discussion. Future leaders of the social movement, Zirnheld, Verdin, Viennet, Tessier, Poimboeuf were, in this way, to receive their introduction to public speaking. "Brother Idelphus" — according to Edward Verdin — prepared his disciples in the arts of writing and speaking, with an engaging sensitivity, attention to detail and exceptional pedagogical skill." Without turning them aside from their sociological research or their professional careers, the expert scholar taught them how to enjoy a poem and grasp the secrets of the orator or the logician.[668]

The devout Religious — who would one day translate the mystical poetry of St. John of the Cross into French verse[669]— was very careful not to neglect spiritual development, to which he was particularly dedicated in his talks at Rue de Sevres. He became even more committed to that cause at the Athis-Mons school where we shall meet with him again at the center of his young pupils.

The commendation directed at the ministry undertaken at Athis must be attributed primarily to Brother Joseph. As Director of the school and of the Francs-Bourgeois "Club", he was concerned with providing young people with the means for deepening and making progress in the spiritual life. As Brother Irlide's Assistant, he set up the plan to offer the laymen in his circle as well as the Brothers in every District the solitude for recollection in order to begin, to renew or to complete a program of personal asceticism.

We have already described how the Athis establishment had been opened to "Thirty-day Retreats" and to the "Second Novitiate" for Brothers.[670] It remains to relate the goals and the steps taken to acquire the manorial buildings and a most imposing park, a crown of greenery rising above the Valley of the Seine.

Brother Joseph had been looking for a residence that would be of sufficient size to lodge a large number of guests, quiet enough so that contemplation might thrive there far from the noise of the world, but at the same time close enough to the capital to make it inexpensive and to facilitate easy travel. He fixed his choice on property that belonged at the time to an Egyptian Colonel, Mottet-Bey, "the little Athis chateau", the residence — in the 18th century — of a

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668 Choix de notices, Vol. III, pp. 216-222; *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April, 1938, pp. 162-164. — I. de Cicé, Appendix no. 17 to Brother Camillus of Jesus' biography.

669 Paris, Beauchesne, 1922, with a Preface by Maurice Brillant.

670 See above, Part I, chap. II.

Duke Roquelaure.

A letter dated July 18, 1883[671] suggests that the Brother Assistant was on the verge of "closing the deal". He had received numerous contributions, especially at Francs-Bourgeois. Former pupils, tactful and generous, guaranteed the success of negotiations. And the Brothers, thus situated on the woody hillside, were delighted to be on the receiving end of a magnificent gesture of gratitude.

In fact, the deed of purchase was signed in the name of the "Athis-Mons Building Society."[672] The Institute took possession and, alongside the structures of the chateau, constructed glassed-in arcades that joined the wings, and between 1884-1885, added a chapel in a style at once simple and severe, the work of the architect Conchon.

On one of the aisles of this sanctuary there is a painting done in the Byzantine style and framed by Roman frieze: this is the "Virgin of the Cenacle", invoked here as "Our Lady of Retreat". It is surrounded by ex-voto offerings which recall the many Religious and priestly vocations that began here or which were irrevocably decided on this sacred ground.

Here there came the very best among young Catholics to pray and to propel themselves toward their ideal. Like the Jesuits and the Brothers of St. Vincent de Paul, the Christian Brothers taught their pupils the value of a "closed retreat" for the purification of heart and the liberation of their finest instincts. They were among the forerunners on this route along which the pleas of Leo XIII was to commit every teacher who was subject to Roman discipline. "It is an enterprise of regeneration for Society", declared the Pope. "God wills that institutions of this sort be multiplied throughout France!"[673]

For twenty years Brother Anthymius was the mainspring of the operations at Athis. It was his task to welcome retreatants. He exhausted his thoughtfulness and deployed his goodness so that his guests, arriving full of youthful liveliness, remain in the best dispositions and so that nothing might disturb their spiritual peace and joy.[674] Meanwhile, Brother Idelphus expended himself as cantor, organist, speaker and president of religious devotions. Two hundred of his pupils whom he conducted to Athis for retreats owed to him — so it has been said — their entrance into Religion or into the seminary.[675]

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On March 1, 1896, in a general assembly at Francs-Bourgeois, the historian George Pico spoke to the Brothers: "You have been able to strengthen the bonds between your pupils at a moment when life itself divides them and tends to isolate them. What young people elsewhere seek for vainly, you give them; you teach them how to live the common life and live fully together."

And after the death of Brother Joseph, Father Paguelle Follenay, recalling the merits of the Superior-general in an article in *Bulletin des OEuvres de Jeunesse* wrote: "My dear readers, Brother opened, furnished and beautified the establishment at Athis for the good of your souls...Occasionally he got caught up comparing your attitude to that of his Religious Brothers,

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671 Addressed to M. Falcimaigne.

672 Archives of the Secretary-general, announcement concerning the Athis-Mons institution, by Brother Bomel.

673 Quote by Lecanuet, Vol. IV, pp. 149-150.

674 Obituary, 1904.

675 I. Cicé, op. cit., pg. 175.

and he hesitated to decide which was the more fervent." Elsewhere, the same writer traces out a touching sketch of the great educator "at home" in his "utopia": "For him retreat days were holidays. We see him as he enters the chapel or making his way along the garden pathways, bent with age and worn by weariness and agony but with a happy smile on his lips and a light playing in his eyes. His glance rested gently on our young people as he spoke to us in a quavering voice: 'How prayerful and recollected they are! This time of life is so beautiful, when one is a Christian!'"[676]

Father Paguelle Follenay was well informed. From 1889 to 1898 he had been the spiritual director of the St. Joseph Benedict Labre Association, an elite group that occupied a primary rôle in the history of "Our Lady of Retreats".

Its origins date from May 21, 1881 when Brother Exupérien attended a general meeting of the Parisian Youth Ministries. For several years he had dreamed of a Sodality recruited from among the more courageous youths who were most suited for the sacrifice and for the supernatural life. As the assembly was breaking up, he spoke to Father Chaumont, the chaplain at the Motherhouse: "I have no doubt but what there are young people here whom an education stronger than what they find in the "Clubs" would make apostles of them. They need to be discovered, set apart and trained and they should be employed for the betterment of our ministries."

Father Henry Louis Joseph Chaumont was a man who was equal to the task of understanding what Brother Exupérien was saying. They both will one day, perhaps, be honored by the Church.[677] He discussed the project with Father Gabiller who was at the time the chaplain for physically handicapped youths, and like Father Chaumont, an adherent of Bishop Ségur.

On June 9, the two priests and the Brother met at Rue Oudinot with nine youths. They immediately decided to draw up a rule, appoint a director and place their project under divine protection. What patron should they select? One of the nine — who later on would join the clergy — suggested Joseph Benedict Labre. The sublime and disconcerting mendicant had just been canonized. To claim such a patron saint was to contribute to the amusement of irreverent wits, to defy human respect and to embrace exemplary behavior without shrinking from penance. One must not fall short of courage, in fact, of a certain dauntlessness. Rather, it was in this way that one showed complete trust in God and determined the goal of the infant association. The name was enthusiastically adopted.

Thereafter the "Labrites" assembled in religious meetings and, guided by their strict obligations, they practiced all of the Christian virtues. They assisted at evening devotions at Montmartre, at St. Vincent de Paul groups,[678] and, of course, in increasingly more compact groups, at the retreats at Athis. It became the leaven in a mass that objected neither to fervor nor generous impulses.

Temporarily directed by Father Chaumont, they subsequently accepted the guidance of Father Gabiller. Beginning in 1889 their association took on a new form when it fell under the influence of Father Paguelle Follenay. Behind a not unusual appearance, but with startlingly sharp flashes of wit, the Vice-rector of the Institute Catholique disclosed to the young men a lofty mind and a total priestly dedication. Regularly, every Saturday evening and well into the late hours, in a room at the Motherhouse on Rue Oudinot, he made himself available to his "Labrite" penitents. He put them at their ease; but his friendliness and paternal gentleness were

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[676] Father Paguelle Follenay, Vice-rector of the Institute Catholique in Paris*, Le Très Honoré Frère Joseph, son action personnelle dans l'oeuvre de l'éducation.*

[677] Both of the causes have been introduced in Rome.

[678] In the beginning four small groups tried their hand at the practice of charity in the "Clubs." In 1903 this number was increased tenfold. The influence of Marquis Anatole Ségur doubtless contributed to this huge growth.

in no way allowed to becloud the resolute character of his guidance. Except for serious reasons, he never missed the meetings — periods of recollection, retreats — convened at Athis, where his talks were sincerely savored. He spoke — as he wrote — in a vivid style, spirited and always calculated to retain or recapture the audience's attention. There were never any slangy appeals, nor was there any false elegance. He strove to influence purposes, and his efforts tended to inspire his listeners' practical resolution.

In the same spirit and with the same zest, he edited the *Feuilles mensuelles*, the association's publication. In four small pages, counsels followed one upon the other, interspersed with humorous reflections and concluded with a clear statement of some points of topical importance.

In this way the name of Louis Paul Joseph Paguelle Follenay remains closely associated with the names of Brothers who promoted and seconded his ministry: — Brother Joseph, Brother Exupérien, Brother Alban Joseph, and Brother Idelphus. When he became pastor at St. Michael Batignelles and handed the direction of the St. Labre Ministry over to Father John Peuportier, he did not, however, desert the people who had put their trust in him.

From 1898 to 1903, Father Peuportier — future pastor at St. Roch — with a smiling face, an affectionate heart and eloquent speech, led the select group of Catholic youths. While continually revitalizing with the importation of new blood, he quite effectively strove to retain its older members; to him was due the definitive incorporation of the "married members branch"; he provided in the seclusion of Athis, special periods of recollection, grouping together men of the same age, engaged in the same way of life and determined to pursue within the context of a Christian family the realization of ideals that had been proposed to them during their youth.

In 1901 there were 1,092 associates. Brother Exupérien, as he had done with the indomitable group of 1881, surrounded them with his friendliness and his prayers. But after 1885 he had yielded the immediate responsibilities to Brother Alban. The saintly Religious marvelous disciple was Visitor of the District of Paris and Director-general of all the "Clubs" in the capital. On the strength of both of these titles he participated in the "St. Labre world". And while with respect to his own person he practiced the severity of a "Dauphinois hillbilly,"[679] and while, in his austere virtue, he remained the faithful imitator of his Director of novices, toward the young he showed himself to be a man who radiated kindness.

Meetings could be held only in the evenings, at the end of the members' workday. Whether in rain or snow Brother Alban Joseph would set out; he was in attendance, joyful, affable, shaking hands or giving a vigorous embrace. He was not an easy, nor exciting conversationalist; but the serenity of his glance, the nobility of his character, his charity that was so strongly infused with self-sacrifice, the supernatural confidence exhibited by his prayer and his entreaties, his entire behavior and all the visible reflections of his personal spiritual life created a luminous atmosphere all about him. Rarely fussy, extremely compelling and always encouraging, he secured stupendous results. Brother Idelphus and Brother Almer Bernard insured the continuity of the project, the modest but necessary rôle of intermediaries. The former of the two turned out to be an incomparable instigating force; should he turn up at the threshold of an entrance of a "club" or on the platform of a railroad station, at a moment when an outing was about to begin, when people were about to take off for Athis, there would be shouts and enthusiastic cries breaking out on all sides, sometimes so raucous that the uninitiated might wonder: "Are they welcoming some political figure or is there a brawl about to break out?"

Neither the Revolution nor the Nation were tottering. And that exuberance was constantly

[679] We recall that Brother Alban Joseph was born in Tencin, in the diocese of Grenoble in 1837. Following his two brothers he entered the Institute in October 1859, when he was twenty-two years of age.

under the curb of prayer. The Society of St. Benedict Joseph Labre stored up this energy which would be employed in the service of God. In thirty-two years, 168 priestly or Religious vocations would attest to the value of the intuitions and the success of Brother Exupérien's plan.[680].

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In the ministry of a mystic we shall find the essence of the Christian trade union movement. As early as June of 1890 the Marquis Ségur,[681] pointed out that an association dedicated primarily to prayer, recollection and penance succeeded in giving rise — without losing anything of its own character — to an institution eminently suited to the professional concerns of its members.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools eagerly participated in the cooperative movement. Since 1855 a cooperative called "St. Eloi" operated in Dunkerque among the alumni of Brothers' schools and with an assist from the teachers in the Lasallian schools; and on April 2, 1864 it was officially recognized by a decree of Napoleon III. No other initiative could have been more welcome by the northern peoples and their centuries-old sense of "community"; economic and political fluctuations did not affect its growth: and by the end of the 19th century St. Eloi had 800 members.[682] Its principles were applied elsewhere, in La Rochelle, for example, where "Cooperative Assistance" was organized in 1861 in a "Club" operated by Lasallian teachers.[683]We have pointed out analogous projects in a southern school, in the village of Laurac.[684]

Religious charity inspired them, as well as the desire to preserve men in a harmony of conviction and feeling, who had already been brought together by regional relationships and economic interests. On the professional level such a union seemed more especially desirable and more easily realized.

It had been begun among "people employed in private education" by Brother Alban Joseph. In this instance, what was at stake was both a cooperative society and a genuine trade union. Brother Visitor took advantage of the law of 1884 to organize the civilian colleagues hired by his Institute. His dream, advanced for its times, sketched the outlines of a general association of laymen, participants in Christian education, and sought to guarantee its future progress through the task of winning over youths still in school.[685] These were generous views, worthy of one of De La Salle's heirs; they were at the origin of the educational "workshops" at Rheims, La Frére, Paris and St. Denis. And after sixty years they remain viable.

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[680] According to the *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for January 1921, pg. 87, the vocations broke down as follows: 116 priests or seminarians, 17 Capuchins, 1 Franciscan, 3 Cistercians, 1 Jesuit, 1 Benedictine, 3 Fathers of the Holy Spirit, 1 Priest of the Foreign Missions, 3 Augustinians of the Assumption, 1 Redemptorist, 1 Salesian, 1 Camillian, 1 White Father, 3 Brothers of St. John of God, and 15 Brothers of the Christian Schools. — The priests in the diocese of Paris who were former "Labrites," continued to be united by special ties to the Fraternity. For everything having to do with the Association we have consulted Brother Bomel's report in the Archives of the Secretariat-general, Brother Exupérien's Bomel's biography, Brother Alban Joseph's Obituary, 1903, L'Essai sur la Maison Mère, for 1905, and the Bulletin referred earlier in this note

[681] In the Bulletin des OEuvres; quoted in *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April 1938, pg. 171.

[682] Védie, op. cit., pg. 27.

[683] Idem. ibid.

[684] See above, pp. 403-404.

[685] Brother Alban Joseph's Obituary, and pg. 318 of Notices for 1903.

It was not from that direction, however, that the really promising winds were blowing. Rather, the man who anticipated their direction and who attempted, successfully, to capture a portion of their power, was Brother Hiéron (Jean Giraudias). Born in the Department of Puy-de-Dôme, in Ravel, on July 22, 1830, sixteen years later a novice at Clermont-Ferrand, he was one of those sons of Auvergne whose practical genius discovered his field of action on the banks of the Seine.

In 1883 he was appointed to the Parisian "Club" called *Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle*. He immediately set up an employment office for commercial workers; and he became its unsalaried administrator. He got in touch with the leading employers, major business leaders and heads of industry. His open manner, candor and vigorous good sense earned him respect, promises and friendship; meanwhile confidence was established. Achalandé, Brother Hiéron office, centralized offers of jobs coming from important business houses and the requests of a large number of young people who graduated from the Brothers' schools or who participated in or other of the Institute's postschool ministries.

In the meantime, the law of 1884 was promulgated. It was a genuinely social law, frankly combatting the individualism of the Constituent Assembly of 1789 and restoring to the wage-earner the right of association. The capitalist system, political administrations, prejudice and customs had, for a century, perpetuated the penury of the worker; in order to deliver him from physical and moral slavery, there was no need to repudiate an illusory "liberalism"; what was wanted was the intervention of law. "Catholic social activists" in Germany, Austria and Belgium had been operating in accordance with the real spirit of the Gospel; and in France, Albert de Mun had been struggling for Justice; the human person, he believed, would be less in danger of being dominated by the machine, if an association provided the worker with the possibilities of defending his rights, his autonomy and his soul. The trade union movement did not end in Socialism; it demanded initiative; and it contradicted no principle in the sphere of the family or of religion. Based upon mutual assistance and, as a consequence, hostile to self-indulgence and laziness, it paralleled at the temporal level, the confraternities, and even the Congregations, of the religious world. To consider the movement as threatening was absurd, and to suspect it was a mistake. But to use it as one of the components of the Christian city became an urgent obligation.

The Brothers were not among the unresponsive. Ever-sensitive to popular aspirations, they placed their spirit of justice, their good will and their hearts right in the middle of the work for the organization and transformation of the modern world. They did not seek conflict, but a ground of understanding where the children of the same nation, the faithful of the same Church could practice genuine "charity": — love, understanding and respect for "one's neighbor".

They began by supporting exchanges of ideas among their former pupils, who were also Catholic employers. In this way they promoted the "Association of Commercial and Industrial Unions" which championed relations among believers concerning everything that had to do with economics.

Then they turned their attention to the employees who came to Brother Hiéron's office. The most prominent of these young people belonged to the St. Benedict Joseph Labre Association. They were opened to a most ambitious range of activities, since they were dedicated to the common good. One evening in the autumn of 1887 Brother Alban Joseph brought together seventeen of these youths, and so began the "Union of Commercial and Industrial Employees". And as the center of its activities was set up in Brother Hiéron's quarters at 14 Rue Petit Carreaux, for a long time the project was known by the quite modest name of the "Petit Carreaux Union".

To play a rôle in it, it was necessary to have already distinguished oneself in one of the Catholic Ministries of Perseverance. And so it was that its officers were, ordinarily, "St. Labre" members: professional and social activity appeared to be the putting in practice of the highest

principles of the spiritual life. Evening prayer in the Sacred Heart Basilica, morning Mass and reception of the Blessed Sacrament preceded and prepared for meetings at which statutory articles were explained, bills paid and legitimate claims clarified.

Filling the principal offices were close friends of Brother Idelphus and members of the Society of Blessed de La Salle; at the same time, they were also the disciples of Father Chaumont and of Father Paguelle Follenay and of Brother Exupérien: — Edward Verdin, a model employee at the Bank of France, for over half-a-century a fearless and faithful militant, commendable for his triple loyalty, to the Brothers, the "St. Labrists" and the union. "All that I am", he declared, "I owe to the Brothers."[686] At the same level, there was Edward Zirnheld, who directed the growth of the project; he, too, had wished to declare his gratitude to the Institute, and had no difficulty in writing[687].that the French Confederation of Christian Workers bore "the trademark" of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, i.e., "Discipline in doctrine, independence of action, the spirit of humility and a practical sense". The F.C.C.W, on whose power so much hope rested, included among its leaders another member of the "St. Labrists", another alumnus of the Brothers, whose heart and soul was closely bound up with his former teachers: Gaston Tessier.

In the eyes of an attentive observer and, more especially, of an initiate, the embryo of 1887 predicted the organism that we contemplate in its robust maturity. In 1890 the Petits Carreaux Union did not total more than 253 members; it was indigent both as to quarters and to finances. On the other hand, with its religious convictions, it clear notions of rights and duties and its will to go forward, it possessed a powerful momentum.

For the most part, its membership came from the Lasallian "Clubs" — no one who did not identify with Catholicism, not only through Baptism and education, but by the most explicit profession of faith. We have emphasized the quality of the men who occupied positions of authority. "The corporative movement", writes Max Turmann, "turned out to be the crown as it were of the Youth Ministry."[688]Actually, it was something much more than just the top floor. Rather it was a new and quite innovative building arising, with material carefully selected for their endurance and power of resistance.

The "tricolor" flag was its banner, with the image of the Sacred Heart at its center. It was a representation of the union of Christ and France, in accordance a divine wish expressed by the mystic at Paray le Monial. When the union members assembled with the pilgrims who presented the working class's tribute to Leo XIII, the symbolic standard was unfurled at St. Peter's in Rome; the Pope blessed it and commanded that it appear at the head of the column in which all such emblems are displayed.

A position at the head of the file could not but please the movement's leaders. Brother Joseph recognized that his disciples — Religious as well as lay — had wholeheartedly embraced the way that had been recommended by the Pope himself. The "Club", certainly not satisfied merely to provide protection to a number of adolescent youths, recruited volunteers for the task of social renewal. It got them into a frame of mind so as to view social problems which, tomorrow, they would share in solving in the light of the Roman Encyclicals.

The Christian Trade Union movement did not settle down clasping a small cluster of ideas and interests. Quite deliberately, it associated itself with those who struggled, with the champions of the Catholic cause in Parliament. One of these was Paul Lerolle who, in 1893

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[686] In 1929 Edward Verdin published a book of invaluable memoirs and irreplaceable documentation: *Les Origines du syndicatlisme chrétien en France, Fondation du syndiat des Employés du commerce et de l'industrie.* — He died in 1935.

[687] See the preface to Edward Verdin's book. — Edward Zirnheld himself published a book entitled *Cinquante années de syndicalisme chrétien*

[688] Op. cit., pp. 107-108.

wrote a letter to Edward Verdin and his friends in which he emphasized the dangers of individualism and the necessity of associating in order to introduce the reign of a more perfect justice. “M. Lerolle’s example, his secure guidance and his lofty inspiration remain our law”, asserted Verdin at a time when trade union doctrine had already been vigorously infused into daily life.[689]

These courageous groups that had been the product of the institutions of religious education and of postschool ministries also stood side-by-side with Léon Harmel. They attended the Workers Congress that the apostle of Val des Bois organized in Rheims in 1894. The Brothers threw open the doors of their residence school on Rue Venise to the members of the Congress: “We were royally treated”, Harmel notes in his letters; “the classrooms were used for Committee meetings; and we took our meals in the cafeteria. The Brothers placed everything at our disposal; adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, sought by Robert, the Worker-president, was held in their beautiful chapel. Through his efforts, an honor guard stood uninterruptedly before the Eucharist.”[690]

This paints a symbolic picture. In the city where the Founder of the Congregation was born, the Brothers toil in the service of Christian democracy; and under their scrutiny a new-born movement proclaims its alliance with God.

But returning to more mundane matters, the files of the World’s Fair of 1900 supplies us with prosaic but precise information concerning the Employees Trade Union Movement. At that time it had 2,002 members who paid a monthly dues of fifty cents each. “It’s purpose is to unite Catholic employees in Paris — but especially those who belong to the Ministries of perseverance — on the basis of their professional interests.”

It was divided into eight sections, depending upon the character of the labor undertaken by each one: administration (public or private), writers, builders, textiles, paper, commercial agents and travelers, clothing, and food.

It utilized an employment agency, a judicial counsel, teachers of bookkeeping and steno-typists of English, German and Spanish.

It set up a “cooperative service” (that provided union members with discounts for purchases made in various businesses), a “mutual assistance service” (free medical care, daily indemnification for illness and, indeed, a guaranteed retirement pension). It also opened a restaurant.

A special Committee studied economic and social questions, published a monthly bulletin and achieved the beginnings of a library.[691] Finally, it is important to point out the biography of Edward Zirnheld recently (1948) published by Father Stephen Piat.

Without attributing more to themselves than is rightly theirs, the Brothers of the Christian Schools can take pride in the major contribution they made to procuring these results.

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689 Paul Blanchemain, *Un Apostolat social et religieux*, Paul Lerolle, Paris, 1925, pp. 196-197.

690 George Guitton, Léon Harmel, (1829-1915), Vol. II, pg. 24.

691 Védie, op. cit., Appendix no. XXXIX. — Cf. concerning the “Petits Carreaux Trade Union” the Obituaries of Brothers Alban Joseph and Hiéron, and the *Bulletin des Écoles chrétiennes* for April 1913; pp. 179-180, for July 1929, pp. 284-286; for October 1929, pg. 321; for July 1935, pg. 281.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lasallian Education

Frequently in the foregoing pages we have seize the opportunity of throwing light on the ideas and procedures of De La Salle's disciples: — teachers in elementary schools, Directors, instructors in residence schools, initiators of special programs and youth ministries. What follows will be nothing more than an effort to complement information so far provided. We shall unearth it especially in the explanations, the remarks and the facts that have been issued by a variety of individuals within the Institute.

As a point of departure we select a circular letter by Brother Irlide, dated January 25, 1879. The Superior-general was communicating to the entire Institute reflections occasioned by the educational work included in the 1878 World's Fair. Rather than spreading compliments, he was inviting his associates to a sort of examination of conscience. He pointed to "gaps" much more than underscoring successful contributions.

Geography and drawing had been the two branches of instruction that the Brothers had cultivated most successfully. The great pioneers in these areas — we have already met with the geographer Brother Alexis and the artists, Brothers Celestine and Victoris — had contributed splendid efforts; and the experts of the period recognized it and celebrated it.

Grammar, sentence analysis, French composition and everything having to do with the art of the French language seemed to have been on its way to perfect mastery. There were misgivings however that there was too little explanation of reading methods. Writing had been widely discussed in numerous treatises on calligraphy; it was hoped that concern for the subject equalled the quantity of writing on it; however, except for despatches from Canadian schools, there seemed to be a sagging interest in the subject.

Geometry, as an appropriate subject at the level of elementary education, has not been adequately studied. Bookkeeping offered practically nothing to occupy the mind.

And then there was history. Here Brother Irlide deplored negligence and a strange sense of inferiority. Hence, he offered a good deal of advice: "It would be a good idea if the pupils were to summarize what they learn in writing, and especially to be obliged to infer the moral consequences that follow from the principal events in history. Biographical reports..., changes and developments in various institutions, the most conspicuous inventions and discoveries, national successes and setbacks..." can serve as themes for compositions that would be as useful for the development of judgment as they would be for the exercise of the memory or to the suppleness of literary style.

Finally, after having gone through the cycle of studies, the Superior expressed the desire that outside of class, pupils, who had been duly motivated assist the teacher in gathering "samples of raw materials on which local industry depends", the natural products of the region, its mineral wealth, its plants, its butterflies and its insects. In this way might be assembled a modest "museum", the enrichment of which would stimulate competition and initiative among the young pupils. It would be a superb way to put the mind in contact with the real world and, educationally, to avoid rote memory, confused ideas, and ineffectual science.[692] In this connection the Brothers' school in Lisieux earned a complimentary mention.

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[692] Recall Comenius' principle: *Docendi sunt homines non e libris sapere, sed e coelo, terra, quercubus et fagis.* "Not books, but the heavens, the earth, the oaks and the beeches must teach men wisdom." (Quoted by Durkheim, *l'Évolution pédagogique en France,* Vol. II, chap. ix.)

Overall and in spite of honestly acknowledged deficiencies, the Institute's teaching emerged honorably from this confrontation with the world's educational systems. "It did not fall under the criticism which, from a partisan point of view, it all too frequently encountered, namely, that it was frozen in routine and that it had failed to take into account the progress made by the human species."

While an exacting and cautious observer might refuse to grant his Brothers an absolute *satisfecit,* his very standards showed that the Institute was endlessly preoccupied with introducing fresh factors into its traditions. Doubtless, concerns of a religious nature continued to be at the top of the list; and this is why the circular of 1879 decided that the rôle played by the Brothers' schools in their fundamental mission was very much under-represented at the World's Fair exhibits.[693] But along the pathways of education it was important not to be outstripped by any of the competition.

Regarding certificates of studies that had been too quickly obtained, the Superior-general wrote during the following year: "If children of eleven or twelve years obtain this diploma, the tendency to leave school too soon will be exacerbated, with results as wretched for education as for religion. The current needs of society demand something more than superficial knowledge. You will be serving, my very dear Brothers, the most sacred interests of families, of the nation and of the Church by postponing examinations for as long as possible, so that your pupils do not apply for a certificate until the age when they should necessarily leave school."[694] What was being sought was an intensive cultivation of the faith and, at the same time, the broadest possible cultivation of the mind: the watchword became clear a little while later.[695] "Since the Christian schools have become sanctuary cities for people who share a common faith and morality, they would be unworthy of their history and fail to answer to present demands if, on the one hand, they failed to stand up to whatever criticism and meet all competition through the quality of their methods, the scope of their programs, the level of scholarship and the superiority of their results; and if, on the other hand, they do not offer a climate so infused and saturated with the Christian spirit that their pupils may breathe fully of that piety which alone is capable of supporting the religious character."

These guidelines were quite influential. The Brothers intensified their catechetical efforts. And in those secular studies where their efforts left something to be desired, they took advantage of the courses that were being more seriously approached in the Junior Novitiate and in the Scholasticate. Eugene Rendu, a well informed witness and judge, notes in 1855: "A large number of Brothers — but not all — strove, more effectively than in the past to make their youthful auditors understand the character of an important period in history, an economic or social institution and to draw discernible and useful conclusions from the given facts." The former Inspector-general in the Public School System, invited to visit Brothers' classrooms, heard questioned intelligently raised about the contributions of Sully and Colbert, and about Turgot's reforms; and the answers to these questions proved to him that the clear and patient method of the teachers bore fruit.[696]

The utilization of interscholastic competition supplied a sort of goad: — for both the teachers and the taught. A long standing tradition in Paris, where it operated as sifting mechanism for higher elementary education, it expanded into the provinces. Brother Blimond introduced it into Orleans when, prior to 1888, he was Principal of St. Bonose: every month the same class-levels in the various neighborhoods of the city were given the same theme for their

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693 With the exeption of the schools at Passy, Bayonne And Versailles, said Brother Irlide.

694 Circular, May 30, 1880.

695 Circular, January 6, 1881.

696 Eugene Rendu, 1885 Report, pg. 12.

French composition. Brother Bertulian, who had been the Director of St. Sulpice in Paris, imported a system into Rouen which was analogous to the one in the capital. When Brother Adolph of Mary became Visitor, he established in the District of Mans the celebrated contests that were called "Provincial competitions". In order put the competitors on a more equal footing and establish fairness, the schools were classified into categories. At the beginning of the school year each school received the program on the basis of which it's pupils would be questioned. The judges were selected in such a way as to avoid any partiality.[697]

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It cannot be denied therefore, that, in essentials, the Brothers remained faithful to their Rule and profoundly committed to their professional obligations. They did not regard their revered *Conduct of Schools* as an inviolable text. Nor did they regard it as something to be merely treasured. It was an ever reliable guide representing an agenda. It had to be interpreted; where it was silent, it had to be given a voice, and superseded where it was unable to anticipate new directions.

But since preoccupation with "grammar schools" was no longer the Congregation's unique task, it would have been a good thing to have had a *vade mecum* like the *Conduct* for the other institutions. The Founder had left nothing of this sort in writing; nevertheless, since the beginnings of the school in St. Yon, a tradition had been established. Enhanced in the course of the 18th century by the experience of teachers, both the famous Norman institution and its replicas in St. Omer, Nantes, the *Rossignolerie* and Marseille, this educational philosophy, applied to a special type of child or youth found its lawgiver in person of Brother Agathon who, preparing a revised edition of the *Conduct of Schools* about 1788, added chapters on the "management of residence schools" — an astute collection of principles, definitions, psychological commentary and administrative and disciplinary regulations.[698]

Unfortunately, the book, worked over on the eve of the Revolution, was never published. The manuscript, preserved by the author and then placed in the Institute's archives after the Brothers were disbanded, was used only to supply a few passages to the *Conduct* of 1811. The extremely rewarding sections having to do with residence schools were never used; the Lasallian Congregation, only just reestablished and still very few in numbers and restrained under the tutelage of the Imperial Department of Education didn't even dream, during Brother Gerbaud's generalate, to resume the vast and complex ministries it had conducted in more favorable times.

The residence schools, however, were finally revived. Under the protection of the liberating law of 1850, the experienced a prosperity comparable to the one they enjoyed during the days of Louis XVI. There was one Minister of Education, Victor Duruy, who, in 1864, took their program of studies as his model. The intellectual and moral directions of France immediately after the Franco-Prussian War, with the restoration of the "Conservatives" to power, appeared to guarantee the growth of institutions frequented by young, middle class Catholics, the sons of business men and farmers.

Thus, the General Chapters of 1873 and 1874 planned the publication, not, of course, of Brother Agathon's work (in the intervening century, inevitable anomalies had occurred), but of a code of the same character and parallel to the guidelines furnished to the teachers in primary education.

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[697] Obituaies of Brother Blimond, 1896 and Brother Bertulian, 1903. — Brother Albert Valentine, Saint-Pierre de Dreux, pp. 722-723.

[698] See Vol. II of the present work, pp. 602-611.

Brother Philippe outlined the plan, following his Circular letter of July 21, 1873: the book was to begin with an "historical introduction" and include three parts: General Administration, Teaching and Education.

In 1874 when Brother Jean-Olympe controlled the Institute, Brother Joseph, Director of Francs-Bourgeois, was commissioned to inform his colleagues about sending information. "It seems fitting," the letter dated May 4 declared, "that every school send a general account of its organization, regulations, its special purposes, its teaching personnel and the public from which it draws its pupils." The proxy also asked for reports "concerning special programs, St. Vincent de Paul Chapters, scholarly societies..." Qualified Brothers must not fail to carry their stone to the structure. Later on the documentation would be collected into the hands of Brother Albert of Mary, the Sub-director at Passy. It was also a question of clarifying an educational program and summarizing the materials that were common to all residence schools.[699]

This project was never completed — probably for the lack of leisure on the part of the school principals, but especially for the lack of a man whose time and activities might be totally set aside for the task of synthesis demanded by the project. The Management of Residence Schools continued to be listed among the preoccupations of the Superiors-general; it might have been edited toward the end of the 19th century, if the political horizon had not become too dark to allow people the joy of hoping and an appetite for achieving.

In any case the Congregation constantly insisted of the right, inherited from its Founder, of opening residence schools in order to teach the modern secondary program of studies. In 1883 the Council of State refused to authorize either the conveyance of a legacy willed to the school in Grenoble or the acquisition of real estate intended for the residence school in Passy: the Institute, it was alleged, had abandoned its rôle and diverged from its principles in not restricting itself to primary schools. Brother Irlide objected that the charter of 1724 had clearly certified and legitimated the existence of residence schools; that, in the meanwhile, Lasallian initiatives, far from raising governmental objections, had in some sense received official acknowledgment by means of the Empire's and the Republic's Ministers in 1865, 1867 and 1874, on the occasion of the discussion of legislative texts that had to do with education. And while he failed to make his point with jurists in the Upper Assembly, it remained that he had posed and resolved the problem in the most enlightening language.[700]

The obviously proscribed sphere was that of the Classical humanities. It must be admitted that the temptation to drift off in that direction was very strong indeed; and no one can deny that France — like the rest of the people in the Occident — looked to Athens and Rome for their intellectual roots; and that these peoples had a better chance to understand one another mutually and even to feel more fraternal about each other when they could hear the ancient sounds. Latin culture, and especially Greek culture, contributed to the genuine education of scientists; in the past they had shaped the minds of men like Lavoisier, Laplace and Berthelot. The ultimate argument for a Catholic, of course, was the fact that the Church had chosen Latin and Greek as the languages of its liturgy, the linguistic vehicles of its mysteries and it preaching; they had become integral parts of its treasure. And to refuse to employ them was tantamount to condemning oneself to an excruciating ignorance and to deprive oneself of a perfection of the spirit.[701]

Many priestly vocations took germ in Brothers' schools, and these youngsters required a classical training. Should one venture to provide it within the schools? In the past, the

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699 A lithographed letter added to the thirteenth volume of the Circulars written by the Superiors-general. Motherhouse Archives.

700 Obituary, pp. 136-137.

701 Cf. Francois Charmot, *La Teste bien Faite*, Paris, 1931.

Beguinage school in Douai employed a Latin teacher, but in 1872, the position was abolished. A few years later a dozen pupils asked that it be re-established. The Brother Director received them good-naturedly; and he set before the administrators of the foundation that the statutes that had been written by Deforeset Lewarde had decided in favor of clergy recruitment. Cardinal Regnier was asked to send the school a priest/teacher. He sent a man to the Brothers, and they inducted the young cleric by incorporating him as a member of their Community in the capacity of tutor. But in July of 1881 the Inspector of the School District declared the arrangement illegal, so that the Latin students transferred from Beguinage along with their teacher to St. John's College.[702]

Elsewhere, the ambition to earn the classical bachelor's degree in science prompted the older pupils in the residence schools to get a smattering of Latin. We have seen this situation occur in Dijon. The Education Department, miffed because of the competition, brought suit against the Brother Director, which a skillful defense turned to the advantage of the accused.[703]
The Superiors had shown their forbearance; neither Brother Irlide nor Brother Joseph were inclined to be immoderately rigorous. Quite determined to maintain the Rule, they allowed temporary exceptions, inconspicuous and timely accommodations. It was the period during which, in the present connection, the Brothers in the United States took advantage of a very special situation.[704]

A new Superior, Brother Gabriel Marie, would decide not to allow any deviations. This correction, which was completely justifiable, was the act of a man of strong will, whose hand never faltered. Everybody involved behaved within the limits of obedience, but not without sacrifice and, for many, not without suffering. The future, dominated by the decision of Pope Pius XI, would provide compensation for those most afflicted.

But for twenty-five years more the primitive Rule would be integrally enforced. Teachers in residence schools would come to learn what it could cost to transgress it. The Superior-general insisted on recalling that "the primary and direct end" of the society founded by Blessed John Baptist de La Salle lay outside such institutions. "Charity schools, schools for the sons of workmen and the poor", must always occupy a preferential position. "If ever, which, God forfend, they should occupy any but second place", the "Work" of the Founder would be subverted.[705]

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If we should enter more thoroughly into the thought of the Brothers, we would find eventually that they subscribed to the definition of Christian education given by the Pope: [It intends through its proper and immediate finality] "to cooperate with God's grace in the formation of genuine and perfect Christians, i.e., the formation of Christ Himself in human beings who have been regenerated by Baptism, according to the striking words of the Apostle: '...My children! I must go through the pain of giving birth to you all over again, until Christ is formed in you.'(Gal., IV, 19)."[706]

Such was the ideal presented to the religious teacher. Catechism class was regarded as the

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[702] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique de Douai.

[703] See above, pp. 372-373.

[704] We have examined the causes in Vol. VI of the present work; and we shall inspect the consequences in a future volume.

[705] Circular for April 26, 1897.

[706] Pius XI's words quoted by the M. H. Brother Junian Victor in his Circular for February 19, 1938.

initial effort at the realization of this ideal. It should not "resemble a summary of speculative theology,"[707] or appear to be "the arid teaching" that was so much dreaded and rejected by Bishop Dupanloup, the very shrewd judge of human nature, according to whose counsels the religion class should unfold in a "family" atmosphere and that it create a friendly framework wherein Christian principles "seduced the heart" and became inseparable from life.[708] The narrative method, as specified by Bossuet, Fénelon, and Father Fleury in the 17th century and as Jean Gerson had already been practicing it in the 15th, was indispensable until the minds of children were up to embracing abstract definitions. Such teaching, which appealed both to the imagination and the conscience and which stimulated reflection to open paths to the depths of children's souls, needed to be assisted by pictures: drawing and painting translated the text by fixing meanings in the visual memory, in the manner of the decorative sketches in the Catacombs or following the more lavish model supplied by the stain glass windows of the Middle Ages.[709]

The Brothers were completely equipped for this fruitful apostolate. We have indicated their catechetical studies that had been ratified by a series of examinations.[710] Their pupils would never forget the excellence of many of their courses and, throughout their lives, cherished the influence of the minds of their teachers. "Through Brother Léon of Jesus I had become a theologian", declared a man who became a Salesian, but had at one time habituated the classrooms in the residence school in Dreux. And since we are discussing the knowledge and the zeal that distinguished the entire Congregation, we may recall the name of this illustrious catechist, who was Brother Miguel, the Ecuadorian Brother who possessed the art of illuminating the meaning of every word, of explaining topics by way of examples and of framing striking reflections. Such fascinating discourse, penetrating the partitions to the ears of those in neighboring classrooms sometimes interrupted the course of a regular recitation or demonstration. From the near-by chapel were also heard warm and harmonious voices: the Brothers, in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, indulged themselves in the pleasure of listening to a colleague whose holiness further exalted his lofty understanding.[711]

For young people such a religious formation took on a power and an incomparable amplitude when nourished by sound courses in philosophy. Everyone did not have the opportunity of meeting people like Brother Gabriel of the Cross or Brother Louis or Brother Adolph Joseph; those who were so privileged became aware of the supreme importance of this crowning stage in their studies. In their earlier years they had lacked the necessary maturity; and after college was over hasty specialization would strip them of the leisure to inquire and meditate. The teacher, who was enthusiastic about argument and determined to beget real human beings, came upon the scene at exactly the right moment.[712]

But, lacking these advantages — and, no doubt, they were by no means very common —

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[707] Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pg. 314.

[708] Baunard, *Un siècle de l'Église de France*, pg. 396.

[709] Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 314-317. — The author notes appeals presented along these lines at the Ecclesiastical Congress of 1896 in Rheims.

[710] Cf. above, pp. 145-148.

[711] Vie du Frère Miguel, pp. 106 et sq. Quoted by the M. H. Brother Junian Victor in his Circular for February 19, 1938.

[712] Cf. Charmot, op. cit., pp. 226-227.

there remained in most of the schools an atmosphere that encouraged the pursuit of knowledge and the fulfillment of duty. The virtue of the teachers worked its power; and the behavior of the best of one's classmates, of those who, belonging to Marian Sodalities, asserted themselves through their work, their joyful eagerness, their modest behavior and who succeeded in exorcising "a bad spirit" and in diverting the winds of rebellion and arrogant criticism. For the rest, schools of whatever kind were not prevented from practicing a certain selectivity — by refusing admittance to elements that might be suspect, candidates who were too old to be shaped by the demands of collective discipline and by the elimination of the vicious and those who rebelled against every effort at reform and were capable of spreading their disastrous contagion.

"Our pupils [wrote Brother August Hubert] would not be receiving a Christian education in our schools if they had nothing but a facade of the faith... They must not be mere worldlings with a smattering of Christianity, but persons upon whom Grace has sculpted the likeness of Christ."

There is no such thing as "God's share". The Creator, the Redeemer, the Sovereign Good continues His work through the teacher. The vigor of the Gospel must flow in every branch without either the teacher or the pupil interposing the obstacles of dilettantism, routine, indifference, self-love or prejudice.[713]

A supernatural power alone can produce those special people that the world needs. To bring Christianity into the social order, believers are terribly wrong in seeking security primarily in numbers, in imagining political reversals or upsets that would facilitate the precarious conquest of the levers of power. What is, above all, needed is a spiritual reformation, the effect of a measure of leaven which is enough for the fermentation of the whole.[714] It was such a leaven that the Director of the residence school in Passy assumed the task of cultivating.

It is important to be clear about the expression "special people". Every normal human being, free of the excessive burdens of heredity and tyrannical habits, is called upon to play his rôle among his contemporaries. A passage from the writings of Henri Brémond, commenting on the theories of the English educator, Edward Thring, will enable us, we believe, to throw light on the Lasallian project.

"The school [he writes] has no more essential goal that to prepare young people to fulfill their mission here below; and since everybody, the intelligent as well as those who are not very bright, have a mission, every child, no matter how limited, has precisely the same right to expect from his teachers as much attention as the most brilliant of his classmates, unless, for very special reasons, he does not require even more zeal and dedication...From the outset Thring poses the fundamental idea that in any secondary school worthy of the name every student must be the object of direct and personal attention. A child who is being given only average attention is, in a sense, being excluded from the school.[715]

The Brothers had also been committed to this individual concern as a strict obligation. Their Founder, although he advocated the simultaneous method of instruction, never forgot that education continued to be spiritual activity, the action of one mind on another. Two completely identical personalities do not exist; and therefore the procedures that have to be employed are practically infinite; or, in any case, it's important to vary them, combine and distinguish them according to a meticulous inquiry into character and temperament. In the Conduct...a sensitive

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[713] Brother Paul Joseph, op. cit., pp. 83-84.

[714] Cf. Baudrillart, Vie di Mgr. d'Hulst, 1912, Vol. I, pp. 418-420.

[715] H. Bremond, *Ames religieuses*, (1902), *Un Éducateur anglais, Édouard Thring.*

analysis initiates this psychological effort.

It cannot be surprising then to see that St. John Baptist de La Salle's disciples were extremely skillful in turning to account youngsters whose minds were torpid or slothful. Some persons praised them, while others criticized them, for such patience, for such devotion to all the youngsters in their classes. Families were frequently inclined to entrust what they called "their dullards" to the Brothers — but usually, too late and after the situation had become irremediable. Nevertheless, there would be Brothers to blow upon the ashes and rekindle the spark. And if they happened to succeed, it was because they had not lost hope.

It was in this way that Brother Vigbert Louis operated, who refused to allow pessimism to touch the Community at St. Genes, who proclaimed "the value of every Baptized soul" and who required of the teacher a constant and confident cooperation with the Divine Grace that had been freely imparted to the least of reasonable creatures.

There were also the principles that Brother August Hubert clearly announced before he translated them into a wise course of action. He stated: "I need to know the minds of my pupils as individuals..., understand the personal dispositions of each of them, and, as a consequence, modify my procedures and my demands." He observed, experimented, and verified for weeks and months. Sometimes he reached conclusions about an excess of sensitivity, the involvement of the imagination, sometimes about a dominating will or the chilling effect of a lucid reason. When he thought he was sufficiently well informed, he summarized his inquiry in a "synoptic table", a portrait that he did not slip into a convenient drawer without giving it further thought; rather, he used it when it came time to give his advise — an exhortation or a reprimand — or to guide the educational efforts that were being made by the parents or other teachers; it was a portrait that he carefully and constantly altered, depending upon the shifts, the crises or the corrections in the youngster's character until he finally left the residence school.[716]

The psychologist in Brother Hubert respected the personalities of those whose inner depths he had studied. He insisted that in the last analysis it is the child who must resolve the educational problem with the assistance of mature human beings.

"The best teachers do not create anything in their pupils and without them they can do nothing [he used to say to the youths who surrounded him] What we want to do is to train you, not to stuff your minds...You shouldn't be just recitation mechanisms, but people with minds that reflect...As to moral education, we try to prepare you for the struggles you will meet with in life...You must face the world with a healthy body and a sound mind...as serious Christians, not merely as a [bien-pensant] whose Christianity doesn't cost them anything."[717]

There is no work nor virtue that does not begin with effort. Such was the favorite theme of the Director of Passy. And that "constant, progressive and pervasive" effort he did not hesitate to demand as a form of "sacrifice". He reminded his listeners of Jesus' commandment: If you would be my disciples, deny yourselves! "We cannot teach you anything else...You have to know how, and to want, to suffer; in a constant pleasurable state, the body becomes over-demanding, conscience is put to sleep, the will debilitated and the entire being debased...The spirit of sacrifice is the law of your education, as it is the law of every Christian life."[718]

As the most complete image of a Brothers' residence school, Passy was like a beehive, not like a factory [or a jail]. "We have never treated you as automatons [declared Brother August]. We have striven to get you to develop a taste, a need for mental activity, not specialized work, the

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716 Brother Paul Joseph, op. cit., pp. 107-115.

717 Idem., ibid., pp. 86-89.

718 Idem., Ibid., pp. 91-94.

sort that's appropriate after a final choice of vocation or career has been made, but for any study that suits your age and that will be a profitable exercise for your intellectual powers. Your teachers have directed your personal effort; but they have not brought it to that facile level where application becomes amusement ... Your programs of studies, aimed at the bachelor's degree, were not confined to that."[719]

The administration of residence schools deserves neither condemnation nor tribute. As Brother August pointed out: "where the family possessed strong traditions and where the head of the family enjoyed ample moral authority, personal development and self-command, there was nothing to rival family education." Such circumstances were not easily found together. However, actual conditions may have obliged parents to live at a great distance from their sons.

Hence, it was crucial to guarantee "resident pupils" all the advantages of a collective education, a strong discipline, competition in daily endeavors, games and good example. "A residence school is a social environment adapted to the child's power of acting and of resisting." It assists in the welding of social ranks, and it contributes to the formation of character.

But it is valueless "unless religious influence is preponderant in it." When adolescents live in permanent relations with one another without the protection of a lively faith and without exercising self-respect "a sort of immoral fermentation is at work within that environment...Those who were bad become worse; the good suffer and, more often than not, succumb; while the weak yield to every impulse."

Experienced persons acknowledge the fact that a residence school, even a quite Christian one, "is difficult to manage, especially when the number of pupils becomes great."

It must, then, be moderated by a "genuine family spirit". A home-like atmosphere pervaded the Institute's major residence schools. Parents who came to visit, who chatted with the Brother Director, felt at there ease. Letters, regularly exchanged between residence school and home, testified that the absent family and the climate of affection inspired by teachers and comrades combined in the hearts of the children.

Transforming the common life into a gregarious life was the complaint which had been leveled, not without foundation, against many residence schools. Poor children! Nameless faces in a sea of sheep! But the complaint was not heard when "the shepherd knew each of his sheep", called him by name, freed him from the brambles and lead him back to the fold.

A child is only unhappy when it does not love and is not loved. Beware, then, of his boredom and his dejection! "Boredom, melancholy and demoralization combine to destroy an educational project." At Passy "joy was fostered". Life was happy and sweet, wrote an "alumnus". Brother August Hubert, following his models, Brother Théotique and Brother Libanos, had succeeded bringing about the miracle of creating happiness between austere walls without diminishing in any way the demands of a virile education.[720]

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It appears that very little remains to be said about the foundations of Lasallian education.[721] An occasion to define its external forms in a public forum arose in 1899. Brother Justinus, Secretary-general of the Institute, was in a position to point out at that time in a most relevant

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[719] Brother Paul Joseph, pg. 188.

[720] Brother Paul Joseph, pp. 77-82.

[721] In this connection, moreover, one might do well to consult the earlier volumes of the present work, especially pp. 540-598 of Vol. I, pp. 570-611 of Vol. II and pp. 486-531 of Vol. V.

way many of the essential goals sought and achieved by the heirs of the master "Educator".

In its meeting of December 12, 1898 the Chamber of Deputies called for an inquiry into the causes for the crisis that secondary education was experiencing: the number of pupils in the high schools had fallen; there were numerous detractors of the classical humanities; the quality of studies had suffered; the preferences of the up-coming generation seemed to favor the technical schools. And, as sectarianism prevailed in political circles, the blame was being laid at the door of private education, into which a veritable torrent of young people poured, to the detriment of the Public Schools. There were some who were already talking about repealing the law of 1850; others were proposing to grant a privilege to public education by not requiring the obligation of the bachelor's degree except as a weapon against those people who availed themselves of religious institutions.

Confusion and uneasiness, mixed with threats, concluded with the plan for a preliminary investigation. A Committee made up of thirty-three members was appointed. Assembling for the first time on January 27, 1899, it met on thirty-eight occasions until March 27, and heard 196 depositions. Furthermore, questionnaires were sent to members of General Councils, Chambers of Commerce and Rectors of School Districts.

This work, the minutes for which filled six volumes was, in the end, a tribute to both the investigators and the witnesses who were questioned. Among the former were the Catholics, Albert de Mun, James Pious, Father Lemire and Liberals like Aynard. It was presided over by Alexander Ribot: a jurist obsessed with the Rights of the State, extremely sensitive concerning the Church, completely won over to the cause of the Education Department, respectful of the opinions of others and a skilled conductor of discussions.[722]

He called every noteworthy person of any competence before his committee: the Archbishop Mathieu of Toulouse, the Rectors of Catholic Institutes, the Directors of the principal private colleges and members of teaching Congregations. It was in this latter connection that Brother Justinus came to supply, at the meeting on March 28, explanations that not only attracted the attention of the Committee-members but, once published, they drew the applause of educational and psychological specialists.[723] The President became immediately preoccupied with the views that had been taken by the Brothers on school questions. "For some time now, and especially in recent years, you have [he said] expanded the nature of your instruction. There was a time when elementary education was your chief object."

"Mr. President," replied the Secretary-general, "on this subject there are certain preconceptions that I would like to ask your permission to dissipate..." The rôle of our Congregation is better understood when its history is known. Brother Justinus then set out to relate the main outlines of the origin and growth of the residence schools at St. Yon, Marseille, etc., their destruction in 1792 and their rebirth in the 19th century. He defined the operation as "middle or secondary education including general culture, without Greek or Latin, directed toward careers in business, industry and agriculture."

The "suppleness" of the system "contrasts with the inflexibility of the Education Department's programs". That explains its quick and enduring success, but also the dismay of the educational authorities. In the eyes of certain Inspectors and Rectors and, indeed, of a Minister, the Brothers had taken on the guise of bold and invasive revolutionaries. Victor Duruy, on the other hand, considered them as pioneers and models; he believed that it wasn't

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[722] Cf. Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pp. 279-282.

[723] The Brother Secretary-general's testimony became the subject of pamphlet published by Devalois in Paris in 1899 (copy found in the National Library, Shelf-mark L89 141) Gustave Le Bon speaks of it admiringly in his book *La Psychologie de l'Éducation*.

obstacles that should be thrown in their way but that others should provide honest competition. Hence, his visits to Passy and the setting forth of the reasons for his bill to promote special education.

"The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools," concluded the Congregation's representative, "has in no way deserted it primitive rôle...It has simply remained faithful to the two-century old tradition of its Founder."

There have been no innovations; but there has been progress in the opened at the beginning. And, incidentally, it may be recalled that John Baptist de La Salle's methods triumphed within public education. As Ferdinand Buisson notes in his *Dictionnaire de Pédagogie,* "having observed the success of the Brothers, M. Gréard transformed of the 'mutual schools' in Paris to 'simultaneous schools'."

But the inquiry was not concerned with elementary education. And while in fact the enrollment crisis affected much more closely schools that were preparing pupils for the certificate of studies than the high schools and colleges (over a ten year period elementary pupils had dwindled by 320,000) it was important to confine one's suggestions to those of a such a nature as to get the attention of thirty-three politicians.

Look at the figures! Supplementary courses, higher elementary schools and professional schools administered by public authorities had gained 16,000 pupils for the most part, spirited away, obviously, from secondary schools. It was suggestive of the way people were thinking.

Another statistic, covering the careers taken up by former pupils of the principal residence schools in the Institute: 35% of them went into business; 33% agriculture; and 15% industry. The remaining 17% divided as follows: 7 to government, 5 to the army and the colonies; and, finally, 5 who, continuing their studies, opted for the liberal professions.

Nevertheless the Brothers, under the prevailing conditions, were not operating specialized courses on a broad scale. In the first place, it is crucial to note that about half of the pupils, in the schools under consideration, did not complete the programs they had begun; many of them never went beyond the elementary grades as found in the lowest classes of the residence schools. And then it was only parallel to the modern secondary program and in order to respond to hopes expressed with increasing clarity that a more concrete instructional program was introduced and oriented toward the learning of a trade. It was thought that the number of children in the primary program here under consideration was about 4,000, while the so-called 'commercial' or 'professional' classes had a population of about 2,000, and that there were about 5,000 in the program of modern education.

These details induced President Ribot to ask: "Do you think that the program of modern education is sufficiently well adapted to commercial needs?"

Brother Justinus replied quite frankly that that program was only a carbon-copy of the "classical" program.

"Thus," continued the questioner, "you had to modify it for future business men?"

— "Our concern continues to be to adapt ourselves to the various regions."

The Brothers were faithful to the general principles of education. But they did not restrict their pupils within rigid frameworks. Rather, following the example their Founder gave them, they were open to the many shapes that life takes.

"We make every effort to resolve the problem of vocational guidance by deliberate arrangement with families: 'Make our sons educated young men, polite, armed with strong Christian convictions and lofty standards of conduct; we ask nothing more!' Under these conditions, why not be satisfied with secondary education?"

Elsewhere, there were those who preferred higher elementary instruction. It was conducted either in certain residence schools to the exclusion of every other program, or in one of the divisions of a school that was equipped overall to grant the baccalaureate. Many pupils, although not following an all-inclusive program, studied industrial design, commercial

bookkeeping, surveying or introductory agriculture. At the residence school of St. Mary's in Quimper there was a program of agricultural education that made an important contribution to the progress of the southern Briton peninsula. The explicitly technical institutions were quite varied: Brest, Douai, Lyons, St. Etienne, etc. In this connection the St. Nic\olas ministry had for a long time been making a very strong effort that was finally crowned with success.

What are we to make of the criticism sometimes directed at the Institute: "You carry on a destructive competition to the national secondary schools lycées and the Church's colleges?"

"We are in complete agreement, on the one hand, that Christian families, opting in favor of modern education, naturally turn to the Religious teachers who began the tradition of these intellectual disciplines." On the other hand, how is it possible to speak of intrusion into the clergy's territory, since the Brothers were forbidden to offer courses in Latin?

What is certain for every impartial witness is that social evolution had endorsed the system that had long ago been begun at St. Yon. (When our Founder drew up the its main lines) "it did nothing more than respond to the needs of a minority of young people. Among the country's well-to-do classes their lives were directed toward liberal careers. The world has changed a great deal since that day. The necessities of life have become much more urgent. We admit the masses, whose numbers have become considerable and who are struggling to procure those necessities."

From this point on, the dialogue became more lively. Alexander Ribot's questions stimulated replies from Brother Justinus the clarity, precision and supreme common sense of which captured the audience.

President: "Do you think that the sort of modern education that was realized in 1891 can be spread...? Or, on the contrary, are you of the opinion it would have been better to have stuck with the Duruy model?"

Brother Justinus: "I think that certain advocates of modern education were too ambitious for their program, namely, to depose classical education."

President: "In your view it would have been better to remain within the framework set up in 1865?"

Brother: "I don't look upon that framework as changeless. The school system could have been altered and given the flexibility and suppleness that it needed. As for the modest rôle we had to play, we attempted to accomplish that sort of improvement... Wouldn't it be possible to graft to the common roots of knowledge those disciplines that are special and adapted to various regions."

"We need to distinguish two sorts of modern studies: the first is composed of pupils who do not continue their education as far as the bacchalaureate class; for them we need envision only a restricted program. The others require a complete formation, different from the Greco-Latin program, but offering equivalent benefits relative to results in the practical and social order. The growing number of modern bachelors provides proof of these aspirations. We ought not to run the risk of misdirecting so many minds".

President: "In that case, as you see it, we must retain the reforms of 1891, i.e., a complete cycle of studies leading to the modern baccalaureate?"

Brother Justinus: "Yes, provided the programs are cut back and made more flexible."

President: Do you think its necessary to open a law school and a school of medicine for those who have followed the complete cycle of courses?"

The question assumed a somewhat insidious quality. Indeed, the most passionate advocates of the classical humanities had maintained that Latin was indispensable for future physicians and future lawyers; and they had no difficulty in suspecting of presumption the defenders of "modern" educational programs who pretended to adventure upon the territory of Bartole and Cujus, of Hippocrates and Galen. This is why Brother Justinus at first tossed off a deft and humorous response, causing the committee to smile:

"Mr. President, I ask for your permission to remain silent...We would not like to allow people to assume ambitions of which we are totally devoid!"

M. Ribot persisted: "You fear perhaps that higher elementary education might be drifting through that door toward the Departments we have just mentioned?"

Well! the Brother could no longer disguise his meaning: "We have never asked for that privilege; and we are not now demanding it. However — to be completely frank — it would be difficult for us to admit that a modern bachelor, possessing, as is the case, real literary learning and being distinguished by accomplishments in natural history and in physics and chemistry, could not become a good pharmacist or even a skillful physician."

A curious feature of this discussion was that the last point was pressed home by Jacques Piou. The leader of "Liberal Action" of whose biases there could seem to be no doubt, wanted to appear impartial, or to provide the Brother with an opportunity to explain his position.

"We are told [he began his intervention in the debate] that pupils who leave the Brothers' schools and once they enter the public schools, they fall below the level they had when they were admitted. Isn't this something we should keep in mind? Haven't these young people been subjected to 'forced-feeding', immediately after which they loose whatever they gained?

The Secretary-general was not fazed by the question. Of course, he admitted, individual failures are always possible. But to contradict most of the objections all one need to is to marshall the facts. The pupils that Passy sent to the Central School finished with excellent grades. At the School of Mines in St. Etienne, eleven students who stood at the head of their classes (some of whom achieved this rank at the entrance competition, the others in their final grades) over the past ten years had been taught by Brother Rodolfo. Of one-hundred "Miners" who finished among the top ten since 1889, fifty-one come from the residence school on Rue Disiré were listed among these leaders upon their admission and fifty-three at the time of receiving their diplomas. If any further proof were needed of sustained and, indeed, expanded success, Brother Justinus was in a position to provide a quite convincing one: in July 1898 the addition of... *he* gave the figure 382. But in the classification of January 1899, originating from within the St. Etienne School for Advanced Studies, the positions of these same young men, spread out from the top of the list to the thirtieth place added up to the figure 283: — in other words, a quite marked advance (represented by the figure 99, the difference between the two indices).]

Before accepting the President's warm expressions of gratitude, the Brother concluded his testimony with the following statement: "The Brothers are deeply interested in maintaining the tradition of good relations with the Education Department...You will always find us prepared to provide our patriotic cooperation in everything that has to do with the important task of national education."

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Brother Justinus was not speaking lightly. The Institute, in whose name he was speaking, was no stranger to the formulation of the programs of 1902.

In January of that year, George Leygues, the Minister of Public Education, wrote to President Ribot: "The inquiry you directed, in the course of which you assembled the testimony of the most distinguished men in every profession and belonging to every group and which is, without fear of contradiction, the most complete and the most productive that we have every assembled, the work of the parliamentary committee and of its chairmen and the work of the Higher Counsel of Public Education and of my own Administration, the studies undertaken at Teachers' Congresses, both in and out of the Department of Education, by men of lofty purpose, intrigued by these important problems, the accumulation of such imposing

documentation and such an immense effort — it is not possible that all this should be lost.[724].

It is true that the Department of Education, Religious Congregations, members of Parliament, public administrators and private citizens and the most diverse interests were set to work to reform education. In this environment the Brothers' Secretary-general played his rôle.

The Minister's strategy, coherently designed, had, in the process of realization, suffered unfortunate alterations and burdensome additions. Every expert regarded it as a duty to add what, in good faith, he believed to be necessary for the literary, scientific, historic or philosophic development of the up-coming generation. But pupils stood in grave danger of being discouraged before the ordeal of hours of prolonged labor over many school year.

Brother Justinus challenged the Director of one of the residence schools and a very talented teacher to a sort of informal revision. "It is scarcely probable," he wrote to him, "that they will review the foundations of the problem. But we can, and we must, attempt to correct the most unfortunate errors. We should express our honest opinion...Draw up your own: 1) on the overall programs, by giving the reasons why you think that the elementary mathematics programs are too ambitious as well as too much. a departure from previous programs; 2)on the various parts, by suggesting what might be usefully sacrificed."

Twelve days later, on May 30, 1902, a report was sent to the "artisan of the revision". Brother Justinus had completely won his case. He had described "the event" while modestly hiding behind Brother Exupérien, the representative of record for the Private Schools in the Higher Counsel of Public Education.

Our proposals had persuaded some of the better minds in that assembly. At the time of the vote on the science program M. Gréard, set forth quite persuasively suggestions that had been advanced by notes that we had supplied. The Minister was presiding at the meeting; and he himself asked for a gathering of the Science Committee with a view to a re-examination...That Committee worked without relaxation. On Thursday, at 3:00 o'clock the Counsel heard the report of M. Darboux, Dean of the Faculty of Science in Paris. The chairman announced quite candidly that the notes submitted by Brother Exupérien had been, as far as possible, taken into consideration; and he proposed a number of modifications to the Counsel.

To the delight of his correspondent, the Secretary-general then described Ernest Lavisse, an individual of immense authority in governmental circles, "as he good-naturedly teased Dear Brother Exupérien": "Look, now, how Brother Exupérien dominates the Counsel; he doesn't say much, but he still gives us orders!"

It was an instance of French "civility", which, unfortunately, did not preclude the existence of prejudice and the triumph of injustice. Nevertheless the professional and human qualities of De La Salle's disciples were recognized by the leaders and the spokesmen for the Republic.

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In the learned world, some of the better minds also declared their respect for the work accomplished by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Ferdinand Brunetière, who was quite definitely making his way toward the Catholic faith, had, in March of 1900, agreed to preside at the annual meeting of the Francs-Bourgeois Circle. His talk, proclaimed vigorously and in the persuasive tones that conquer an audience, was a magnificent tribute to the Religious educators.

"What I admire and love in your teachers [he told Brother Joseph's former pupils] is, in the first place, the popular or social character [of their Institute]...I know of no work that is more democratic than their's is...True democracy consists in extending and tightening the bonds of solidarity...in promoting the continuous elevation of the humble toward the heights and toward the light. Who better than you, my dear Brothers, have had intimations of the advent of [of this

[724] Quoted by F. Buisson in *Nouveau Dictionnaire de pédagogie* article on Lycées et collèges, col. 1141-1142

new force], who, more than you, have contributed to it?
...You have never separated (and this is the basic reason for your success) schooling from education...You are committed to shape the conscience of the young...It is crucial that we return to the primacy of moral and religious education!For having insisted on it and for having put it into practice, accept our gratitude!

Brunetiére was then delighted to acclaim Blessed De La Salle as the man who "had laid down the principle of tuition-free education": — a principle for the defense of which the Brothers had struggled "against more than one government, against more than one administration".

While expressing his preference for the classical humanities, "for the one and only virtue," the speaker admitted that, since modes of life evolved, a program of studies had to be adapted to them; and in this respect, the Brothers had shown themselves to be precursors.

For two hundred years they had remained what they had always been, but without being loath "to accommodate" themselves to the changes occurring among peoples. And this direct address aimed at the Brothers was worth remembering: "You are of yesterday and of today; you date from the times of Louis XIV and you belong to our times; along the highroads of progress you have anticipated those who consider themselves the heralds of the next century."[725]

The dying century, before fading away, drew up the balance-sheet of its achievements. At the celebrated "World's Fair" the Brothers retained much more than just an honorable place.
For here the hand of their Secretary-general was in evidence. For the Institute's participation in the triumphal display of scientific progress Brother Justinus proposed an apologetic theme. If the education offered by the Lasallian congregation was accused of blatant inferiority, it was crucial to present proof of the contrary.

Notices were sent to all schools detailing the sort of documents that must be shown in the exhibitions. Regional Committees were set up to effect an initial selection. Further selection, under tight control, took place in Paris. Entrees so collected came not only from continental France but from the colonies and from every land into which the Brothers had expanded.

Brother Justinus himself presented them to the official Committee. Praised for his skill as an organizer, singled out for his educational competence and winning over the goodwill of his associates, he was rewarded for his splendid efforts.[726]

The Institute won three "First Places": — for elementary education, professional education and for social activity.Thirteen "gold medals" were awarded for modern secondary education, agricultural education at Beauvais and Limous, technical education, education for the hard of hearing, for the Feldkirch normal school in Austria, the school in Tananarives and, generally, for success in the "colonies". Silver medals were awarded to the Brothers in Canada for their dependable and learned relief maps and individually to Brothers Charles for drawing, Leobert for calligraphy, Justinus for "technics", Alexis for his personal writings, Anselm for his course in maritime education at Havre, Léodéric for his teaching at the Revel school (Upper Garonne), Bellot for his cooperation with the Agricultural Institute in Beauvais, Florimondis for the St. Eloi Cooperative in Dunkerque. Élie Bernat, President of the Bordeaux Alumni Association, and Edward Verdin, as a member of the Counsel of Ministries, were associated with the these prize winners.[727]In all there were twenty-one silver medals, fourteen bronze medals and six honorable mentions. — Or, counting the first places and gold medals, fifty-seven awards.

The report of René Leblanc, Inspector-general of Public Education, dwelt on the situation of the Institute in France and in the world: the various institutions opened, organized and directed

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[725] Ferdinand Brunetière, *Discours académiques*, 1901, pp. 272-283.

[726] Notices cited, pp. 45-46.

[727] Cf. Maurice Croisé, *L'Institut des Frères des Écoles chrétiennes*, Versailles, 1903, pp. 4-5.

by the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1900 — elementary or junior high schools, residence schools, Scholasticates, Normal Schools, programs of technical and professional education, houses of study and practical agriculture — had arisen to 2,256. France alone, not including the colonies, was the beneficiary of 1,500 schools, thirty-two residence schools, forty-two professional programs, seventy commercial programs, eleven agricultural schools, the most important and the most justly acclaimed of which was the one in Beauvais. Of the 350,000 pupils of the Brothers 285,000 of them lived within the continental limits of the French Republic. The Lasallian ministry, besides, brought together some 33,000 adolescents and young men; associations or cooperatives of former pupils affiliated about 21,000 men of every age-group and of every social condition; and 3,000 students, workers, and employees accepted the hospitality of the "Homes."[728]

Spiritually and materially the heirs of the priest in Rheims had served humanity very well. They had resisted smug self-satisfaction. Like Brother Irlide twenty-one years earlier, the Superior-general, Brother Gabriel Marie pondered how to draw the most profitable message from the vast educational inquiry. His Circular Letter, dated October 2, included a series of observations on intuitive procedures, on the exercise of the human faculties — judgment, memory, imagination, sensibility and moral conscience — on the "unity" one must maintain and strengthen between the various teaching specialties, and on the necessity continually to adapt knowledge to the demands of practice.

Demanding "life" in the classroom, the head of the Congregation wrote: "One of the most serious defects of a school method is to fail to stimulate the intellectual activity of the pupils. 'Passive pupils are worthless pupils,' says the adage. But how do we provide this activity with excitement and interest if not by bringing life to our lessons? The teacher must not instruct in a solemn way, but rather informally, doing a great deal and speaking well...Because, my very dear Brothers, you are stimulators of minds, your teaching gains by being primarily oral; it is not therefore the book that has the most important rôle, but rather the collaboration between the teacher and the pupil [in explanation and development of, and in commentary upon, the subject-matter].

Under the title "Unity in Teaching" there was a discussion of the "reciprocal inter-relation of the various specialties, French composition, morality, history, geography, introductory science and 'critical reading'." Basically, there were common principles; at every level of work the same spirit breathed; and then among them all there was dialogue, confrontation and a sort of mutual assistance founded on charity.

"The schedule, you say, allows too little time for the study of French and geography; but 'critical reading,' recitation, the judicious employment of written homework can be turned into supplementary exercises of your instruction in geography and French. It was a method that was certainly facilitated by the nearly universal functions of "class teacher" both in residence schools and in primary schools.

This interdependence was even more systematic and easier in "special programs, rural agricultural schools, and in maritime and industrial schools". In the countryside, dictation, reading and writing frequently dwelt with the land and its products; in an industrial region, a report on visits to factories took the place of French composition; physical sciences, chemical and natural, geography and drawing exhibited a correlation with the objects and tasks that attracted the young technician's attention — raw materials, processes, tools, machines, transformations and syntheses.

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It was utterly unjust then to accuse the Brothers of shallowness of conception and

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slothfulness of realization. Nevertheless, a writer, hiding behind the pseudonym of Milès and motivated by upright intentions, sought to involve them in a harsh criticism which, in 1904, he leveled at private education in a book entitled *Banqeroute des maîtres chrétiens au six-neuvième siècle, ses causes, ses remèdes.*

The author had published his book in a painful period, the history of which we shall undertake in the closing pages of the present volume. But the problems raised by Milès and that he attempted to resolve were much more related to education than to politics. We must examine them here as corollary to the questions already studied.

Bishop Dupanloup's statement emerges like an aphorism: "If, as an accessory of the sluggishness of the century, we do not take better advantage [than the Religious educators who lived prior to 1789] of the recently gained educational freedom, posterity will bitterly reproach us."[729]

But twenty-five years of Republican anti-clericalism has aroused distressing problems: — "The Decrees of 1880, educational neutrality, military draft of priests, [expulsion of members of Religious Congregations] were some of the laws voted in by politicians who were in large part our former pupils; and in every case, they were elected by a people of whom a considerable proportion came from our schools."[730]

Frankly, we must specify among the "external" causes of this sort of degeneration the social climate that had deteriorated since the 18th century through irreligion and the economic climate, so contrary to the moral composure and to the stability of conscience of the worker in the cities and the farmhands in the countryside because indifferent to their well-being, hostile to their freedom, insensitive to their unemployment, to their illness and their old age.

But in Milès eyes it was important to seek out the intrinsic cause, the defects directly traceable to teachers. The first accusation targeted inadequate intellectual training. Catholic teachers, in his view, "force-fed" their pupils rather than trained them to reflect and allow them to take the initiative. The accusation went like this: "I can immediately identify — states a Catholic, an "alumnus of the X Fathers", the educational head of a financial house — among the young engineers that I direct those who have graduated from our colleges...They are all good will...; but they do not know how to work; they can't get things done. The clumsy dedication of their teachers has prepared them for ready-made tasks only.[731]

This declaration agrees with M. Piou's disquieting query. We have become familiar with Brother Justinus' reply as regards the Brothers.[732] It has a persuasive power. Was is it universally valid? Excellent judges would perhaps hesitate to say so. In fact, it appears that in many places the "dedication" acclaimed and criticized by Milès' informant had overstepped its limits; and that students from fifteen to eighteen years of age who were over-protected had not been adequately exposed to the uses of intellectual freedom. On this point, the current era, instructed by past errors, works for the necessary broadening of horizons.

There was a more serious charge. Milès deplored the lack of genuine religious education in private secondary schools. "Little time and little preparation," he alleged were set aside for the cultivation of the religious spirit and for the deepening of the faith. Young people retained practically nothing of religion except "the burden of devotions and sermons." — The Mass that they had to attend every morning of the school year, what was it for most of them?" he asked. — "An exercise like all the others, relatively endurable while hymns were being sung, when

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729 Dupanloup*, De l'Éducation*, Vol. II, Part III.

730 Milès, op. cit., pg. 6.

731 Idem. ibid., pp. 15-16.

732 Cf. above, pg. 463.

they took an active part, [at other moments] rather dull."[733]

Some distinctions have to be made here. That the services — especially low Masses — generated boredom and weariness, the avowal was epidemic — if not undeviatingly, at least all too frequently, on the days on which liturgical preparation was undistinguished. Hearts were touched only during the ceremonies that marked important feast days, but then in a very lively way, for a large number of the participants and enduringly. Memories of First Communion lasted well into old age, or were reawakened on the occasion of a trial or an illness or in the presence of death. Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, at the time usually celebrated splendidly in the chapels of Catholic schools, brought teachers and pupils together in a sense of collective joy and familial accord.

Alumni of ecclesiastical colleges and of residence schools operated by Religious Congregations spontaneously adduce conclusive testimony in this regard. And it seems certain that in schools directed by model Religious teachers, every-day piety contributed enormously to the building up of the faith. We become persuaded of this when we refer the matter to the entire history of the Brothers' Institute.

But, with respect to the Brothers, we are not talking merely about the emotions. Affective piety was nourished by catechetical instruction, moral exhortation and by competition among the best pupils. We have expanded to such great length on these various matters that it would seem tedious to insist further.

Thus Milès speaks too thoughtlessly and without foundation of the *Directoire pédagogique* published by the Congregation in 1903.[734]

He is surprised to find that in this book "the program for religious studies" refers only to the "diocesan catechism". Intended "for all children without distinction, this catechism is nothing but a makeshift!" The criticism neglects the fact that the Directoire attempts to supply nothing but a guideline; it adds, besides, that later on the pupils will receive more advanced explanations. The caustic critic himself noticed this suggestion, with which he is dissatisfied, because, he says, such explanations "depend upon individual teachers."[735]

We suspect some bias in this passage, and the same thing is more evident in what follows: "Appealing to children's faith in a practical and efficacious way...there is not trace of it in the Directoire pédagogique; reading the chapter on "Restraint", there is not a word that would encourage the suspicion that Christian teachers are dealing with Christian pupils. One might think that one was in a public school!"[736]Such is the tone of excess to which the pamphleteer suddenly ascends. He could convince none but very superficial readers of textbooks and of the Institute's *vade mecum*.

Pausing at the Rule, he refuses to believe that beneath its surface it contains the substance of something living. Does he fear to destablize his own thesis? We might try to imagine him turned toward his target, listening to him prophesying about the "Reflection", the evening "Examination of conscience", the "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God."

"These are all excellent practices," he says, "but...at a fixed time and designed for groups, never for the individual, good for a gathering, but practically useless for each one; these are administrative wheels which, monotonously turn and, with their perpetual rhythms, begets routine and aversion! When will people understand that a Christian word directed at a child individually, a word suited to its condition, its character, its mood of the moment, the word that

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[733] Milès, op. cit., pp. 23 et sq., 28-29.

[734] See above, pp. 162-163.

[735] Milès, pp. 110-111.

[736] Ibid., pg. 145.

is precise and personal contributes to the child's religious formation in an entirely different way than these group devotions or these pious gestures?"[737]

The Brothers would have replied that we need to understand one another. What the critic calls "gestures" — and which are not without their influence on a class' behavior, indeed on individual schoolboys, privately singled out and privately influenced — are, in fact, amplified by the most confidential conversations; one of the heads of the school, an educator worthy of the name, considers himself obligated to manifest interest and affection toward the least of the little ones entrusted to them. "The child [eats] its heart out," you sigh, "awaiting"[738] comfort and light. The critic ends up by becoming entrapped in his own rhetoric.

And the same thing is true when he writes: "The work of Catholic teachers in the 19th century has failed, because it has fallen into the hands of incompetents; because the essential — religious instruction, education and disciplinary energy — has been sacrificed to the accidental — to the ambition of assembling a huge quantity of bodies and to the vanity of diplomas."[739].

Indeed Milès, the fiery advocate, badgers and jostles his comrades in arms. In the final analysis, does he aid or hinder them? Reserving judgment on his false and immoderate assertions, we are inclined to thing that his coarse language has provoked useful examinations of conscience.

Routine and timidity in the use of methods, the insipidity of the supernatural spirit, the entirely human search for success are so many perils lying in wait for the Christian teacher; Milès denounces them and, as a consequence, renders them less insidious and reminds us that, if they are to be overcome, we have to know how to look them in the eye.

He spoke pertinently with regard to the priestly ministry which, on the whole, must be undertaken in relation to youth. We, of course, detect the bitterness in such assertions as "In schools, residence schools and colleges people seek to limit the priest to official functions."[740].

And there is something of an uncompromising stance in the statement: "In every educational institution religious instruction or, at least, the real direction and efficacious control of such instruction must belong to the priest."[741]

The point is clearly directed against the unfrocked catechist. But one can do little else than embrace legitimate demands inspired by genuinely apostolic views and supported in every-day life by a farsighted, persevering and selfless zeal. Here is a series of recommendations, or more precisely, demands that should be underlined and remembered: "The teacher should facilitate frequent interviews between pupils and the confessor and not prevent them or ever delay them. The teacher should keep the confessor informed concerning the external behavior of the children, reporting to him every week with detailed notes on each one of them; and he should supply him verbally, discretely and impartially — without seeking to influence him in one way or another — with supplementary information required by special circumstances. Once he has done that, he should get out of the way! If he is a priest, and all the more so if he is only a [non-clerical] Religious or a simple layman, he has no business getting mixed up in matters of

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[737] Op. cit., pp. 146-147. The testimony of the best among the former pupils, priests, religious and integral Catholics, however, underscore the fundamental importance of the devotions condemned in the name of individual freedom, of preserving personality and of initiative in religious matters.

[738] Milès, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

[739] Idem. ibib., pg. 82

[740] Op. cit., pg. 1881

[741] Ibid., pg. 123.

conscience."[742]

A close, cordial and confident collaboration between chaplains, the Director and the teachers, in a residence school, between the pastor or the Vicar and the teachers in a Catholic school, seems — beyond a doubt — like the primordial guarantee for the preservation and progress of souls. Misunderstandings are awkward; conflicts, always painful, can become the cause of anarchy and objects of scandal. That such situations occur one would have to be singularly ignorant of human nature to refuse to agree. To deal with their frequency forms part of the very warp and woof not only of a sound educational philosophy but of fraternal charity and of the respect that every member of the faithful owes to his pastors.

Milès is no less correct in demanding special consideration and an expanding authority for those who are called "counsellors" or "regents". They "must be really thought of as 'Directors'," he wrote, since the moral and religious formation of pupils depends, for the most part, on their wisdom and their attentiveness. The task assigned them demands serious competence and an enduring effort; it involves heavier responsibilities than a teaching post, even "in philosophy, rhetoric or science."[743] If the author had examined the work of the Brothers more closely, he might have painted this portrait of the lofty, powerful and conscientious "counsellor" with all desirable detail; the "heads of departments" of residence schools would have taught him the importance and complexity of their rôle.

And, as he concluded, he would have refrained from using the word "bankrupt", even for the purpose of arousing public opinion. He would not have exaggerated the "liabilities" without seeking to balance them out with the list of positive achievements. Rather than indicting the victims of sectarian prejudice, he would have perceived their merits and made them prominent with as much vigor as he employed to cry failure. Far from condemning, he would have reflected that there was no need of "attenuating circumstances" for the absolutely inevitable acquittal.

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[742] Milès, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

[743] Idem., ibid., pg. 197.

EPILOGUE

The Canonization of the Founder and the Great Ordeal of the Institute

Forgetful of the many services rendered to them, the French people through the instrumentality of their legislators disbanded the Brothers of the Christian Schools. As in 1792, De La Salle's Institute in 1904 was officially decimated in the land that had given it birth. The legal persecution, of course, did not extend its fury to the shedding of blood; only our own times, in Mexico and then in Spain, would witness the repetition of scenes of martyrdom that Brother Agathon's contemporaries experienced. Nevertheless, injustice took flight by means of the closing of schools, the confiscation and "liquidation" of property, the prohibition of teaching imposed on all members of the Congregation and law suits brought against those whom a government with bigoted ideas suspected to maintaining, under their layman's apparel, total fidelity to their Superiors and their vows.

We shall not go beyond the threshold of that somber period. The Law of July 7, 1904 genuinely brings to a close the end of the century of history opened by Bonaparte's gesture of agreeing to the reestablishment of the Brothers' Institute. We shall study the premonitory symptoms of the antireligious offensive, followed by the working out of the iniquitous text and the voting of it into law. With the approach of the hour of darkness, we shall fall into silence. We shall not leave the French Brothers, however, without getting a glimpse of a brighter future. A light in the heavens preceded the storm; it seemed like a pledge of reconciliation and resurrection. The disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle would suffer, would have to renounce living publicly according to their Rule or would spread across the world the lesson of faith and Christian morality that their initial homeland could no long, as in times past, hear from their lips. But in their voluntary and generous exile, they bore the most magnificent title of nobility: they had become the sons of a canonized saint. The Founder's fame helped them support a trial which it enabled to anticipate and which, in a certain sense, served it as a ransom.

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Let us recall the stage at which the "Cause" introduced at Rome on May 8, 1839,[744] had reached when Brother Philippe died. The Pontifical Decree promulgated on November 1, 1873 had declared "the heroic character of" De La Salle's "virtues". Thereafter, it had become a question of seeking the "recognition of miracles" attributed to the intercession of John Baptist de La Salle.

At the same time that the Holy See was placing this Catholic and priestly merit beyond discussion, a movement was taking shape in France for official honors to be bestowed upon the man who organized elementary education during the reign of Louis XIV.

As early as 1832 the academician Joseph Droz had written that "national gratitude must erect a statue to his memory."

In 1872 a petition was issued from Rouen, signed by a great variety of distinguished citizens, Protestants, Jews, indeed Moslems, as well as Church dignitaries, requesting that the public authorities approve the inauguration of a subscription which would license the collection of the necessary funds.

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[744] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 451-454.

As approval was obtained and funds poured in from everywhere,[745] the organizing committee opened an artistic competition; it voted in favor of the model entered by Alexander Falguière. Thereafter, the city Counsel of Rouen indicated St. Sever Square as the most favorable site for the statue. It was not far from the old St. Yon estate and on the banks of the Seine from which one comes upon spectacular views of the city "with the beautiful belfries."

The bronze group — consisting of John Baptist de La Salle and two boys he is teaching — stood at the top of a monumental fountain designed by De Perthes, the architect of the Basilica of St. Anne in Auray and of the new city hall in Paris. The entire work, along with its decorative patterns, bas-reliefs and the statuettes around the pedestal, exhibited a quality of elegance and harmony; Falguière was able to express the compassionate, lucid, firm and gentle soul of the great Teacher in the bearing and the physical features of his subject.

The festivities surrounding the unveiling took place on June 2, 1875. Archbishops, Bishops, generals, magistrates, bureaucrats, children from the parish schools and residence schools, former pupils of the Brothers and representatives from foreign nations, in all more than 15,000 people, attended by soldiers and military bands formed an immense cortege; a throng of some one-hundred thousand people crowded along the parade route. A numerous group of powerful voices sang two cantatas, one of which was composed by Charles Gounod. And, in commemoration of the stirring day, Henry Bornier published a poem that represented the figures of statues in Rouen conversing with one another:

I taught the little ones to read,
I was a simple priest...

says John Baptist de La Salle to Joan of Arc, Napoléon and Boïeldieu. Once the parallel between patriotic grandeur, of warriors and artists, and the apparently more modest fame of the educator have been drawn, Bornier himself concludes:

The true master of the world is he who enlightens;
And Caesar who, with a majestic and sovereign gesture,
Bears the golden sword or the bronze scepter
Is no greater in the eyes of poet or sage
Than the priest who stays two youths along the way
And, with paternal mien, shows them
With one hand an ancient book and, with the other, Heaven!

These sonorous verses long vibrated in the souls of the Brothers and, worthy of an anthology, were frequently found on the lips of schoolboys.[746]

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On June 30, 1881, in the presence of Brother Irlide, the remains of the Venerable De La Salle were transferred from the school on Rue Beauvoisine to the new residence school on St. Rue Gervais.[747] The school chapel soon became a reliquary completely adapted to its purposes.

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[745] The Counsel-general of the Lower Seine and the city Counsel of Rouen voted subsidies. It w as the same thing for the Communal Assemblies of Elbeuf, Bayonne, Nîmes and Rodez. Numerous contributions came from Marseille, Algiers as well as from London, New York, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Québec and Montreal. — An article by George Dubosc, entitled *Le Cinquantenaire du monument de J.-B de La Salle* was published by the *Journal de Rouen*, April 12, 1925. We will summarize it below.

[746] In 1866, on the strength of a report of an aide named Fouray, the monument to John Baptist de La Salle was relegated to the tiny St. Clement's Square, in spite of protestations from Falguière and the contrary counsels of the architect De Perthes as well as that of the Committee on Fine Arts in Rouen. In 1888 it was simply surrounded by twenty-one catalpa trees.

[747] Account by Brother Adolph Joseph, 1913; see above, pg. 346.

However, procedures in Rome were approaching an extremely important stage. Cardinal Pie had become involved with them.[748] Cardinal Pitra, particularly dedicated to the Institute, whose official "Protector" he was, assumed the task of keeping the appropriate ecclesiastical tribunal to the grindstone.

Brother Floridus, Procurator-general to the Holy See, was at the same time doing duty as Postulator of the "Cause". In October of 1878 he received Brother Robustinian as his assistant. And he died on January 3, 1880.

His aide, who succeeded him, assumed a task that was all the more sensitive in that nothing had prepared him for the slow and scholarly procedures of the Pontifical Court. He was a native of Montagnieu, in the diocese of Grenoble, entered the novitiate in Lyons in 1846, was professed in Vienne in the Dauphiné and directed the Guillotière and St. Polycarp schools in the District of Lyons. He was a very regular Religious, discreet, prudent, of upright conscience and apparently somewhat timid and subject to indecision and hesitation. But he worked with remarkable diligence. He armed himself with useful information by dint of questioning other postulators, skillful prelates and lawyers broken by the difficulties raised — in the pursuit of their professional obligation — by these fearful wranglers — "promoters of the faith". Brother Robustinian spent nights in the study of documents and in correcting reports. And having himself experienced the inconvenience, he showed charity for workers who were to follow him: in order to eliminate additional burdens, he prepared, in French, a compendium of rules to be observed in the progress of a "Cause."[749]

He was employed for twenty years in the success of the great enterprise — at least to the extent to which human dedication and patience has a rôle to play; since it is a realm especially reserved for divine action — the realm of the miraculous.

In this connection the Sacred Congregation of Rites undertakes the following inquiry: is the diocesan preliminary examination regarding facts considered miraculous pursued in a regular way? And are the "miracles" indisputably such in the eyes objective scientific inquiry?

The Pontifical Decree of February 13 1883 confirmed the decision of the judges concerning the first point: the procedures undertaken in Orléans, Rouen and Paris, involving the cures of Victoria Ferry, Stephen Suzanne and Brother Adelminian[750] were declared valid. This, noted Brother Superior-general in his Circular of the following April 7, was "a great step toward beatification".

The second question was answered between April and October of 1887. Leon XIII chose the Feast of All Saints to publish his decree on the "authenticity" of the three miracles: "So that", [he wrote] the results might turn to the profit of the Catholic name throughout the world and that it might realize the persistent and pious wishes of Catholic France, that most noble nation."[751] Brothers Assistants Exupérien and Gabriel Marie experienced the profound joy of being present in Rome at the moment of this last promulgation. The entire Institute vibrated with delight. Brother Joseph's Circular, dated January 15, 1888, invited the Brothers to make plans for the beatification of the Founder, and especially to prepare themselves as befitted the sons of a saint: "As for ourselves, my very dear Brothers, in the midst of songs of triumph, hymns of joy and eloquent oratory...we should be on our guard against allowing ourselves to be

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748 Baunard, *Histoire du cardinal Pie*, Vol. II, pg. 718.

749 Obituary, 1917.

750 Concerning these three miracle see Vol. V of the present work, loc. cit.

751 Text of the November 1, 1887 decree.

dazzled or distracted by the external glitter and pomp of the celebration; rather we should savor in the depths of our souls its religious significance. That is where we shall hear without interruption the voice of our Father reminding us of the two great lessons, the epitome of our duties, personal holiness and zeal for souls."

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The ceremonies connected with the Beatification were scheduled for Sunday February 19, 1888.[752] On that occasion 200 Brothers were present in the hall in which the ceremony unfolded, above the entrance to St. Peter's; at their head was the Brother Superior-general and his six Assistants, Brothers Osée, Louis of Poissy, Cyrus, Junian, Apronian of Mary and Raphael; among these Brothers there was Brother Adelminian, one of those who had been miraculously healed through the Founder's intercession. The Archbishops of Rouen and Besancon, the Bishops of Orléans and Poitiers represented in the Church in France.

At the request of Brother Robustinian, Postulator, Cardinal Bianchi, Prefect of the Congregation of Rites, directed the reading of the Brief that inscribed the Venerable De La Salle into the ranks of the Blessed. The officiating prelate, Bishop Neckere, then intoned the Te Deum. The bells rang out; the curtain fell from in front of a painting which showed the Founder of the Brothers being carried into Heaven; and the veil that covered his relics was drawn back. The cantors of the Julian chapel and the choir of San Salvatore in Lauro sounded the liturgical notes of The Introit: *Justus ut palma florebit*...And in this Mass "of Confessors not Popes" was introduced the Proper Oration composed in honor of the newly beatified.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the Pope came to pray before the picture and the relics. For a long time he remained kneeling and in silence. The French ambassador, Count Lefebvre Béhaine, with his entire staff in formal dress, joined the throng of Brothers. From Brother Joseph's hand Leo XIII received the customary "Offerings": the reliquary, the flowers, the biography and the finished portrait. The Holy Father withdrew; and after sung Vespers, the Magnificat arose in thanksgiving.

More than two hundred dioceses throughout the world solemnly invoked the great Frenchman, the originator of the modern school and the mirror of evangelic perfection. The account of these ceremonies fill seven large volumes that the Institute preserves as a magnificent family document. Among the triduums celebrated at the time it is important to make mention of those in four cities inseparably associated with Lasallian hagiography: Paris, Rheims, Rouen and Mende.

In Paris during these days of prayer, 2,000 children from Catholic schools attended the church of St. Sulpice. In Rouen, Father Monsabré preached one of the eulogies: he said that the saintly soul of the Founder continued to sanctify the souls of his disciples; he called these latter "the first defenders of the nation, encamped on those moral frontiers where fearful passions threaten the life of every people".

Rheims strove to surpass in splendor the churches that acclaimed her glorious son. It began, in the Cérès neighborhood, the construction of a church that would be dedicated to the Blessed John Baptist. Bishop d'Hulst recounted the illustrious lot of the baptistery city of the nation, the birth place of the Pope of the Crusades, Urban II, the Tabor of Joan of Arc and — through the ministry of Canon De La Salle — the primary site of the popular school. Bishop Freppel explained what was so very new and so very creative about the Lasallian school.

Mende listened to less illustrious orators. But no less zealous in its praise for the great man was this antique city that M. de La Salle loved, this capital of a region so rich in vocations to

[752] We borrow the substance of this section from Armand Ravelet's book, Revised by George Rigault, Paris, 1933, pp. 504-510.

religious education: in 1888 more than a thousand Brothers were natives of the Gévaudan.

On April 7, 1889 the Superior-general sent the members of the Congregation the Office of Blessed de La Salle[753] along with his glowing commentary upon it. He invited the Brothers to use this "official prayer of the Church, this heavenly prayer that enlightens the mind and inflames the heart". He found in the text of the Psalms expressions that were amazingly appropriate to the thought and aspirations of the "Elect of the Lord". He emphasized the scope of the "Collect", in which "the sublime mission" of the Founder and his heirs was marked out in such clean cut strokes. The very attractive hymns should henceforth provide —Brother Joseph asked urgently — "the preferred songs" of the Brothers.

Poetry, oratory, music, painting, sculpture, all the arts cooperated in the triumph of "the Teacher of teachers". After Falguière, Montagny, Cabuchet, and Oliva strove to bring to life, under their chisels, the ascetic and luminous features of the man of prayer and action.

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God multiplied the supernatural favors sought through the intercession of John Baptist de La Salle. As early as 1889 two striking miracles were recorded.

The first involved a pupil in the residence school in Rodez, Leopold Tayac. Born in Labruguière, in the Tarn, in 1873, this young man was stricken, at the age of fifteen and a half, with infectious pneumonia, complicated by cerebral disorders. He received the last Sacraments on February 10, 1889. On the same day his teachers and school comrades began a novena. On the 13th the doctors announced that death was not far off. Prayers were redoubled. While the Community was assembled before the Blessed Sacrament the youth suddenly emerged from delirium and his body temperature became normal. On the 14th a Mass of thanksgiving celebrated the extraordinary recovery.

Without delay Bishop Bourret set up an ecclesiastical tribunal in order to examine the cure. A thoroughly persuasive affidavit was issued by Drs. Artus and Laurens. After thirty-nine inquisitorial sessions, the documents of the proceedings appeared sufficiently complete to transmit to the Holy See.[754]

The other beneficiary of a manifest intercession was a French-Canadian. His name was Brother Néthelme. Until 1887 he enjoy excellent health. While teaching a class of young boys in Ottawa, suffered a paralysis of the lower members. Incurable, the spinal cord heavily damaged, he was brought to the Brothers' headquarters in Montreal, to the infirmary of this major institution of the District. His legs were completely without feeling.

On April 25, 1889 the Communities that composed "Maisonneuve" — Junior, Scholastics, Novices and Senior Brothers — began to prepare for the approaching feast of Blessed John Baptist de La Salle, the first since the solemnities in Rome. A novena was begun; its primary

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[753] The Feast of Blessed John Baptist de La Salle at this time was May 4, the anniversary of the exhumation and identification of his remains in Rouen in 1835.

[754] Archives of the District of Rodez, Historique of the residence school by Brother Irlide Bernard. — Vie du Frère Isidorus of Mary, by Brother Ildefonse Gabriel. — Leopold Tayac in 1898 entered the Brothers' novitiate in Rodez, where he took the name of Brother Idinaël Leopold. He was twenty-five years of age at the time. He became teacher in the eight grade of his former residence school, where, to tell the truth, he was not very successful. Transferred to the Junior Novitiate, and thereafter to the Community of Retired Brothers, he showed signs of mental derangement and had to be admitted to the institution called "The Good Savior" in Albi; he died there on September 14, 1929. This was the painful and mysterious aftermath of a heavenly intervention, however glittering it may have been! (Archives of the District of Rodez.) Another pupil of the Brothers, Celestine Roou, at the school in Saverdun (Ariège), afflicted with meningitis, was also cured in the course of a novena by the application of the relics of Blessed de La Salle. The miracle became the object of a routine enquiry to be used in "the Cause of Canonization." The young man in who favor the miracle was performed became a distinguished priest in the diocese of Pamiers. (Archives of the District of Toulouse.)

object was the cure of the paralyzed Brother.

During the night of May 3 and 4 Brother Néthelme endured agonizing pain. Nevertheless, he appeared in the chapel for Mass. At Communion time, he uttered the simple prayer: "Holy Founder, if you can do something, now is the time!" On his crutches and in great pain he made his way to the Communion rail. He had only just received the Body of Christ when he felt a shudder in his legs and an urge to walk. He left his crutches at the railing and with firms steps returned to his pew. Those who were present, amazed, saw him—once the service was over — kneel before the relics of the Blessed that had been on display in the chancel and then, in the company of his confreres, climb the long staircase that lead to the Community room.

Bishop Fabre of Montreal arrived and then the physician. And both were satisfied as to the remarkable event. The many lacerations that had covered the lower limbs of the Brother a few hours earlier had disappeared. We can imagine what must have been the high Mass that was celebrated on that great day![755] Following upon such events the hope was born for an early canonization. The Holy See welcomed the solicitations of Brother Robustinian: and on January 22, 1890 a decree ordered a resumption of the "Cause"; to the late Cardinal John Baptist Pitra there succeeded as "ponent" Cardinal Zigliara whose every concern had been won over by the Brothers.

Brother Joseph shared this good news with the Institute in his Circular of March 31. But the Superior at the time of the beatification would not be the one who was to take part in the final triumph.

The decree on the authenticity of the miracles did not appear until April 30, 1899. Leopold Tayac's and Brother Néthelme's cures had won over the votes of the Sacred Congregation. From that time on there could be no doubt about the outcome of the process.

"Holy Father, you must preside at this canonization," said Brother Gabriel Marie to Leo XIII at an audience on July 2, at which the *decree de tuto* was promulgated. "You have always wanted to be known as the Pope of the working people..." "I would be proud to do so," broke in the Pontiff who at the time was ninety years of age. — "And," continued the Superior of the Brothers, "Blessed John Baptist de La Salle founded his Institute to provide a Christian education for the sons of tradesmen and workers."

Most assuredly Leo XIII had a special interest in the "Cause" of "the Educator of the people". In 1899, as earlier in 1887, he was delighted to have witnessed it approaching a successful conclusion at a most opportune time. "While,", he wrote, "religious education is being rejected in many countries and is being proscribed by the civil law itself..., the example and the advocacy of John Baptist de La Salle will preserve youth from the debacle that renders a lethal educational philosophy an impending danger."[756]

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Indeed it was to be the great Pope, the teacher of nations, who would discern the honors of the altar for the Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.[757] The exhilaration of a Jubilee Year, the Joy of Ascension Thursday — May 24, 1900—enveloped the canonization of St. John Baptist de La Salle; 16,500 persons, 8,500 of them French pilgrims, participated in the

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[755] *L'OEuvre d'un siècle: Les Frères des Écoles chrétiennes au Canada*, Montreal, 1937, pg. 229. — Brother Néthelme taught in various Montreal schools for eleven years. He died suddenly in the night of January 12, 1900 in the Sacred Heart Community without having witnessed here below the ultimate glory of his Father and Benefactor.

[756] Quoted in Brother Gabriel Marie's Circular of December 15, 1899.

[757] Here we reproduce what we wrote in 193 for Armand Ravelet's book.

ceremonies. The sun in the clear sky matched the joy of the people. Preceding the sedia gestatoria, Religious Congregations filed in procession, the Monastic Orders, the Roman clergy, six Brothers escorting the banners of the Founder, the Chamberlains, Prelates, Bishops, Cardinals, the Papal guards. When Leo XIII appeared in the Basilica, the silver trumpets intoned Longhi's March and the cantors sang the *Regina Coeli*.

After the Pope had taken his place on the thrown, the consistorial lawyer, on his knees, asked that "His Holiness inscribe the Blessed John Baptist de La Salle in the catalogue of the saints..." Following the rites, the Litany of the Saints and the *Veni Creator* prefaced the solemn decree. Then, with his miter on his head, Leo XIII, God's Vicar, exercising his authority as Judge as far as the invisible world, uttered the thrilling words of canonization. He continued with the Te Deum which was immediately amplified by the voices of the faithful in the vast nave of St. Peter's, as all the bells in Rome began to ring out.

After the invocation of the new saint, the prayer, the Confiteor and benediction, a Pontifical Mass was celebrated by the Dean of the Sacred College. The ceremony of the "Oblations", connected with the Offertory was performed, symbolically and colorfully, with a procession of Cardinals carrying large candles, Religious and nobles some carrying small candles, some cages of birds, others a golden plate with the bread, and some the wine in miniature casks; and a choir of 130 voices singing: *Cantate Domino canticum novum, laus ejus in ecclesia sanctorum*...

In the afternoon the Basilica was illuminated for a second time: and the crowds came to venerate the relics. At nightfall, the *Sampietrini* lighted 3,000 lanterns and 1,000 torches on the facade, the cornices and the dome.

Thirty-three Cardinals attended the canonization of John Baptist de La Salle and, among them, Cardinal Langénieux, Archbishop of Rheims. Some time later, in the Parisian church of St. Sulpice, so cherished by the Brothers' Institute, Bishop Touchet of Orléans, delivered a sermon in his best manner, highly colored, drawn with broad strokes, lyrical and intimate. He praised the virtuous Canon and doctor in theology, acceding to the people, to those who, in one of Tertullian's phrases, "owned nothing but their souls" and "who drew from this splendid poverty a still more evident and more sacred right to the extent that people became interested in them"; he described him as succeeding in establishing between himself and the lowly that equality that is assumed by friendship, because De La Salle stripped himself of his wealth, his family, his titles, his leisure for intellectual advancement and his freedom of action.

Rouen, proud of possessing the illustrious relics of the founder, paid them a magnificent public cult. The reliquary, moving in a procession through the nave of the Cathedral, was followed by the Brother Superior-general, by a grand-nephew of the magistrates of Rheims, the Duke de La Salle Rochemaure and a man who had been miraculously cured thirty years earlier, Count Stephen Suzanne. Archbishop Fuzet, desired personally to preside at the closing of the triduum on July 11, 1900; a former pupil of the Brothers, his classical eloquence, his "cool and enigmatic features"[758] lighted up when, in superb accents, he lauded the hero who had become a saint by fulfilling a triple ideal: that of the Christian life, the priestly life and the life of the educator.[759]

The Holy See had ultimately decided on May 15th as the date on which this illustrious memorial would be celebrated. The Pontifical decree of February 26, 1901 had approved the proper Office and Mass, granting them the rank of "Double of the First Class with Octave", in all chapels and oratories of the Institute. For the universal Church, the rite — from the 10th of

[758] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 12.

[759] Brother Albert Valentine, *Armand Le Lièvre*, Brother Aucte, Rouen, 1931, pp. 70-71.

the same month — was a "Double minor", including the Office and Mass of the Common of Confessors not Pontiffs, with the exception of the Collect, the "Gospel" (...*nisi conversi fueritis et efficiamini sicut parvuli*), and the lessons of the second and third nocturnes.

On the 27th of October 1904 in the central nave of St. Peter's in Rome was place a huge statue of the French priest represented as sheltering two schoolboys under his mantle and with his raised right hand pointing them the way to Heaven. The sculptor, Aureli, had hewn the three figures out of a block of Carrara marble. St. John Baptist de La Salle thenceforth appeared among the Founders of Orders, at the center of the Catholic world, in this *Urbs aeterna* which he so profoundly respected, which he had at one time in his life hoped to have looked upon human eyes and which later on reserved an enthusiastic welcome for his relics.[760] *

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In this canonization the Brothers' Institute received a pledge of more abundant blessings and more solid rewards. It could, simultaneously, augur the approach of suffering — without alarm and without scandal for Brothers who meditated upon the Passion of Our Lord and the accumulated lessons in the life of their Founder, the perfect disciple of Christ.

A few years of relative peace marked the relations between the Church in France and the Third Republic after the directives given by Leo XIII to the Episcopacy and to Catholics. "A new spirit" struggled to be born, but timidly, showing a great deal of wariness and getting involved in a number of disturbing setbacks. The more moderate men in power feared to be labelled "clericalists". Free-Masonry had them holding their breath, gesturing threats, watching for a favorable moment to resume a furious campaign against religion.

The divisions and false manoeuvre of its adversaries presented it with a one-sided contest. There were many "conservative" men — for the rest, inspired by respectable views — who refused to follow the Pope or such wise leaders as Albert de Mun or Jacques Piou, on "constitutional" grounds. Too frequently, these opponents entertained a language of violence and abusive methods with respect to the established government.

The awkward "Subscription" law of April 16, 1895[761] aroused the exchange of sharp, bitter and less than charitable remarks, rather than courteous controversy, among the partisans of resistance. Blows struck the most exemplary individuals, those among Religious who were the most faithful to the wishes of the Holy See that had been conveyed by the nunciature. In a newspaper whose policy of conciliation received Vatican encouragement, *Le Monde*, edited by Father Naudet, Father Felix Klein, and by George Fonsegrive, George Goyau, Max Turmann, and Bernard and Jean Brunhes was threatened with extinction. Veuillot's paper, *l'Univers,* involved in the same movement, also lost a quantity of readers. A merger between the two groups became necessary in order to avoid disaster.[762].

Then came the Dreyfus Affair. Too much confidence in the infallibility of military judges as well as anti-Semitic passion induced the great Catholic newspapers to display the most categorical refusal of a hearing to those who defended the condemned man. The religious press in the provinces allowed itself to be drawn down this unfortunate path. There were certain speeches by Father Didon to Arcueil College that further inflamed the initial error. The clergy as a whole showed less imprudence; but beneath its official neutrality, people had a fairly good idea, with some rare exceptions, as to where their opinions leaned. Henceforth, every party and every sect that, in France, was associated with anti-Catholicism took a definitive position. The "Affair", which required an examination of conscience, a concern for truth, an option for

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[760] The Cause of Brother Benilde was introduced in Rome on April 23, 1903. Since then, according to the regulations in force at that time, the Brother has earned the right to the title of "Venerable."

[761] See above, pp. 220-223.

[762] Lecanuet, Vol. IV, pp. 235-238

justice, was transformed into a fearful military machine. The nation was deeply divided. In the "Dreyfusard" camp a majority of its sectarians issued slogans. It was a windfall for Free-Masonry, which was able to seize every strategic point; and under the pretext of a struggle for the rights of man and the citizen, it readied new assaults against the Church.[763]

Religious Congregations, of course, were the primary targets. In hitting them, the Masons reduced an essential source of energy in the Christian world; in particular, they disconcerted the school system organized on the foundations of the law of 1850, worked out and broadened since secularization. As a consequence, the Brothers had to expect some harsh setbacks.

The first of these occurred as early as 1899. This was a particularly loathsome scheme with a scenario unmistakably inspired by the Léotade Affair.[764] Toulouse was the site in which the pathetic suit of 1848 unfolded; Lille became the theater of a tragedy, fertile in horrors, at the conclusion of which, however, there was a sudden switch.

On Sunday, February 5, 1899 Gaston Foveaux, a pupil in the Notre Dame de la Treille day-school, twelve years of age, at about 6 o'clock in the evening disappeared from the "home" operated by the Brothers. He was sought, unavailingly, in every house in "la Monnai". Three days passed without uncovering a trace of the child. Finally, on Thursday, at 8:30 in the morning, the doorkeeper at the Brothers' school, upon entering the parlor, found Gaston's body! On a chair was placed a note, signed "a former Brother and ardent Socialist" and, addressing the victim's father, it declared that the boy had been violated and then strangled. At the same time, there had been discovered in a neighboring yard the unusual deposit of a box in which the body seemed to have been reserved.

The preliminary examining judge Delalé conducted the inquiry with a precipitation that was scandalous and biased. According to him, the murderer was a member of the Community. The questioning of each Brother was undertaken in such a way as to obtain confessions at whatever cost. Under very severe strain, Brother Flamidian stammered out his replies. "He is the guilty party!" the judge immediately concluded.

It was then that there began a veritable moral agony for the Brother. Abruptly he was brought to view the corpse under autopsy. He was obliged to stare steadily at the bloody remains while a medical student was given the task of making the eyelids seem alive: an accusation from beyond the tomb, Delalé dared to suggest. The macabre spectacle intensified the threats, the insulting remarks, the self-styled "handwriting evidence".

The enemies of the faith were exultant. Tumultuous hoards ran through Lille, which in the past had been denounced by Jules Ferry as "the citadel of clericalism". Residence schools for young girls, orphanages, and several private homes were ravaged; even Catholic Departments in the universities were not spared; rocks were thrown at three of their annexes, a dispensary, a clinic and at 'a residence home'. The Treille day school had to call off classes and did not reopen until after Easter.

The populace, excited by the newspapers, cast the name of "Flamidian" as an insult in the face of priests and members of Congregations. The repercussion of the calumnies continued well beyond the conclusion of the proceedings.[765]

Indeed, at the end of five months of preventative detention, accepted with a calm courage, the Brother was set free. All evidence pointed to his innocence. In the opinion of the medical

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[763] Brugerette, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 442-443; 451-453; 474-475.

[764] See Vol. V of the present work, pp. 293-296.

[765] The Visitor, Brother Maurice Lucian during this storm was able to steer the course with a vigor, a serenity and a spirit of faith that inspired admiration.

experts, Gaston Foveaux was not subjected to violation before dying; rather, strangled in cold blood on Monday evening or Tuesday morning, following a heavy meal, he was already a stiffening corpse when the murderer — or an accomplice — transported the funereal box to the Brothers' house. Bizarre anonymous letters contributed details about the circumstances of the crime that coincided with the results of the autopsy.

The defense attorney, M. Pierre Chesnelong was thus provided with a serious defense. The preliminary judiciary, illegally conducted, was quashed as early as April 20th by the Indictment Chamber in Douai. It was begun all over again and on June 30, it prompted an ordinance by the First President of the Court of Appeals, which united to the Indictment Chamber the Chamber of Appeals *Correctionels pour statuer sur le cas*.

The eleven judges decided, in a decree of July 10, "that there was no reason to go to trial". The same day, Boillerault, Chief of Police in Lille, brought Brother Falmidian back to the teachers in "la Monnaie". They sang the Magnificat. The youths at the "home" surrounded affectionately, and, with cries of joy, the Brother who had experienced the sufferings of Christ in the Praetorium.

As to the actual criminal, he eluded the scrutiny available to human justice, which, in reality, he had served as the instrument of secret hatred. The mystery which the public authorities did not oblige themselves to clear up hung over the death of young Foveaux and over the extremely suspect hours that had preceded his murder.[766]

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The "Flamidain Affair" showed just how far antireligious fury could go. There was one politician who did not try to stem this lava-flow but to channel it in directions profitable to the Republic. He was Pierre René Waldeck-Rousseau, who was immune to blind passion; "he had grown up in Nantes in a family environment that was intensely upright, soundly Christian, whose chief quality, in conduct as well as in thought, consisted in a proper and cultivated moderation."[767]Gradually, he had slipped toward "indifferentism": he was a lawyer prepared skillfully to plead whatever cause, a legislator concerned with "handy" successes, independent of religious or moral considerations, an enormously ambitious man who found pleasure in ruling until the moment when satiety turned to distaste.

In 1900 Waldeck-Rousseau believed that the conservative parties, plotting against Republican institutions and contemplating a *coup d'État*, deserved a sound lesson. While, in spite of the Pope, they had allies in the Church, the President of the Counsel of Ministers, supported by the anticlerical majority, saw nothing inconsistent in satisfying the vast number of its followers by a campaign that had the break up of the "monk leaguers" as its object. The name designated especially the "Assumptionists" who had been zealously involved in the civil struggles during the Dreyfus crisis. But people who were hostile to all Congregations were not bashful about broadening the extremely dangerous scope of the term. In fact what Religious Order should escape ostracism? Would the Church itself, besieged at first along its outer defenses, have long to wait before people stormed its walls? The recent history of the Third Republic made it possible to anticipate a vast unfolding of the field of combat.

"I speak as a man who has nothing of the sectarian spirit," declared Waldeck-Rousseau in Toulouse on October 28, 1900. Nevertheless, he had already relaxed the reins of sectarianism,

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[766] Archives of the District of Cambrai-Lille, Historique. — Canon Masquelier [Cyr], La Vérité sur le crime de Lille, 1899. — Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. IV, pg. 269. — Mourret, Histoire de l'Église, Vol. IX, pg. 157. — Essai sur la Maison Mère, pg. 200. — Father Léon Mahieu, Vie de Mgr. Baunard, Paris, 1924, pp. 439-440. Bishop Baunard, after Brother Flamidian's liberation, came to "la Monnaie Street" to preside over the distribution of prizes: "He gave one of the most stirring talks that he ever uttered."

[767] Mourret, op. cit., pg. 155.

when, threatening the Jesuits' private education, he denounced the dangers of "the two youths"; and when, suddenly turning demagogue, he promised to use "the millions amassed by the Religious Congregations" for social programs.[768]

We have heard him, eighteen years earlier, insisting that once a Religious pronounced his vows, he no longer retained his value as a human being.[769] This was the sort of words that unleashed and justified persecutions. And far from disavowing them, their author elaborated on them in his talk to the Tribune of the Chamber on January 21, 1901.

The bill on "the contract of association" that he presented to Parliament in November of 1899 was, behind a veil of words, quite significant: Article 2 declares "null and void every Association involving renunciation of "non-commercial" rights; Article 13 subjects to systematic exception Associations formed in part of foreigners or whose seat in fixed in a foreign land. But Congregations, like the Church, extended beyond the national frontiers; and "non-commercial rights" — e.g., the right of the free disposition of oneself, the right of marriage — a Religious voluntarily renounces.

The Committees chosen by the Deputies and Senators to investigate the text of the bill rejected the hypocritical language. With brutal candor they distinguished Associations in the general sense of the term, from Congregations properly so-called, regarded as suspect.[770]

It was vain to indulge in illusions. If, as M. Gailhard-Bancel said, they were going to save the first blows for those Societies especially detested by the Free-Masons, future governments were not going to draw the line there. "I stand by the Jesuits, because they are the pacesetters," one Catholic orator asserted pluckily; "but in defending them I am assuming that I am coming to the aid of all Congregations." And he protested against those lawmakers whose ineptitude prepared them to lay down the law in problems of conscience and in the regulation of religious life.[771]

The law of July 1 1901 realized the pessimistic predictions by sanctioning the inroads of civil power into the domain in which Caesar clashes with God. Liberal in its first two sections, which dealt with ordinary Associations, in its third section it amassed tyrannical injunctions.

1. No Religious Congregation [stipulated article 13] can be formed without authorization given by a law which will determine the conditions of its operation.

2. It cannot found any new institution except in virtue of a decree handed down by the Counsel of State.

3. The dissolution of a Congregation or the closing of every institution can be pronounced by a decree handed down by the Council of Ministers.

The first paragraph removed Congregations already authorized, such as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, from consideration. But the second and the third roused anxious thoughts.Article 14 revealed every secret motive of the sectarians: "No one is allowed to direct, either immediately or through a third person, an educational institution, of whatever sort, nor to teach in it, if he belongs to an unauthorized Religious Congregation." This was a new rupture in the law of 1850. This charter of liberties had remained the center of attraction for Free-Masonry; Fernand Rabier, Deputy from Loiret, commissioned by the Secret Society of

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768 Hanotaux, *Histoire politique de la nation francaise*, pp. 646-647.

769 See above, pg. 209.

770 .[770]Mourret, op. cit., Vol. IX, pg. 159. — Lavisse, *Histoire de France contemporaine*, Vol. VIII, (by C. Seignobos), pp. 217-220.

771 Lavisse, loc. cit. H. Gailhard-Bance, *Discours parlementaires receuillis et annotés* by M. A. Fontgalland, Valence, 1902; speech given in the Chamber of February 5, 1901.

which he was a very active member, had imposed article 14 upon the Parliamentary Committee: "Basically, in this law", he stated quite plainly, "we hold for nothing less than the suppression of the freedom of education." Waldeck-Rousseau had agreed to the insertion of the offending clause, for which nothing in his original bill prepared.[772]

Somber flashes began suddenly to unveil the future.

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Waldeck, relinquishing power in 1902, designated Emile Combes as head of the government to the President of the Republic; Combes had become the open enemy of the Church of which he had at one time been the servant and in which he had nearly become a priest. The man's entire politics was confined to active anticlericalism. And to this unique end he assumed and retained the reins of power. In the clearest way possible he indicated his determination: Alexander Ribot on one occasion was given unrepentant assurance of it.[773]

The elections of 1902 had indicated a measurable progress for radicalism. The hope of a broad agreement between Frenchmen had disappeared several years earlier. One had only to reflect on the defeat in St. Gaudens of Jacques Piou, one of the men who worked in the most intelligent way to bridge the gap between Catholics and middle-of-the-road Republicans.

Combes, therefore, for his vile project, took advantage of strong support on an area stripped clean of all serious obstacles. He used the law of July 1, 1901 as a bludgeon, striking indiscriminately and savagely at persons whom the preceding ministry no doubt spared.[774]

In the language of Article 18, "Existing Congregations...which have not yet been authorized or recognized, must, within three month's time,[775]conformwith legal prescriptions."

The Jesuits and other Orders and Societies which assumed that they were unremittingly condemned abstained from taking any step with respect to the government. Their dissolution was considered as an accomplished fact. But Congregations, whether teaching or dedicated to preaching, that believed that they were less imperiled and, that trust in Waldeck-Rousseau's so-called pledges, drew up petitions for authorization. The Chambers were called upon to enact decrees. Combes submitted to the Deputies a bill which, on the whole, was equivalent to capital punishment. F. Rabier was appointed chief executioner.

His notorious Report, published in 1903,[776]. with a prefatory letter by his sectarian emulator, Henri Brisson, disclosed influences of the Masonic Lodge to any citizen who had eyes to see and ears to hear.

From the very first pages there was enlightenment for all who read. After the petitioners involved were enumerated — the Ploërmel Brothers, the Brothers of St. Gabriel, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the Clerics of St. Viator, the Marianists and the Marists, etc... — the government, whose position had become identical with the author of the report, proclaimed that teachers who were members of Congregations, previously excluded from public education, must disappear from private education.

"The rapid progress realized over the past thirty years and especially since the laws of 1882 and 1886 and the sacrifices sanctioned by the nation have henceforth assured educational service everywhere in France. While, in spite of the complete realization of this organization,

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772 Hanotaux, op. cit., pg. 647.

773 Hanotaux, op. cit., pg. 647.

774 Idem. ibid.

775 Beginning with the promulgation of the law. prove by their diligence to conform with legal prescriptions."

776 In Paris, H. Simonis Empis, Publisher

[statesmen] continued to favor [a certain] competition [between] secular and private [schools], [they have been opposed to] the maintenance, in a privileged situation, of confessional schools whose members have renounced the fullness of their individuality... "

Waldeck-Rousseau's favorite sophistry was inadequate to Fernand Rabier's churlish mentality. He felt obliged personally to assume the more antique "cliches" of Voltairian propaganda; following the example of the "Liberals" between 1815 and 1830, he spoke of "the Congregation", in the singular, reducing the hydra to a single head in the hope of disposing of it the more quickly. What did he have against the monster? "The conscious corruption of brains and hearts, control over reason and will..."

He concluded: "It is an obligation for every Republican to destroy such education...The law of 1886 revoked the arrangements [specified] by the law of 1850" which favored in the introduction of members of the Congregations into elementary schools. The Falloux Law — that "lethal" legislation — on this point has been abrogated: the people who have been privileged by it and who are bound up with its entire history "cannot outlast it".

Without any difficulty the author of the legislation made his case. Quite simply, the Chamber refused "to move on to a discussion of the articles". And since no authorizations were granted, the government regarded it as unnecessary to seize the Luxembourg Palace after the Bourbon Palace.

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Private schools and colleges closed by the thousands. Somebody raised the objection to Combes: "What are to going to do about the pupils who attended them?" He replied cynically: "Catholics will find a way to reopen the classrooms. And members of the Congregations, far from withdrawing in order to embarrass me, will teach to the very last minute, until the moment when, the future secured, I can get rid of the lot of them."[777]

Thus, the very patience of the victims lightened the burden of the oppressor. Some people congratulated themselves at having eluded carnage; and some counted on a reversal of the situation; and there were simple souls that practiced a guileless optimism. Brother Exupérien headed the list: he could not imagine the repeal of the decree of 1808; he placed his confidence in assurances given by people in high places, who were not sparing in their signs of esteem for him. "And when one suspected the validity of such arguments, he would come up with others of a supernatural order."[778].

Certainly, the saintly Brother was perfectly right in believing in the final triumph of the Good. But, as a prophet, he neglected the ground lying between here and there. And when he listened over much to his own heart, he bestowed upon his adversaries views on justice and fidelity similar to those that he himself cherished.

Administrative jurisprudence confirmed his composure. A decision of the Counsel of State, on January 16, 1901,[779] acknowledged once more that the Imperial Decree "handed down in execution of the law of May 10, 1806, constituted a genuine authorization, according to the meaning of Article 4 of the decree of '3 Messidor in the Year XII' (June, 1804), the conditions of which it fulfilled." This is why the Minister of the Interior had declared on the following December 28 that all Brothers' schools were within the law, excluding, after the passage of the

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[777] Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 548-549.

[778] . Vie du Frère Exupéerien, pg. 271

[779] Mentioned in the Rabier Report, pg. 112.

law of July 1, the necessity of having recourse to Parliament.[780]

Nevertheless, would a Congregation, even one that had been authorized for a long time, be able, without a special decree, to open new schools? And, was the opening of a school for a teaching Congregation the equivalent of creating a center of Religious life?

Waldech-Rousseau seemed to have isolated the principal features of the problem. In a meeting on March 18, 1901, Denys Cochin asked him: "What is to become of the private schools operated by Brothers and Sisters? Will they be obliged to seek a decree of authorization?" The President of the Counsel replied: "As regards the right to open elementary schools, the Chamber knows what has been determined by the law of October 30, 1886; all that is needed is a simple declaration." A little later on, Father Gayraud, the Deputy for Finistère received the following reassurance: "In the instance in which members of Congregations lease out their services for any sort of activity to a legal or real owner of a building, there is no "foundation" of their making. No special decree nor even an separate request for authorization need be sought."[781]

On the strength of such lucid interpretations Catholics hoped, kept their schools and opened new ones as needed. But on January 23, 1902, the Counsel of State decided: "In the case of opening a school by one or several members of a Congregation, the school must be considered as a new institution opened by the Congregation, regardless of who may be the owner or lessee of the building and the mode of remuneration of the teaching personnel."

Armed with this interpretative decree, Combes closed several of the Brothers' institutions that had been started since "the law on Associations". In Dunkerque, a private school, founded and directed by Father Choquet, had just been transferred over to the Brothers, who were promptly evicted from it.[782] In Darney, in the Vosges, a Mlle. Clément had deeded 100,000 francs for a Religious Community to come and operate a school. The executor of her will, M. Girardin, had applied to Brother Gabriel Marie. The Presidential decree of March 19, 1900 denied the Institute the right to accept the "Girardin gift". Nevertheless, the school began operations under the direction of Brother René beginning on September 28, 1901, since by the late benefactress' wishes the income from the bequeathed capitol had been placed at the disposal of the Superior-general.

As early as October 10, the Inspector of the School District asked the Brother Director to produce "a decree of authorization issued by the Counsel of State". Brother Justinus wrote, on November 9, to Brother René that "the matter was taken care of", that "the Minister of Public Education would send instructions to the Inspector". A note from the Secretary-general on Rue Oudinot declared as follows: "The Darney school cannot be considered an Institute establishment...The Brothers tenant it by appointment of a third party for the purposes of fulfilling an educational mission."

The Counsel of State's severity demolished this thesis. And, following a decree aimed at "contraventions to the prescriptions of Article 13, paragraph 2, of the law of July 1, 1901," the Prefect of the Vosges issued a decree of dissolution. The Brothers were obliged to leave Darney on June 20, 1902.[783] They were to lose six more schools: Lucenay-l'Évêque, Alencon, Brives-Charensac, Caudiès, Dormans and Socx.[784]

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780 Essai sur la Maison Mère, pg. 242.

781 Lecanuet, op. cit., Vol. III, pg. 307 et sq.

782 Archives of the District of St. Omar, Historique

783 Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique de l'école de Darney.

784 Circular of the M. H. Brother Gabriel of Mary, June 29, 1905.

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The axe raised above their heads had to fall one day or another. "The Republic," [we read in the newspaper *Le Radical* for July 20, 1901] "must rid itself of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: they constitute the essential peril; every other reform is subordinated to that one. Of all the Congregations there is none more dangerous...It has the craft to transform its former pupils into a "black militia" which spreads over the country a vast network of espionage and reaction...It is one of the strongest forces for evil, for falsehood and for ignorance."[785].

This infuriated outcry had its repercussions throughout France. The Institute's adversaries sought to arouse disgust. In Brest, on the complaint of the father of a boy who had been dismissed from school, Brother Duvian Joseph was indicted by the Court of Assizes. Socialist demonstrated in front of the Community residence. Nevertheless, the Police Commissioner told the judge at the preliminary examination: "According to information gathered concerning the accused, it follows that his conduct has never given grounds for unfavorable comment. Nothing gives rise to the suspicion that he does not fulfill his profession with zeal and dignity." On April 6, 1903 the jury handed down a non-guilty verdict, and Brother Duvain was acquitted.[786]

The powers of darkness continued to be fully active. Combes and his agents continued to discover some legal angle to tighten the vice that could squash private education. Mortified and nauseated, even Waldeck-Rousseau objected to the Tribune of the Senate against the cheap and ruthless policies of his successor.[787]

These were difficult times for the faithful. It was the period during which they were grieving the loss of Leo XIII. The great Pope died on July 20, 1903: the Institute of St. John Baptist de La Salle lost a very watchful and far-seeing protector. "The Sovereign Pontiff had testified to his predilection for the Brothers of the Christian Schools on many occasions," wrote Brother Gabriel Marie in his Circular shortly after the death; "when we travelled to Rome, he had an affectionate welcome for us; our requests received responses of a moving generosity; and the growth and progress of our Society held his constant interest."[788].

Some months after the loss, another blow struck the Superior no less harshly. On October 13 Brother Exupérien was the victim of an accident; he was struck by an automobile and the wheels ran over his legs. Although there was no talk of amputation, the injury was nonetheless disquieting. Gangrene had set in. And cerebral distress testified to the stress suffered by the entire organism. In the midst of all of this, Brother Alban Joseph fell gravely ill. And on December 2, he died, while gradually Brother Exupérien moved toward complete recovery.[789]But he would be cured only to play his part in more painful calamities.

In a speech delivered on October 10 in Clermont Ferrand, Combes announced the repression, in the foreseeable future, of every level of education provided by members of Religious Congregations. And on December 18th he informed the Chamber of his bill.

No matter how persistent certain illusions might have been, the Heads of the Institute did not close their eyes to the peril. Twice in 1903, the "Regime" called together the Visitors in order to examine every eventuality. The previous year Brother Gabriel Marie had stated that it was

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[785] Lecanuet, Vol. III, pg. 286

[786] Archives of the District of Quimper.

[787] Hanotaux, op. cit., pp. 647-650; Lecanuet, Vol. III, pp. 461-470.

[788] Circular of July 21, 1903

[789] Vie, pp. 264-267.

important to "safeguard our ministry as Religious educators and, to that end, to embrace the most difficult circumstances as well as privations of every kind, including expatriation itself."[790] At the April meeting, this problem of foreign apostolates was taken up as a means of preserving vocations; at the same time thought was given, in agreement with the Church authorities, to the task of drawing up "normal school programs" for Catholic teachers called upon, should the occasion arise, to replace the Brothers.

On November 27, it became necessary to face administrative problems: How to merge 11,000 French Brothers with 4,000 Brothers of various nationalities. In that form the question had no acceptable answer. The Superior-general suggested the establishment among French Districts of a proportional division of positions available in foreign lands, favoring meanwhile arrangements that supplied personnel to missionary lands and to schools overseas.[791]

Brother Aimarus had earlier gone to Guernesey to inspect the construction of a novitiate and a scholasticate.[792] Brother Reticius ordered the Directors in Besancon-St. Claude to consider the immanent dispersal of their candidates in formation; nevertheless, he added they could send scholastics and novices thought suited for such distinction to Canada, provided their parents lent a hand.[793] The first wave of exiles, consisting of thirty-four Brothers (of which twenty were without vows) took place.[794]

The Visitor of Rodez undertook to disband his District between the 18th and 27th of January, 1904. Young men and youths who wished to persevere through expatriation were obliged to procure a written authorization from their parents. Some of them were instructed to go to the Eastern Mediterranean; others were to continue their religious and professional studies in Bettange, in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.[795]

On December 15, 1903 Brother Gabriel Marie prescribed for his Brothers "residing in France or in lands dependent" upon the Mother Country, prayers, fasting and Communions "in order to avert the closing of Catholic schools and the disbanding" of their teachers, or "to obtain the Graces necessary in times of trial". The Brothers throughout the world were invited to join fraternally in these appeals.

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The "explanation" of the bill relative to the total suppression of education conducted by Religious Orders was a wanton accumulation of cynicism, falsehood and sophistry.

Combes began by boasting of the fact that he had closed 8,200 schools. "But," he continued, "the government's task does not stop there. Public opinion finds it difficult to understand how other institutions, whose utility is equally questionable, remain open on the strength of an

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790 Circular dated July 2, 1902.

791 Summary of these deliberations in the Circular dated June 29, 1904.

792 Obituary of Brother Assistant Aimarus, 1906.

793 Archives of the District of Besancon, Historique, of the Besancon-St. Claude school.

794 Out of the 313 Brothers in the District on December 31, 1903, 142 (including seventy-six professed) became expatriates. Their departures were spread out between 1904 and 1906. On September 16, 1905 two Junior Novices boarded ship along with twelve Brothers: one of the two, Maurice Lacomme, born on September 22, 1892 in Reclesne (Saône et Loire), became, in Canada, Brother Malon Raphael who, after a long stay in the New World, returned to France, where he is currently the Visitor of Besancon. (Archives cited above.)

795 A large number of parents were opposed to the generous purposes of their sons. Twenty-six out of forty-three Scholastics, nine out of thirty-eight Novices returned provided with the required authorization. A little later on ten Junior Novices returned: six of them left for the Biella school in Italy, and four for Clermont Ferrand, from where they were transferred to Lembecq-les-Hal. (Archives of the District of Rodez.)

authorization that is forty-five or fifty years old."

He tried to assume that "every inquiry proved the incompetence" of the education dispensed by the Brothers. "From the point of view of the drawbacks, indeed of the dangers," resulting from the turn of mind and the tendentious opinions of the teachers, "there was no difference to be found between Congregations that were authorized and those that were not."

Since it was the disciples of John Baptist de La Salle who basically were in question, the official pamphlet sketched their history in the 19th century: — at first merely tolerated in the Napoleonic era, they lost no time in breaking through the "defenses" put up against them; they became "associates" and then "privileged". In 1819 "Paris was forced to grant them some property" for the relocation of their headquarters. During the July Monarchy they got a foothold in public education as "regular Communal teachers". They flourished simultaneously at the national level and as a Religious Congregation: Rome overwhelmed them with encouragement and commendation "until the apotheosis of 1888" which, by elevating their Founder to the ranks of the Blessed, established its work "above human criticism"!

Excluded from the Communal schools by Republican decrees, "they moved next door", or indeed stayed in the same place. And at this point "competition" got into the act. The Minister speaks of this competition both with disdain and with animosity. His veiled purposes became clear: blacken rivals who were too successful, too highly regarded or too much surrounded by affectionate veneration.

To believe him, "it was an insignificant thing in itself" for a "private" school to stand across the street from a secular school, "if it did not as the consequence of frequently rendering" the success of secularization "illusory and, especially, of introducing grounds for division into the Communes and political agitation into homes".

"The only way" of putting a stop to it so that the "secularization of education might become a reality" and stop being "a waste of money" Combes suggested without beating around the bush: we must "withdraw all the authorization" of which members of Congregations are the beneficiaries and of which there are none that have retained their reason for being.[796] These were the words of a tormentor who was determined never to be turned aside from his goal, to disregard arguments, objections or any complaints whatsoever. The French Cardinals vainly wrote to the President of the Republic. Particularly touching and noble, however, was the letter from Cardinal Coulié: "For myself, who has had the distinction of being the successor, in Orléans, of the eminent bishop who was one of the most fearless defenders of freedom of education, Bishop Doupanloup, I owe it to his illustrious memory not to allow the outrage that is in the making without, in the name of the Church, raising my voice in sorrow. I owe it, too, to one of my predecessors in the Archiepiscopal See of Lyons, Cardinal Fesch. It was to him, and to his influence on the First Consul, supported by the astute reports of Portalis, that was due the reestablishment of the Brothers of the Christian Schools ...Lyons loyally perpetuates this memory. How could I stand by unmoved at the destruction of this work...whose amazing expansion has meant a century of benefits to the children of the people?" [797]

The Archbishop and the politician did not speak the same language. On the other hand, the philosopher and educator, Ferdinand Buisson, responsible — as a member of the Chamber of Deputies — to explain to his colleagues the meaning of the bill, showed in his voluminous reports that he knew how to recognize zeal and dedication. It was, however, a Platonic tribute, like the one in the past which the lawmakers of 1792 addressed to the "teaching corporations",

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[796] Parliementary documents, supplement no. 1382, meeting of the Chamber of December 18, 1903. — Duvergie, Vol. CIV, pp. 207 and 208. — Cf. Lecanuet, Vol. III, pp. 549-550.

[797] L'Éducation chrétienne for February 13, 1904.

crowning them with garlands of flowers before sacrificing them.[798] Buisson resumed the traditions of his revolutionary "ancestors": with one, apparently respectful, hand, he brushed aside charges about being "survivors" out of the past; and pretended to be an objective historian while cooperating in the merciless job of destruction.

Basically, his reasoning did not differ from the sophistry of Rabier or Combes. The object of the law, he said, was "establish an incompatibility between the institution of monasticism and the institution of the school". A secularized State cannot continue to empower members of Religious Congregations who renounce their entire human personality. And it is obliged to rescue children from the pressures that impair their normal development.

"Who can make us believe that a Congregation does not do everything in its power to mould young minds in its own image?...The pupils of such teachers enter into Twentieth century society with the ideas of the Thirteenth... "

Once these premisses were laid down, the Chairman could feel free to toss a few grains of incense on the burning coals: "For three-quarters of a century the Brothers of the Christian Schools have not only been associated but incorporated into the national school system; they have taken on something of its spirit, which is not without its affinity to the marvelous man their Founder was. They have continued our programs, and sometimes they have anticipated them... "

And Buisson went on to suggest — presumably, with the best of intentions — a program for the future of the Lasallian Society, for which he confessed a very high regard: "Such a Society cannot think of continuing to exist outside the law...As soon as the new system is in force [the Institute, apparently, should take the necessary steps.] Since it operates a number of schools in foreign lands, Brothers who insist on remaining within the restrictions imposed by Religious Orders can adopt that solution. The others who remain in France...will yield to the demands of the times: and once relieved of their vows...without a second thought, they will embrace the secular life."

The Brothers had not need of these precarious counsels. But they took note of the concern that inspired a shrewd adversary: not to allow important projects to be lost. In this respect the report of February 11, 1904 offers something new, and possesses something more than a documentary curiosity.

Respecting the general considerations upon which the author touches, charity forbids that they be characterized as hypocritical. But at least it was possible to see in them all the biases of individualism that issued from Calvin. "Without confronting the idea of Catholicism" [Buisson asserts] "we shall be stripping it of a structure that it has contrived at the expense of human liberty...This law does not remove from the Church the right to teach religion as it understands it, nor from Catholics the right to teach what they want in the spirit they endorse." It merely obliges them to take their place in line with all other citizens, without henceforth enjoying the privilege of "setting in motion the antiquated, hierarchical and authoritarian machinery of the teaching Congregations."[799]

It is difficult to imagine more specious arguments in support of a most unjust cause.

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On March 3, Paul Lerolle, approached the podium at the Bourbon Palace and, turning toward Ferdinand Buisson, addressed his distinguished colleague in language that was both courteous

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[798] See Vol. III of the present work, pg. 209.

[799] Parliamentary documents, supplement no. 1,509, meeting of February 11, 1904. — Cf. Lecanuet, Vol. III, pp. 550-551.

and unequivocal: “Today, the sensitive impulses of your conscience draws a heavy veil of illusion over the evil you are about to commit, so that you are able to stride forward as in a dream of justice in a work that is really immoral and really enslaving.”

The former pupil at the Francs-Bourgeois school, who, a year earlier, had pronounced in Parliament a magnificent defense of Religious Orders, explained — over the course of two sessions — the nature of the Brothers’ work. An apostle of social Catholicism, he threw a strong light on the character of his teachers, “most of whom are of humble birth”, and remained in touch with the people. “Legions of men owe to them the dignity and the success of their lives. If your democracy is not the mere levelling of everything that is excellent, but, on the contrary, the ascent of all citizen by raising them up to the height of their qualities of heart and mind” no one “has better served French democracy” than the disciples of St. John Baptist de La Salle.[800]

Buisson chose the following day in which to respond to the Catholic Lerolle with a genuine panegyric on the Founder of the Institute. Summarizing the life of the priest whom he termed “a superb man”: “There are pages here,” he exclaimed, “which, while not in our books of official history, nevertheless merit being remembered by every Frenchman!” The voluntary destitution of this wealthy man, his “forty years of inflexible, unfailing dedication”, the patient elaboration of “an unacclaimed achievement of which practically he alone conceived the importance” — such were the marvels of the myth that the author of the *Dictionnaire de Pédagorie,* become a painstaking and enthusiastic hagiographer, taught the Combist majority.

It was a curious, quasi-edifying spectacle: but it changed nothing in the minds of that crowd of politicians. The opposition orators, like Lasies, Charles Benoist, Denys Cochin, Raiberti and right down to Ribot, whose liberalism emerged and bubbled up at that exact moment, one after the other arose to prove the villainy of the bill, to call upon the testimony of other nations, and to entreat the Assembly “not to get bogged down in miserable pickering”; it was a tournament of eloquence, a way of comforting one’s conscience, an encomium for the victims, and an indictment of tyranny. The outcome had been anticipated. On March 7, by a vote of 307 to 243, the Chamber of Deputies decided to conclude general discussion.

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Beginning on the 8th and lasting for thirteen meetings an examination of the articles of the bill took place. Debates concerning professional education[801] — that the Committee, in agreement with the Minister, wanted to silence, as well as debates on all the other levels of instruction — opened the door to Lasies, Ferri de Ludre, Plichon and Prache to testify to the value of the Brothers’ accomplishments at St. Nicholas, at Likès in Quimper, at St. Etienne, at Vaujours and at the Agricultural Institute in Beauvais. Gailhard-Bancel pleaded in favor of the Congregation’s residence schools which, in his opinion, were the only ones capable of combining intellectual instruction with character formation.

On an amendment by Joseph Caillaux, the authorized time-limit for the suppression of the Congregations was extended from five to ten years. It makes no difference! declared Combes,

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[800] Parliamentary debates, sessions of the Chamber on March 2 and 3, 1904. — Cf. Paul Blanchemain, biography of Paul Lerolle, pg. 262. — In the meeting in Wagram Hall that Blanchemain presided over, Lerolle read the “vow formula” concurred in by the 3,000 persons in attendance: “Pupils of the splendid Brothers, we rise and in the presence of the people of Paris, so enamored of justice and freedom, in the presence of all of France, we intend to put our whole soul into the following words: Our childhood Teachers, we hail you; people of Paris and of France, defend them! (Op. cit., pp. 313-314). — At the time of the first Congress in Lyons in September, 1904, Lerolle became one of the member of the Central Committee. (Ibid., pp. 314-315.)

[801] Opened up by a speech by Father Lemire. Parliamentary Debates, Meeting of March 14, 1904.

about the time when I shall be free to close schools, as long as I judge it right.[802] However, this extension had consequences that could not have been foreseen in 1904.[803].

Not without reason, a great deal of attention was given to the major debates that arose among statesmen with broad, patriotic views and concerned to support French positions in the world. Brother Secretary-general Justinus was responsible for informing upper-level bureaucrats and influential parliamentarians, concerning the Institute's mission in the Near East, the colonies and concerning the Brothers' schools in North America.

Étienne Flandin opened the discussion on March 18th. And then on the 21st George Leygues intervened with all the authority of a former Minister and an authority on foreign policy. He demanded that novitiates meant to train personnel for missionary schools remain opened. "The reports from our diplomatic agents, from travellers and members of our Chambers of Commerce" — he said in substance — "tell us that if you close religious establishments and especially those of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, France will lose whatever remains of its moral power and prestige in Egypt."

Thereafter, Francis Deloncle, a radical as well as immune to suspicions of possible clericalism, spoke energetically: "I do not intend that in Madagascar English and Norwegian Protestant missionaries will be able to catechize and teach their Bible — i.e., their language — to the Hovas and the Sakalaves, while we shall have driven out the Brothers against whom no one can level the least charge concerning their patriotism, nor the least tepidity in France's service to the great African island."

Careless of involving the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Delcassé, the speaker showed that he was very little inclined to follow the President of the Counsel along the road of sectarianism that was indifferent to the country's major interests. "If he were here now, and we asked him: 'Do you agree to the suppression of the French schools operated by the Brothers in Cairo and in Alexandria?' he would tell us: 'I'm involved in negotiations with a major power [England]; I don't need freely to hand over to it one of the last ingredients of our influence on the banks of the Nile'"

In fact, Delcassé, refusing to support the government's position, Combes had recourse to his Minister of Colonies, Gaston Doumergue, a southern Huguenot whom experience had not yet tempered. Ferdinand Buisson had also fought bitterly against George Leygues' proposal: "It is the equivalent," he declared, "of the very negation of the principle of the law...If there are novitiates, there must be Congregations; what would a novitiate be without a Congregation? If you defend novitiates, it means that you wish to defend Congregations...You, a Republican State, you are going to sign a completely new contract with the Brothers' Institute, grant it a licence in perpetuity and make the honest secularization of its members much more difficult and perhaps impossible!"

But at that time patriotism prevailed over logic. By a majority of eleven votes the Chamber rallied 'round the flag carried by courageous leaders. It was written into the law that those novitiates would be exempt from suppression which recruited teachers for French schools "in foreign lands, in the colonies and in the protectorates".

In order to calm over-sensitive minds, the following sentence was added: "The number of novitiates and the number of novices will be limited by the needs of the sorts of schools mentioned above." Such a concession proved inadequate for the sectarians. Charles Dumont offered an amendment of a nature to restrict, indeed to destroy, the scope of Leygues' amendment. He put it into a single sentence: "Novitiates cannot admit pupils who are less than

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[802] Duvergier, Vol. CIV, pg. 209.

[803] At the beginning of the World War in 1914, Minister J. L. Malvy suspended the law's operation. — in the name of "Sacred union" — the end of the closings. This "provisional step" is still in force

twenty-one years of age." — "I selected that age," said the man who proposed it, "because it is the age of political majority and because I consider the act of entering into a Congregation and alienating an essential part of one's personality as one of the most serious a man can perform, more serious indeed than his last will and testament." And Dumont entreated his colleagues to vote in favor of his amendment "in the name of the freedom of the child, in the name of conscience and of individual rights!"

These mouth-filling words produced the effect sought after. Repenting, so to speak, for their outburst of independence and at pains to reform "the block" around the Minister, many men who adhered to "the left" and "center-left"recanted: 315 votes against 239 in favor of Charles Dumont's reading.As the Deputy on "the right", Massabuau noted during the session on the 22nd of March, "after the age of twenty-one, it is to late for the mind to adapt to a special mission." Leygues'amendment could no longer retain any but a theoretical value; it would serve as a "teething ring" for the restoration that France, terrified by the enormity of the havoc, would long see.

However, in principle the law remained applicable only to continental France. In order to extend it to the colonies and to the protectorates, there would have to be a new text for which the government reserved the initiative to itself.[804].

It remained to decide procedures for the liquidation of property. A significant incident occurred on March 24 when M. Ramel asked that liquidation take place only "after the closing of the Congregation's last establishment." To the noun "establishment" Combes insisted on the addition of the adjective "educational". "The Chamber," he observed, "will thus specify what its thinking has been when it allows the Brothers' Congregation, suppressed in France as a teaching Congregation, to retain its novitiates with the view of pursuing its mission in foreign lands ...M. Ramel's amendment would have the result of rendering the liquidators' task impossible, since some institutions would be called upon to survive...If you reject the word "educational", it would lead people to believe that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools are neither literally nor legally, suppressed by article 1."

On the whole, it was an exercise in spoliation. On March 28 Paul Beauregard, Deputy for Paris, underscored what was shocking about it: "You are about to seize property which has been given for the purpose of assuring a certain type of education; and you are assuming the right to use this property for the benefit of an education that is contrary to the one envisaged by the donors...From men who, for a hundred years, have taught the children of the people, you are taking away an instrument that has been a component part of their work."

The Assembly heard this objection with indifference. On the same day it passed the entire law by a vote of 316 to 269.

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The Senate was very nearly satisfied to record the decision of the other Chamber. At the moment of the last vote, a member of the opposition, Count Goulaine, summarized his impressions as follows: "This law, designed to combat faith and conscience, is not the result of discussion...Nobody except the government and the proponent of the bill,[805].has come forward to defend it. It has been worked out in silence, in the taciturnity of its partisans.[806]
Nevertheless, between June 23 and July 5 it took up ten sessions in the Luxembourg Palace. The defenders of freedom followed one another to the podium.

Count Emmanuel Las Cases showed, by means of recent examples, how difficult it was for

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[804] Parliamentary debates, sessions on the 14th and 28th of March. — A decree dated September, 1904 made the law enforceable in Algeria

[805] Senator Saint Germain who stated that the Committee had listened to Brothers Exupérien and Justinus

[806] Parliamentary detabes, session for July 5. — Cf. Lecanuet, Vol. III, pp. 564-566.

"secularized" Religious to recover the right to teach, the right to live: "People condemn them", he explain, "by interpreting their intentions. They are forced to prove that they have changed their thinking, their methods, their teachings...that they written letters to, nor shaken the hand of a former confrere."

The speaker did not neglect to pay tribute to the Brothers. He added: "I would have liked to have sketched the very authentic and attractive features of Father De La Salle; but this portrait has been painted by the hand of a master, M. Buisson."[807]

M. Lamarzelle, also referring to the speech given by the author of the bill in the Chamber, recalled how the Lasallian Institute, authorized to retain its missionary novitiates, was given a death sentence along with the privilege of survival. "M. Buisson has declared: 'People do not liquidate the property of a person because he is dead while acknowledging him still alive by once again doing business with him.'"[808]

"Yes," confirmed Senator Saint Germain, speaking in the name of the competent Committee; "novitiates will exist in virtue of the law; we have sustained them in spite of everything."[809]

But how are they going to support themselves? René Bérenger suggested that for this purpose a sufficient quantity of capital and real estate from the confiscated patrimony be set aside. The Minister of Public Education confined his remarks to the observation that the question would be the object of regulation on the part of the public administration. And Bérenger's amendment was rejected.[810]

The same article induced an intervention by Vidal Saint Urbain who tactfully sought a reduction to eighteen of the age of admission to novitiates. The Minister who was present replied that, after experimenting, it will be determined whether the limit of twenty-one years "impedes recruitment". If so, the government will look into the matter without prejudice. The explanation satisfied the majority of senators who retained unchanged the extremely treacherous Charles Dumont amendment.

At the session on July 5th Bérenger spoke again in order to attempt to guarantee a less precarious financial situation for disbursed members of Congregations. Prior to him, his colleague, Tillaye, had asked, unsuccessfully, for a division of the common capital among the members of the dissolved Congregation. Bérenger simply hoped that the public treasury would allow credit advances so that the aged and the infirm might not have to wait indefinitely for their allowances. He did not obtain even that compassionate gesture.

"Government using power to crush the week is persecution; in this case it's the persecution of Julian the Apostate." This just verdict fell from the lips of M. Wallon. The "father of the Constitution of 1875" and dean by reason of seniority of the Upper House of the Assembly, he was determined, in spite of his ninety-two years, publicly to bear witness in favor of an essential freedom of private citizens. Weariness prevented him from finishing his speech, for which Bérenger assumed the responsibility of reading the last two pages.[811] Another representative of an earlier parliamentary generation, M. Marcère, rose to recall that "French

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[807] Parliamentary debates, Senate sessions for June 23 and 24, 1904.

[808] Session of the 28th of June.

[809] Session of the 1st of July.

[810] Session for July 4. — Senator Bérenger meant to supply funds not only to novitiates but also to schools to which the novitiates would be sending teachers. He feared that subsidies to schools in the Orient would be entirely eliminated.

[811] Parliamentary debates, session for July 1.

society" and "Christian civilization" covered the same ground.[812]

The tradition as well as the honor and interest of the nation condemned the policies of a man like Émile Combes.

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Passed on July 5th by a vote of 166 Senator for and 105 against, the law was promulgated the following day. "Teaching of whatever sort or nature was forbidden in France to Congregations."The latter were in principle prohibited from all recruitment and obliged to dissolve by way of extinction. The liquidators were to proceed to the legal sale of property that had not been recovered or reclaimed within the prescribed time[813] by the donors or their heirs, "exception being made for real estate set aside for the retirement of aged or infirm members."[814]The law referred only to those who were living at the time of the promulgation on July 7. (Art. 5.6)

"Any deed having the nature of a gift or legacy made to the Communes or to a public institutions in payment toward establishing schools or halls or asylums directed by the members of Congregations will be declared inadmissible if it is not entered in the two years" beginning with the legal closure of the premisses in which the Religious in question exercise their activities.[815]

The sixth and last article invalidated all arrangements contrary to the new text "and in particular Article 109 of the decree of March 17, 1898".

The period of history opened for the Lasallian Institute under the reign of Napoleon I and closed in this fourth year of the 20th century.

On July 9, at about 11 o'clock in the morning one of the Brothers on Rue Oudinot entered the Superior-general's quarters. He found him reading the Official Journal of the French Republic. Distress showed on Brother Gabriel of Mary's face. Tears flowed, and a sob erupted: "May the most holy will of God be done!" he uttered with slightly trembling lips. And then the Superior of the Congregation pointed out to his visitor the decrees which had already been enacted in execution of the recent law and which involved the Brothers' schools in Rheims: "None of them any longer exist! The residence school is closed. It seems as though they had intended to strike us immediately at the heart by directing the blow against the birthplace of the holy Founder."[816]

cThe destruction built up with overwhelming swiftness. The Motherhouse could not long survive: the suit which had been going on for a quarter of a century between Paris and the Institute,[817] was necessarily concluded to the detriment of the Brothers, since henceforth the Republic refused to acknowledge their incorporation. On December 6, 1899, the Court of Appeals in Paris handed down a decision favorable to the claims of the Parisian Municipal Counsel. Since this decision had been the object of an appeal — and effectively annulled on June 7, 1901 — the case had been sent to the judges in Rouen. The latter found themselves

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[812] Ibid., session for June 24.

[813] The time limit, on penalty of foreclosure, was six months beginning on the day of the official closure of the institution. (Art. 5.5)

[814] Art. 5.6.

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[816] M. H. Brother GabrielMarie's Obituary, pp. 102-103.

[817] . See above, pp. 197 and 223.

faced with the new situation created by the law of July 7, 1905, namely that the Congregation, no longer recognized, was required to restore the property to the city within a time limit of four months,

The ministerial decrees of the 9th, 10th, 12th, 13th and 15th of July 1904 effected 801 of the French Brothers' institutions, about three-fifths of the total number. The calamity was so appalling that, during the first hours, it was as though people were stunned. What decisions should be made? What advice to give? Toward what goals should so many Brothers wrenched from their work be directed? What future could be anticipated for schools that were temporarily spared? And how to organize for the mass departures for overseas countries?[818] With ties broken by an unprecedented assault, there was the danger of rout, defection and capitulation. An effort of rectification was called for, and with the help of God, it might be brought to a successful term: — superbly in some areas, but imperfectly elsewhere. Communities were reestablished across the frontiers along with houses of formation and residence schools — in Belgium, Holland, Italy, Spain and in the channel islands. The Superiors made their way to the Brabacon estate in Lembecq les Hal. Turkey, Egypt, the Far East, Canada, the United States and Latin America received groups from France. As for the Brothers who became secularized in order to protect projects and save souls in their terrestrial fatherland, the most courageous among them remained faithful to their conscientious commitments, in the midst of unheard of difficulties, exposed to the suspicions of adversaries, house searches by the police, investigations by magistratures and often, unfortunately, with a sense of being misunderstood by fellow-Catholics and of being — at least in appearance and for reasons of extreme caution — ignored or kept at arms length by their leaders.

But we cannot here undertake an account of all these flights, this resistance, this tenacity, all this activity in which, on numerous occasions, heroism was unfolded. The Good was not vanquished. France itself was, in spite of the sectarians, marvelously benefitted.

In his Christmas 1904 Circular Brother Gabriel-Marie drew the following conclusion from events: "Men have acted, but only by God's will; and we, like our holy Founder, must 'adore God in all things'".

And contemplating the noble example provided by his aides in the Regime, by the Visitors in charge of Districts, by so many professed Brothers and by generous youths, he added: "You have, my very dear Brothers, rekindled your faith; and await confidently for these very consoling words to be verified for the members of our Institute: all things turn out for the greater good of those who love God."

FINIS

[818] M. H. Brother GabrielMarie's Obituary, pg. 103.